

A Tale of a Tender Heart

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[0 : 00] before it confirmed God, but he was afraid because of the story of the evil Lord. Amen. All right. Thank you, all six of you, for reading, helping us out there.

You got the story? Amen. You got the context, what took place here? This was a real thing in history, and it's recorded for us. So if we all got it and you all followed along, didn't get too distracted there, then we're going to tonight outline this and try to make some application where we can. So let's pray before we do that. Father, please bless now and please minister and speak and speak through me if you would and help and minister to each heart here.

I pray that these words in this message and this story would find its way into our hearts and our lives and that we could make real application. Somebody said that the best of men are sinners at best, and we're taking a look at one of them here.

And Lord, help us to see ourselves and to understand just that kind of man you want us to be. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. All right, this is David. David's one of the good ones, right?

[1 : 05] I mean, of all the men in the Bible, David is definitely one of the good ones. And here's an account that God saw fit to put in his holy and his eternal book of one of his biggest blunders in his life.

Now, I'm sure of David, just David's a man, and I'm sure that all through his life he had these daily things that just like you and I where he said something wrong or he did something wrong or had an evil thought or just reacted wrong and he had to square it up with God or I'm sure that was, his life was riddled with those things like ours are.

But there's these few big blunders that we know about that are in this book and here's one of them. The sin of numbering the people and the judgment that it brought upon God's people because of it. Now, this book, David, I mean, God put an awful lot about David in his holy book. I mean, not just his story in 2 Samuel but then recorded a second time in the Chronicles and then much of his writings, his psalms, I mean, he's quite a chunk of this book is from that guy or of his life.

And what I want to draw your attention to is what I believe one of the most outstanding characteristics about David is, is his repentance. He's a great warrior. He was such a great warrior that they sang songs about him and it's recorded in this book for all of eternity.

[2 : 28] The wars that he fought, the bravery that he displayed. He was a great musician and like I mentioned, many of the psalms and many of his writings and he was the sweet psalmist of Israel. He was brought into the king's court, into the king's throne room to play.

The one guy of all the nation. It was him. He was gifted. He was talented. He was very skilled. He was a great leader. He was a great king. He subdued his enemies all around.

He ruled that land and spread it into more than just a kingdom, but the entire region he ruled over and reigned and they brought gifts to him. He's a very talented man.

But I think one of the greatest attributes that this man possessed and that he displayed was a tender heart toward the Lord. And David messed up. And when he messed up, he got it right. And I don't think I can overstate this, that one of the best things that every one of us can have is to have a tender heart. To have a tender heart to God.

[3 : 31] To not being so proud, not being so rebellious or so stubborn or so hard that we can't humble ourselves and repent. And David's a great man.

And part of the reason is not just the fighting, defeating Goliath, not just the lion and the bear, not just taking over the kingdom and fighting the Philistines and doing what he did.

Part of the greatness of this talented, just elevated man was that he could humble himself and that he could repent. And that he maintained a tender heart.

I want to preach from this chapter a tale of a tender heart. And I can relate to messing up like David. And I don't think I'm alone in this building tonight.

To be able to relate to a man that not just in those daily small things, but even in the big times, messed up. And thank God for a man here, an example of one that has a tender heart.

[4 : 32] So we can probably learn something from his response to his sin tonight. And since God gave us record of it, we might as well. And I want to outline this chapter, like I said, and I'll give you five things.

We'll see his sin, his sorrow, his selection, his sacrifice, and then finally his sign. And so let's begin at the very beginning of the chapter again with David's sin.

Now he says in verse number eight, he says, David said unto God, I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing. David's sin, we've read it in the first several verses.

He told his captain, Joab, to go number Israel. Now to you and I, it's like, what's the big deal? And if you look online or read commentators on this kind of topic, some of them just don't, they really try their best to make some application and some of it's pretty weak.

And I don't know that I have a perfect answer. But one thing I know is he is not supposed to do this. And if he does, and I'll show you this in a minute, there was something else to accompany it.

[5 : 40] And that's the scripture. And he knew the scripture and I'm convinced of that. Now before we get to there, let me just say a few things about his sin. Number one, his sin was incited.

Look at verse number one. It says, Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel. The sin, this great sin of David was incited.

It was provoked by somebody much more powerful than David himself. Satan stood up against Israel. Did you see that in verse one? And to get after Israel, he went after their king.

And if I can make their king fall, I can get the nation. And so he attacked the one at the top. He didn't tempt David with women. He didn't tempt him with money. He didn't tempt him with carnal pleasures.

He subtly, like Genesis 3, the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field. He subtly inserted a thought into his head to consider his greatness and to consider his kingdom and to look how just great he is.

[6 : 45] If we could put a category on this in 1 John, it'd be the pride of life. David was incited. He was provoked to do this. There was an unseen adversary that stepped up on him and I don't think David perceived it.

I don't think he knew it. I don't think he understood that the devil, Satan, was against him, working on him. The thought entered his mind and he enjoyed that thought.

And he dwelt on that thought. Rather than cast down the imagination and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, he dwelt on it. And then he acted on it. But what David doesn't know is that this was provoked by the devil.

I don't blame the devil for everything that I do. And I don't give him credit for every time somebody messes up either. But there are absolutely times when he is working against God and against God's child.

And just like in this case, he's engineering a situation that probably we can be very ignorant of and not be cautious about and pay attention to. And I think that Satan standing up against Israel, provoking David, this guy knows all too well how to do it.

[7 : 53] 6,000 years, he's been destroying and tempting and causing men to fall. There's nobody that can stand up against him. And 6,000, well, okay, the Lord Jesus Christ, if that went into your mind, we'll give him credit, of course.

But there's no mortal man that can stand against the devil. He's far greater in wisdom. And we've studied and even saw some of that in Sunday school recently. And so this temptation, this sin was incited.

And while we're here, just let me remind you again and again and again to keep your guard up, to be sober, to be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

And maybe you need to hear it again. He will use whatever he can use. And if he wants to get into this church, he'll use somebody in the church. If he wants to get into your family, he'll use one of your family members.

He may not go and just try to blow the thing up. He'll try to find a way in. And he's standing against Israel, and he's going to use David in a subtle way that David didn't even perceive to get after him, to get him down.

[9:00] His sin was incited. There was somebody that sinned a great sin, but behind it was an enemy working behind the scenes, and he'll be working in subtle ways in your life too, if you're not paying attention.

This sin was a great sin that was incited. Secondly, notice that David was informed. In verses 2 and 3, he tells Joab, his captain, go number Israel, bring the number to me that I may know it.

And Joab says, well, hold up. Why are you requiring me to do this? The Lord blessed him. A hundredfold, what are you talking about, king? He put a check in front of him.

He was informed about what he was doing. Before going through the sin, you might say it, God mercifully placed a roadblock right in front of him and said, you don't need to do this.

This isn't right. He was informed, and David knew what he was doing, and he knew the word of God. Now, come back to Exodus with me. Keep your place, but come back to Exodus chapter 30.

[10:15] You say, why do you think he knew what he was doing so well? Well, earlier in his life, he sinned with Bathsheba. You remember that? And the prophet Nathan came to him, and he gave him a story about a man with a lot of sheep, and one man just had one.

Do you remember that story? And he said, the guy took the one and slayed it for his guest, and David was wroth, and he said, you know, what's going to be done to him? He's going to restore him fourfold. Where'd he get that?

He got that from the Bible. He got that from Exodus 22. Why? Because David knew the scripture. I'll just read that to you real quick while we're here, just to give you that thought. Exodus 22, if a man shall steal an ox or a sheep and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.

Like, who in the world knew that? The king knew that. He knew the scripture. He knew Exodus 22. He knew the law and the judgments in that law as king.

One of the things that he was supposed to do was read it every day, according to Moses. Now, why do I think he knew Exodus 32? Look at chapter 30 of Exodus and look at verse number 11.

[11:24] And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord when thou numberest them.

Why? That there be no plague among them when thou numberest them. Isn't that exactly what took place in that chapter we read? The Lord sent a plague among them? He stayed the plague?

Verse 13, This shall they give. Everyone that passeth among them that are numbered half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary, a shekel is 20 gurus, and half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord.

Everyone that passeth among them that are numbered from 20 years old and upward shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel when they give an offering unto the Lord to make an atonement for your souls.

And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle and the congregation that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel notice before the Lord to make an atonement for your souls.

[12:27] They were to pay up. Every one of them was to pay and to give to make an atonement for their soul. It's called a ransom. It's a redemption price for their souls before the Lord.

Where's that in chapter 21 of 1 Chronicles? What's the king doing? He's not following the book. He's not following the law. He's guilty.

God's supposed to be receiving something from this. Maybe there's a good reason why people didn't want to be numbered. Maybe they didn't want to pay up. At any rate, David's not doing it right. That's one thing that we can say for absolutely sure and he's guilty. And Satan subtly provoked him to do that but we noticed secondly that he was informed. He was informed.

And so I believe he knew full well what he was doing and he knew the word of God and let me say this. God is good like that. To put that check in front of you. In one way, to give you the scripture to let you know exactly what's right and wrong.

[13:29] In another way, to put a faithful man like in this case Joab to stand before you and say, hey, hey, this isn't good. This isn't right. You shouldn't do this. It's not of the Lord.

And God's good like that because he has no interest in seeing you fall into some foolish error because the Lord knows full well there are consequences built into that sin and he will not be mocked and whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

And God's not going to let you get away with something. He's too good. But before you do it, he even puts that check there. He puts that roadblock there. And David's great sin, though it was incited by Satan, he was also informed as Joab stood up to put a check on him.

And that happens in your life too. It could be the word of God that just is there to tell you no and to put that caution, that do not enter sign up before you go forward.

It could be the preacher. It could be the Holy Spirit in his word that through the preaching could just speak to your heart about something and say, you know what that means, you know what I want, don't do that.

[14:45] And then you have a choice. But here's the third thing about David's sin. He was incited, he was informed, but he was insistent. In verse number four, nevertheless, the king's word prevailed.

David was insistent, knowing his error. His heart was fixed upon what Joab calls this trespass to Israel. You ever been there?

You ever been where you knew it was wrong and yet you just plowed forward anyway and just kind of just threw caution to the wind and just pretended that it wouldn't affect you or it wouldn't matter or you'd get away with it and you just pushed forward into transgression, refusing like David to heed reproof, to ignore warning and to make a conscious choice to proceed into sin.

And sometimes just deceiving your own self that it's going to be okay when it's not. So there's David's sin and he said in verse eight, I have greatly sinned.

That's secondly, see David's sorrow. I have greatly sinned in verse eight, he said, because I have done this thing. Look at verse 13, David said unto Gad, I am in a great straight.

[16:06] I'm in a bad spot right here. Look where I am. In 2 Samuel 24, this account is given and it says that David's heart smote him because he's got a tender heart.

And his heart, after he had sinned, after he had knowingly, insistently gone forward with it, it smote him on the inside. David, why? David, you stupid fool, you messed up. And David said, I have great, I've sinned greatly.

Now we see his sorrow. First thing, I want you to see that he admitted, as we've read, he admitted his deed. And we've already read two spots. Look at chapter, or verse number 17, where he's talking to God during this plague.

In verse 17, David said unto God, is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I, it is, that have sinned and done this evil? Indeed, David admitted his deed.

He didn't say, the devil made me do it, God, help, have mercy on me. And he didn't try to justify his sin either and say, hey, come on, what's wrong with this anyway? Everybody's doing it.

[17:15] No, his heart smote him and he admitted his deed and he owned up to it. And it's so important that our sin bothers us just the same and that we sorrow over it because it can reveal a tender heart.

A tender heart. Sometimes that's the hardest thing to do is to humble yourself and to admit the truth that you've sinned. Because inside of us, we just want to keep our image, we want to maintain our reputation, and we don't want anybody to know.

And we just want to get away with it. Or we want to blame somebody else for doing it. Or why we did it. Or we want to justify the reasons why and try to even deceive everybody or ourselves and say it really isn't that big a deal.

And when it's sin against God, it's always a big deal. And the best thing any one of us can do is to admit it.

I have sinned and done this thing. It was me, oh Lord. You know, things never get better until we get honest.

[18:36] Things never get better until we confess our sins. I've found in my life that confessing sin, though it seems so hard, it seems like it's such a wall to climb over that once you take a step, the Lord just drops the thing.

And what you find out is that it's liberating. Confessing your sin and admitting your deed is liberating. It's refreshing. It releases that burden that you've been carrying and hiding and dealing with.

It's a blessing. It's priceless. It's glorious. He admitted his deed.

Secondly, you notice in his sorrow that he acknowledged his desert. That is what he deserved. In verse 17, come to the middle where he says that I have sinned and done evil indeed.

And then he says, but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, oh Lord my God, be on me and on my father's house, but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.

[19 : 47] He acknowledged his desert. Now initially, look back at verse 8. Initially, he wanted to get out of it. David said unto God, I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing, but now I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant.

Just fix it, God. Just, you know, wipe it away. Wash it away. Let it never be known or forgotten and just gone. But the Lord wasn't about to do that. That's not happening here.

Punishment is merited. The sin has wages. There's consequences. And there's a time to reap, David, what you've sown. And so he finally then acknowledges that it was he alone that earned this and deserved this.

And he acknowledged his desert. Now, thirdly then, let's look at David's selection. You remember what we read here, that the prophet came and said, oh, I should back up, where does it say, God said to the prophet, I offer thee three things.

You go tell David, three choices. You pick. What an incredible thing here. That's God. You get into the mind of God a little here. It's just, it's interesting.

[20 : 58] And he gives them three options. And in David's selection, he had the option of famine, the option of his, the enemies of Israel coming in and overtaking them.

And then he had the option of the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel.

And he made the decision to, as he said in his own words, I'm in a great strait.

Verse 13, he said, let me fall now into the hand of the Lord. For very great are his mercies. But let me not fall into the hand of man. So David's selection, first he anticipated God's mercy.

The weather can be unforgiving of a famine. It wouldn't care who it's affecting. The enemies of God would take great pleasure in destroying Israel. But David knew that God loved him.

And David would rather be in the hands of God in his punishment than anybody else anywhere to be found. And so David, in his selection, he anticipated God's mercy.

[22 : 05] But secondly, I want you to consider something else. David's selection accelerated restoration and fellowship. Did you notice that in verse 12 it was three years of famine?

Or it was three months to be destroyed before thy foes? Or else, in the middle of the verse, three days. The sword of the Lord, even the pestilence in the land.

It was this spot here that really got my heart and my mind on this chapter and this message. And considering David's selection, he had the choice of something that would have lasted three years of his life.

Or three months of his life. And David chose the one that lasted only three days. I like how David thinks. Let's get this over with.

Let's just deal with it straight up, hard and fast. There's no easy way around it. Not one of these is going to be good. It's going to be horrible, whatever it is.

[23 : 04] And he deserved it. But he said, I just want the thing to be over with. And if we can, if I can do it in three days instead of 90 days, instead of over a thousand days, let's just do it in three.

And so David could prepare himself to move on and to get restored with God as quickly as possible. The sooner the better. Being in a spot where God was against him wasn't a place he wanted to stay for long at all.

So David made a good choice. And his selection was to accelerate the restoration and the fellowship. And I think there's real wisdom in David's selection there.

And I think we can learn something from that right there. Because the best way to handle sin and its consequences is just to meet it straight on. It's not trying to duck it, not trying to get around it, but to go straight on with it.

And I think you can move on so much sooner if you just deal with it as soon as possible. Drawing things out is unnecessary. Because for David, in three days, God's going to accept you back into fellowship.

[24 : 15] Why would you want it to go 90 days? Why on earth would you want to go three years? Why would people stay out of fellowship with God for three years of their life when they could get on

their face right now tonight and get right?

David's selection. Why? Well, he had a tender heart. He wanted to get it over with. He wanted to get back with God. And so now toward the end of the chapter we see David's sacrifice. And we read the passage already when I'll go through the particulars but he bought the area.

Like bought it with his own money. Paid full price, he said. This threshing floor where he ran into this angel on Ornan's land.

And he paid for it. Paid for it with his own money. In 2 Samuel 24 it says that he bought the threshing floor and the oxen. And so David bought the area and David built an altar.

And after the sacrifice the plague was stayed and it wasn't until then the angel, the Lord told him to stop but the angel was just paused. The angel was still there.

[25 : 23] They saw him. They were afraid. And God's judgment was paused and it was still present. And the punishment didn't cease fully until something died.

Something died. Blood was shed before the punishment was gone. David sinned. David was sorry. David's dealing with the punishment.

But it wasn't until something died that it could stop and that his life could be salvaged and that the situation could finally be put to rest. What satisfies the sin is the sacrifice.

Always a sacrifice. From Genesis and the Garden of Eden to the cross of Calvary to your life and fellowship with God today what satisfies the sin is a sacrifice.

It cost David. He paid full price because he wasn't cutting corners. He was going to pay up. He wanted to get it right. I've got to get this thing right no matter what it costs me.

[26 : 32] A man with a tender heart. I wonder in your life what must be sacrificed when you sin. Christ's blood covers your sin and can cleanse you but for you to get restored what's it going to cost you?

It's going to cost you probably your will. You're going to have to sacrifice your will and admit that you're wrong. It's going to cost you your pride. It'll cost you your image in front of others to admit your sinful condition and what you need to do.

It'll cost you your reputation and it hurts to humble yourself and I know all about it. This is not just something I'm throwing out at you.

I know what it's like to have to humble yourself and get right and be embarrassed in front of people and have that big weight that oh they're going to think this and think that.

I've been there. What I found out was you can't put a price on being right with God and all that stuff that gets in the way once you push it out of the way oh God the mercy all the thrill of being cleansed and being in fellowship and having that guilt gone it comes to a place where all of a sudden you don't care what anybody thinks.

[27 : 50] You care what God thinks. When you get to that place when your heart's tender and you care what God thinks you'll get it. There's David's sacrifice. You'll find that Christ is worth it.

That having Christ is better than being powerful. It's better than being important. It's better than being famous and rich. It's better than being popular. It's better than having friends. Having Jesus Christ and being in fellowship with him.

Whatever it takes to get right with God it's always always worth it. Always worth it. And there's David's sacrifice and he made the payment and he bought that area and he built that altar and then finally to close the chapter there's David's sign and look at verse 26 of the chapter because God answered him and in this passage God accepted him.

In verse 26 David built there an altar unto the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings and called upon the Lord and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering and the Lord commanded the angel you're done it's over it's over I've accepted him now put your see that sword it wasn't in the sheath it was still out ready to go but when David sacrificed when he humbled himself when he paid the payment the Lord answered him and there's a sign here that God answered by fire David's trembling he's afraid of the angel he's afraid of the Lord it says in that passage he's a scared duck I mean he should be because he knows he messed up and he sees that 70,000 men have lost their lives and what am I just one more and here he is right here he probably thinks he's coming for me now it's over for me and he sacrifices and God accepts it and David gets the sign he gets the fire to fall from heaven and take that sacrifice and that fire falls down and it doesn't devour him it devoured the sacrifice

God accepted it he answered me and he realizes the punishment has stayed and God accepted him and in that passage look at verse 28 it says that David saw that the Lord had answered him in the threshing floor and the Jebusite then he sacrificed there a little bit more let's just keep sacrificing huh and in verse 29 the tabernacle Lord of Moses made in the wilderness that the altar of the burnt offerings were at that season in the high place of Gibeon not in Jerusalem but David could not go before it to the power of God he's afraid because of the sword of the angel of the Lord so David's not going to leave this place that God answered him and accepted him and that altar that he built he's going to keep using it now that might seem strange to you like well aren't you supposed to go to the other one to Gibeon aren't you supposed to but there's a sign in this and it's not just the fire fallen from heaven but David's afraid to move away from this thing he's afraid to go to Gibeon because of that angel out there he's going to stay where he feels safe where God has accepted him and he stayed where God was merciful to him and God stayed there too one of the greatest aspects of this story is that this place is a sign this place is the altar this altar rather than David's sacrificing on here for the first time and he just built it it's a prophetic look to a greater altar one that in the very next chapter look at what he says in chapter 22 in verse 1

[31 : 28] David said this is the house of the Lord God and this is the altar of the burnt offering of Israel forget about the other one it's this one and it's on that very plot of land that he purchased that he started preparing to build a temple for his God and then the Lord said through the prophet no you've been a bloody man you're not going to do it but your son will and you read through the rest of this book there he is preparing and getting things ready for his son to build this this thing that look in verse 5 David said Solomon my son is young and tender and the house that is to be built for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent of fame and of glory throughout all countries I will therefore now make preparation for it one of the greatest things about this story is what David purchased was the future site where God said he's like I will place my name there he's been telling them all this time as they're coming through the wilderness coming into the land there's going to be a place

I'm going to put my name there and it wasn't even established where that was but that's the one and as you go through this passage you'll see Solomon standing up I think in the next book and he's making a prayer and I'm just going to glance see if I can catch it quickly I may not find it and Solomon stands up and he says hey this is where God said he's going to put his name and he says it several times don't want to waste time here yes 6 he says in verse number 4 verse 5 since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among the tribes of Israel to build a house in that my name might be there neither chose I any man to be ruler of my people Israel but I have chosen Jerusalem that my name might be there and I've chosen David to be over my people Israel and that's the spot and that becomes the spot that God would take this trespass of David in his life and accept his sacrifice and accept his repented heart and answer him in that place and then use it to be a landmark for years to come and even where we sit years to come and somebody pretty special came to that place and is coming back to that place you might know what a thought this is a tale of a tender heart it's absolutely one of

David's greatest attributes having a tender heart and tonight it's one we ought to consider to seek that we want to possess and never ever ever let go of never let go of a heart that is tender toward the Lord you can be a lot of things in this life but if you got a tender heart to God you got something going on you can be rich and it's not going to matter a bit at the judgment you can be popular you can be talented it's going to all fall to nothing but if you can stay humble to God and tender and when you mess up stay tender always for the rest of your life stay tender it's going to it'll produce something and David didn't know it all he never knew that this was going to be the place it wasn't even in his heart that he was going to be purchasing this land he was just looking for a way out sacrifice please God and the Lord turned and used it for something greater than he ever knew and oh the mind of the Lord what he can do with us and through us when we humble ourselves and stay tender let's pray

Father this this insight into this life of this man I'm glad you recorded it