

“David’s Restoration”
2 Samuel 12:16-31
(Preached at Trinity, July 7, 2019)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapter 11** records the terrible fall of David. We witnessed the fearful progression of sin. It went from an unguarded look, to unbridled lust, to adultery and then to murder.
2. As we came to the end of the chapter everything had calmed down. Uriah was dead. Bathsheba had gone through a period of mourning for her husband and then David took her as one of his wives. Her pregnancy ended in the birth of a son. David had dodged the bullet of the public scandal and it would appear that he had made it through unscathed. His secret had been successfully concealed and all was well. But the final words tell us all was not as well as it seemed.
2 Samuel 11:27-12:1 NAU - "But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD."
3. What David thought was secret was not secret at all. God had seen it all and was greatly displeased. But God was rich in mercy towards David. It had been nine months and David still had not repented. In His mercy God speaks to David through Nathan the prophet:
2 Samuel 12:7-9 NAU - "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! ⁹ 'Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight?'"
4. David’s conscience was finally awakened and he recognized the enormity of his actions.
2 Samuel 12:13 NAU - "Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."
 - A. **Psalm 51** gives us a window into David’s heart
Psalm 51:3-4 NAU - "For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge."
 - B. David’ conscience cried out within his bosom. Upon conviction he didn’t try to hide or justify his sin. Instead he confessed it openly with true sorrow and tears.
5. **Chapter 12** is the wonderful account of God’s grace in restoring David. Matthew Henry writes:
“Though he fell, he was not utterly cast down, but, by the grace of God, recovered himself, and found mercy with God.”¹

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 454.

6. This doesn't mean there were no consequences to David's actions. Sin is never without consequence. His sin was grievous, and it was public. David had brought a reproach upon God and the people of Israel.
2 Samuel 12:14 NAU - "by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme"
 7. God declares several consequences to David's sin
2 Samuel 12:10-12 NAU - "Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' ¹¹ "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. ¹² 'Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun."
 8. And then God declares a consequence that would be a great sorrow to both David and Bathsheba. Their son would die.
 9. What we find in the remainder of this chapter are signs of David's restoration.
- I. David reacts to the sickness of his son
- A. According to the word from God David's son became seriously ill
2 Samuel 12:15 NAU - "Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was *very* sick."
 1. Notice again how Bathsheba is described as Uriah's widow.
 As I've pointed out before, the word is literally translated "wife" which is how most translations render the word. David had no right to rob Uriah of his wife.
2 Samuel 12:15 NAU - "Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was *very* sick."
 Bathsheba was also described as Uriah's wife at the end of **Chapter 11**
2 Samuel 11:26 NAU - "Now when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead"
 - a. The narrator does not want us to forget how it got to this point. Bathsheba was happily married to Uriah. David stole another man's wife.
 - b. Bathsheba isn't described as David's wife, as if they had met and gone through courtship and married. She is described as the widow of the man David murdered.
 - c. We must not diminish the seriousness of David's sin.
 2. God has declared that the offspring of this adulterous relationship would die. The child has contracted an illness of which he would not recover.
 - B. We can see, however, that David has returned to his place of devotion and faith in God.
 1. In all of **Chapter 11** God is entirely absent, with the exception of Uriah's mention of the Ark in **Verse 11**, and the mention of God by the narrator at the end of the chapter when we learn that although God was absent in David's heart, He was not absent.

2. David's response to the child's illness was to go before God in prayer and fasting. This has been the heart of David throughout his life.
2 Samuel 12:16 NAU - "David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground."
 3. But this prayer was of a particular sort.
 - a. Many parents plead with God when their child is sick, but although they may have an idea of God's control over all things, they don't see the sickness as God's chastening because of their sin.
 - b. David knew the child's illness was God's just judgment. It was because of the dishonor David's sin had brought upon God's name.
2 Samuel 12:14 NAU - "However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die."
2 Samuel 12:15 NAU - "Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was *very* sick."
 - c. David's prayer was a prayer for mercy.
2 Samuel 12:16 NAU - "David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground."
 4. David understood that this child was suffering because of him. David knew he was the one that deserved to die. This was the penalty for adultery and for murder. Yet, God told David he would not die.
2 Samuel 12:13-14 NAU - "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. ¹⁴ "However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die."
 - a. David did not doubt his guilt or his just condemnation
 - b. In essence, David is praying that God would take his life and spare the child. David's prayer and fasting went on for seven days. His servants were greatly concerned and tried to get him to rise up and eat, but David would not.
- C. Finally, after seven days the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him.
1. If David was gravely in distress while the child lived how would he react upon hearing of the child's death?
 2. David's response amazed them. David arose, washed, and changed his clothes. Then he went to the house of the LORD and worshipped.
 - a. David's words—while the child lived there was hope and I prayed. But now that he has died God's will has been done.
2 Samuel 12:22 NAU - "While the child was *still* alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.'"
 - b. This was difficult for his servants to comprehend, and perhaps difficult for us. David mourned the deaths of Saul and Jonathan and Abner.
Upon hearing of the death of Absalom David cries out:
2 Samuel 19:4 NAU - "The king covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

- c. Why did David not mourn over the death of this child?
 This is further sign of David's restoration. God declared the death of this child as a sign to the nations of God's holiness. David submitted to the will and purpose of God. Before the child died David held out hope that perhaps God might grant his request for mercy. But after the child died David clearly knew that God's will was not to heal the child—and so David submitted. God is always just in His actions.
3. How different this was from months before when he schemed to hide his sin rather than face the consequences and God's just judgment. Now David placed his life in the hands of God. He was like Job many years before:
Job 1:20-21 NAU - "Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. ²¹ He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."
4. In **Verse 23** David said words that have sometimes been interpreted to say more than what he meant. What did he mean?
2 Samuel 12:23 NAU - "But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."
 a. Some take it to refer to David's belief in the afterlife—that David was referring to life beyond the grave. This was Calvin's position. "he was showing here the hope that he had of life after death."²
 This is surely comforting to parents who have lost a child. They will see them again. We have ample hope in a gracious God, that He deals mercifully with our children who die in infancy. But this most likely is not what David is referring to here.
 b. David is simply making a statement regarding our mortality and the finality of death. Sheol is a place of no return. Once the child was dead there was no hope of him returning to the living. David was saying that he would follow his son to the grave, but his son would not return to his father.
 Matthew Henry: "Those that are dead are out of the reach of prayer; nor can our tears profit them. We can neither weep nor pray them back to this life."³

² Calvin, John, *Sermons on 2 Samuel*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1992) page 592.

³ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 456.

II. The tokens of God's forgiveness

A. Nathan had stated God's promise of forgiveness

2 Samuel 12:13 NAU - "And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die."

1. God didn't leave David in despair. God didn't tell David, "You shall surely die." Instead David found God's mercy.
2. We shouldn't miss the opening words of **Chapter 12** – "Then the LORD sent Nathan to David."
While David was fleeing from God, God pursued David. He did not abandon David.
3. This isn't to say that David's sin did not have consequences.
4. God did not blot David out from His covenant

B. We can see David's restoration and forgiveness in his victory at the end of the chapter.

1. God had promised his curse upon Israel if they did not keep his commands
Deuteronomy 28:25 NAU - "The LORD shall cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you will go out one way against them, but you will flee seven ways before them, and you will be *an example of terror* to all the kingdoms of the earth."

2. The chapter ends with David marching to victory over the Ammonites. This would be David's last great war. But it serves as further sign of David's restoration.

3. The Ammonites were utterly defeated and put under forced labor. The NASB makes it sound as if David put the Ammonites through terrible tortures. We read 1 Chron. 20 in the NASB

1 Chronicles 20:3 NAU - "He brought out the people who *were* in it, and cut *them* with saws and with sharp instruments and with axes. And thus David did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned *to* Jerusalem."

The rendering of the ESV is probably more accurate:

2 Samuel 12:31 ESV - "And he brought out the people who were in it and set them to labor with saws and iron picks and iron axes and made them toil at the brick kilns. And thus he did to all the cities of the Ammonites."

C. We can also see David's forgiveness and restoration in the birth of Solomon

1. God had made a covenant promise to David.
2 Samuel 7:16 NAU - "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."
2. This promise would be fulfilled through David's offspring
2 Samuel 7:12-13 NAU - "I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom."¹³
"He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

3. Do you remember what happened when Saul sinned? God stripped the kingdom from him.
1 Samuel 13:13-14 NAU - "Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. ¹⁴ "But now your kingdom shall not endure."
4. God kept His covenant promise to David. To our great amazement, God blessed his marriage to Bathsheba in giving a son. This is the first time she is not referred to as the wife of Uriah. She is now called David's wife. While she had never been granted children with Uriah, and while she had lost her first son with David, she is now blessed to be the mother of the covenant child, Solomon.
2 Samuel 12:24 NAU - "Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her; and she gave birth to a son, and he named him Solomon. Now the LORD loved him"
5. Bathsheba could have been bitter towards David, but God graced the marriage. She received the comfort and love of her husband, David—further evidence of David's restoration.
6. God's grace upon David was bountiful. He had put away David's sin. We read of David's son – "Now the Lord loved him."

Conclusion:

1. Sin is grievous and always has consequences, but God's mercy and grace is great and he is abundant in pardon through Jesus Christ. But we should fear our own heart and maintain great vigilance.
2. The chapter ends with David's great victory over the Ammonites, but in spite of this victory there were great troubles ahead for David. His restoration did not erase the consequences that would come as the result of his sin.
2 Samuel 12:10-11 NAU - "Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' ¹¹ "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household"
3. On one hand, we rejoice that God is a God of great mercy and forgiveness. He takes pity upon us. But our sins always have devastating consequences which should cause us to live with great caution. Our Confession describes some of the consequences of our sin. It comes from Chapter 17 on Perseverance.
LBC 17:3 – "And though they may, through temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves, yet they shall renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end."