

Title: The Grace Found in God's Discipline

Scripture: 2 Samuel 12

Series: The Promise of the Messianic Kingdom

1. Introduction:

- a. In chapter 11, David seemed to be in control; he was the prime decision-maker, dominating the action from the palace until he crashed into God's Righteousness.
 - i. And that crash was recorded for us in **2 Samuel 11:27B** But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.
 1. This verse was ominous because it made it clear that the Holy God would not allow sin to continue in the heart of His chosen king.
- b. As expected, God and His Word dominate the action in this chapter.
 - i. After the flagrant crimes that David commits, one would expect God's wrath to fall entirely upon David. We expect punishment and judgment, and these things are certainly here, but what we do not expect and find is unmerited grace for such a wicked sinner.
- c. This is the central theme of our sermon today. As Christians, when we sin against God, we can expect the chastisement of the Lord. There will be consequences, and often these consequences are dire. God loves his children too much to allow them to live continuously in sin.
 - i. This is the teaching recorded for us in **Hebrews 12:6A** For the Lord disciplines the one he loves...

- d. And yet, in His discipline, God reminds us of His love. His discipline is made to bring us back to Him, to restore us to the joy of salvation, and not to push us away. God's discipline is meant to bring us back into the land of grace. He reminds us that even in our darkest hour, even for new and terrible sins, the grace of atonement exists. What incredible grace!
 - e. God does not crush an errant child, no matter how much we might deserve it. God brings us back into holy communion with Him.
2. Verse 1A: God's Grace is always Ready: And the LORD sent Nathan to David.
- a. More beautiful words have never been spoken.
 - i. We learn that God is not a passive onlooker. No God is a God of action. God sends Nathan to David. He sends him words of discipline and, surprisingly, words of love. God is intent on restoring a wayward son. Praise God for this truth!
 1. God will not allow his servants to remain comfortable in sin but will expose their sin lest they revel in it, even if doing so causes incredible pain.
 2. We learn that a Christian might temporarily succeed in unfaithfulness, but God's grace will track him down. After all, Jesus is the good shepherd that loves His sheep and never loses one.

- a. It might be uncomfortable and excruciating, but God will come for His own.
- b. We find incredible comfort in the words, **and the LORD sent Nathan to David**. Imagine if God's grace did not search for or pursue us. What if God abandoned us when we succeeded in sinning? We would all be lost.
- c. But not here, not ever. God sent Nathan with His Word just like he sends that same Word after us today.

3. Verses 1b-7A: God's Grace is always Wise: He came to him and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. (2) The rich man had very many flocks and herds, (3) but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. (4) Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." (5) Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, (6) and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." (7A) Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"

- a. Nathan tells David about a case. After all, David is the supreme judge in the land. And by using this story, David's eyes are graciously opened to the filthiness of his terrible sin. The story elements are essential.
 - i. There was a rich man - the one who had overabundance (David)
 - 1. He has flocks of sheep. To him, sheep are a property and nothing else. The sheep represent all the women in David's life.
 - ii. There is a poor man - the man that had little (Uriah).
 - 1. He had only one ewe lamb. To him, this little lamb was a member of his family. It was not property but something dear and loved. This ewe lamb represents Uriah's wife, Bathsheba.
 - iii. The guest with an appetite represents sexual lust and desire.
 - iv. We learn that the rich man does not want to take any of his sheep but would instead take the poor man's lamb to feed it to the guest.
- b. On hearing this story, and unaware that Nathan was talking about him, David's rage explodes. He cannot fathom the unfairness of the rich man's deeds. Beloved, living a hypocritical life can often cause rage and resentment.
 - i. David sentences the rich man to death. But, beloved, this punishment did not fit the crime. The Old Testament only required the replacement of stolen property on a four-to-one basis.

- ii. We learn that when we harbor unrepentant sin, we become very judgmental of the lesser sins of others. Nathan's story relates a lesser crime than David's actions in chapter 11. And it is as if David's hidden sin is so loathsome to him that he wants to punish others for his actions. This is the peril of unrepentant and unconfessed sin. It forces us to live a duplicitous, hypocritical life in which we are offended by the lesser sins of others.
 - 1. The Bible warns us about this hypocrisy in **Matthew 7:3-5** Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? (4) Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? (5) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
- iii. Although death was unwarranted for the rich man, death was completely deserved for David's crimes. David had committed adultery and murder, and both of these carried the death penalty because, unlike the killing of sheep, the killing of a man and dishonor of a woman are crimes against those that are created in the image of God.
 - 1. In wrongly calling for the death of the rich, David rightly applies the death penalty to his

case. David must pay with his life for what he has done.

c. So Nathan, instead of calling David a filthy sinner, gets David to see the gravity of his actions. What wisdom is found in God and His grace? Nathan points the finger and delivers the news, “**YOU are that man!**”

i. With this, David stands before God as a dead man with no hope of atoning for his sin.

1. **Romans 1:32B** Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die...

4. Verses 7B-12: God's Grace Confronts Sin: ...Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. (8) And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. (9) Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. (10) 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 out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. (12)

For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.””

a. God’s discipline is scary. It causes us to shudder. The Holy God hates sin, and he hates it most vehemently when it is found in the lives of His redeemed. Nathan introduces this thought with the hefty words, **thus says the LORD, the God of Israel**. These words bring a foreboding to the soul. They tell us that we have sinned, and now God must act.

i. **1 Peter 4:17A** For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God;

1. God must start with His people. God must require holiness from those that claim the new birth.

b. So in verses 7-8, the chastisement of the Lord begins with a retelling of God’s past grace to David.

Whenever we sin, we do so because we have forgotten or cast away from our mind God’s past grace and mercy. Whenever we sin, it is because of ungratefulness.

c. Beloved, for sin to appear as foul as it is, it must stand in comparison to God’s past overwhelming grace.

Treachery may only appear hideous when viewed against the fidelity it has despised.

i. God had **anointed him**. God **delivered him**. God **gave him the kingdom and Saul’s wives**. God **gave him Israel**. **If this had not been enough, God would have given even more**. There was no need to do what David had done. Like all sin, it was a rebellion against God and God’s goodness.

1. David was not deprived. David, indeed was the rich man.
 2. When we desire to sin or go after sin, we must admit there is no reason. Beloved, we are not deprived. God has given us everything we need.
- ii. Because sinning is ungratefulness, it is typical of God to remind the offender of past Grace. God shows us what we have scorned.
1. What about you and me, beloved? What has God done for us? Should we not walk in total humility? Should there not be an overwhelming sense of gratitude for this great Salvation? Should not gratitude keep us from wandering into the forest of sin?
 2. Consider what gratitude did for Joseph in **Genesis 39:7-9** And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." (8) But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. (9) He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"
 - a. A grateful heart will not sin against God.
- d. In verse 9, God demonstrates how evil sin truly is.

- i. **Why have you despised the word of the LORD?**
 - 1. Sin despises the Word of God. It takes God's Word, and it tramples it underfoot. We preach the impotence of God's Word when we discard it in favor of sin.
- ii. **To do what is evil in God's sight?**
 - 1. Sin is evil before the eyes of Him, who is absolutely holy. We purposefully forget that God sees all.
- iii. **You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.**
 - 1. Sin not only offends God, but also destroys those around us.
- e. Verses 10-12 announce the consequences of purposefully sinning against God. Sin will always make you pay a steeper price than you intended.
 - i. **Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house.**
 - 1. Because David used violence against Uriah, violence would now be a part of his house. David would see terrible things happen within his house and have to live with the truth that he had started his house on this path of violence.
 - ii. **...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 out of your own**

house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. (12) For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.”

1. Because David took Uriah’s wife, God would take David’s wives. Someone within his own house would do to David what he had done to Uriah. And just as David did his deed in the darkness, God would publicly humiliate him.
 - iii. The reality of all these judgments will be the theme of the following eight chapters.
 - f. So what do we learn, Beloved? God always sees the true nature of sin and is appalled by it. If David, the sinner, has the moral capability to rage over Nathan’s rich man, how much more must God hate our sin? We see the gracious God that sends Nathan, but he is also the holy God that despises sin and will hold each of us accountable.
5. Verses 13-14: God’s Grace offers Forgiveness: David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. (14) Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die.”
- a. The Moral Law of God calls for David’s death, but our passage shows us that God forgives David and commutes his death sentence. But you say, how can

God do such a thing? How can David be allowed to live after such offenses? The answer to that question is the same for both David and us. This God is the God of grace.

- i. Beloved, do not be too quick to condemn David unless you want to condemn yourself.
- ii. None of us deserves the grace of forgiveness.
- b. David repents. He utters two words in the original language translated as “**I have sinned against the LORD.**”
 - i. Does the apology seem enough? For all that David had done, could these words suffice?
 1. We want to see David wallow in his guilt and plead, beg, and agonize over the possibility of being forgiven.
 2. However, the simplicity of David’s repentance is beautiful. He takes full responsibility. He does not blame shift. **I have sinned.** The problem is me and no other. I was ungrateful. I despised the Word of God and the God of the Word. David does not seek any loopholes or pretexts.
 - a. **Psalms 32:5** I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah
 - b. And beloved, God does forgive him. Nathan assures David that **he will not die.**
- c. So we learn much from this portion of Scripture:

- i. First, we understand that to be a man after God's own heart is not to be sinlessly perfect but to be, among other things, completely submissive to the word of God, even when it accuses us.
- ii. Secondly, we learn that God himself is the one that puts away our sins. God says to David, **“You will not die.”**
 1. We can never lose the sense of marvel when thinking about God's forgiveness. God's propensity for forgiveness should grasp our minds and stir our emotions.
- iii. Thirdly, we learn that our forgiveness requires a substitute. **Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die.**
 1. God forgives the guilt of David's sin but inflicts the consequences of sin.
 2. God's forgiveness was marvelous for David; David was forgiven but it was also costly, and the child would die. It is as if the child will die in David's place. There was no doubt that David was the one under the sentence of death. David himself had judged the matter. But God informs David that the child will die. Beloved, see the price of sin.
 3. David's infant son is a type of David's greatest Son (Jesus).
 - a. So here is the great truth of forgiveness. Salvation is both free and costly.

6. Verse 15-19: The Grace of Pain: Then Nathan went to his house. And the LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he became sick. (16) David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. (17) And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them. (18) On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us. How then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm." (19) But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David understood that the child was dead. And David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" They said, "He is dead."

a. There is a genuine sense in which we know the depravity of our souls by the pain that our sin causes. This type of pain makes things clear to us. It is a bitter grace.

- i. **The Lord afflicted the child.** Do these words wound you? Do you read them and protest, "This is not what I expect God to be like." One of our greatest sins is our propensity to try to limit the extent of God's sovereignty.
- ii. Does God not own everything and everyone?
 1. **Psalms 24:1** The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,
- iii. Beloved, we expect death from David's crime, but we are offended when that death falls upon

the child. We scream that such a thing is not fair. I would agree with you! It is unfair that someone else should be substituted for the wrath you and I have incurred. It is unfair that Christ would die on the tree for you and me. That is the point of this story and of the gospel.

- b. David throws himself into supplication. He worries the elders. David lies on the cold floor for seven days and nights, refusing to eat or rest. The sorrow and guttural cries to God alarm those around David. They believe that David might be suicidal, overcome by grief.
 - i. But David knew two things that his elders did not know.
 1. First, he knew God's propensity to relent and deal in grace even when undeserved. He reasoned that perhaps this would be one of those times. So he prayed before the Holy God.
 - a. And so should you and I pray fervently that God would act in kindness even though our sins deserve nothing else but God's scorn.
 2. Secondly, David understood God's absolute right to deny his request. God is sovereign and, as such, must act according to what He deems is right. It was right for David to experience loss so he would never do such things again. It was important for David to see the price of sin. It was important for

Israel to realize that only God is the perfect king.

7. Verses 20-23: God's Grace Grants Faith: (20) Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. He then went to his own house. And when he asked, they set food before him, and he ate. (21) Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate food." (22) He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' (23) But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."

- a. Our last portion ends with the child's death. David's men are afraid to tell him, but God's Spirit teaches David to discern what has happened. David understands that the child is dead. His actions further baffle his elders and you and I.
 - i. David arises, bathes, perfumes his body, changes his clothes, worships the Lord, and then sits down to eat.
- b. When pressed, David answers. Perhaps God would do the unthinkable and save the child.
 - i. However, God didn't spare the child. David teaches us two great truths:
 1. None can cheat nor overcome the grave. David says, "**Can I bring him back again?**"

2. There is a gathering of the believers to come. David says, **“I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.”**

a. Because of forgiving grace, David was assured of eternal life.

8. Verse 24-25: The Overabundant Grace of God: Then David comforted his wife, Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her, and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the LORD loved him (25) and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

a. David and Bathsheba now have a second son.

Bathsheba is finally referred to as David’s wife. We are told that God loves this second child. On what basis did God love this child and yet strike the other? Both children had done nothing wrong or right. Our passage teaches us that the basis for God’s choice was God’s sovereignty.

i. The first child dies, a picture of substitution and redemption through the Son of David; the second child is chosen, loved, and commissioned. This child’s nickname was Jedidiah (beloved of the Lord.)

ii. **Romans 9:14-15** What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! (15) For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

iii. Our passage teaches us that God’s love and salvation belong to Him.

9. Verses 26-31: The Grace of Victory: Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and took the royal city. (27) And Joab sent messengers to David and said, “I have fought against Rabbah; moreover, I have taken the city of waters. (28) Now then gather the rest of the people together and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city and it be called by my name.” (29) So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah and fought against it and took it. (30) And he took the crown of their king from his head. The weight of it was a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone, and it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount. (31) 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. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

- a. It was proper for the king to strike the finishing blows to his enemies. Joab understood that. He did not want anyone thinking rebellious thoughts regarding David, so he called David. David came and was victorious.
 - i. We learn that God can and will return us to service and victory. Perhaps not at the levels of before, but still for His glory.

10. Benediction:

- a. **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Public Reading of Scripture
1 John 1:5-10