

2 Samuel 11

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[0 : 0 0] Again, it's 2 Samuel chapter 11, page 248. In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab and the servants with him and all Israel, and they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah, but David remained at Jerusalem.

It happened late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful.

And David sent and inquired about the woman, and one said, Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her.

Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness. Then she returned to her house, and the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, I am pregnant.

So David sent word to Joab, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war was going.

[1 : 2 0] Then David said to Uriah, Go down to your house and wash your feet. And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king.

But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. When they told David, Uriah did not go down to his house, David said to Uriah, Have you not come from a journey?

Why did you not go down to your house? Uriah said to David, The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field.

Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.

Then David said to Uriah, Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back. So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next.

[2 : 2 2] And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter he wrote, Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down and die.

And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell.

Uriah the Hittite also died. Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting. And he instructed the messenger, When you have finished telling all the news about the fighting to the king, then, if the king's anger rises, and if he says to you, Why did you go so near the city to fight?

Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who killed Abimelech, the son of Urubesheth? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Tebath?

[3 : 35] Why did you go so near the wall? Then you shall say, Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. So the messenger went and came and told David all that Joab had sent him to tell.

The messenger said to David, The men gained an advantage over us and came out against us in the field, but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall.

Some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. David said to the messenger, Thus shall you say to Joab, Do not let this matter trouble you, for the sword devours now one and now another.

Strengthen your attack against the city and overthrow it, and encourage him. When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband.

And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

[4 : 42] This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated. Thank you, Drayton.

Join me, please, in recognizing our children's choir. As well as our red-clad children's choir director.

Thank you, Joan, for all of your work for that. I recognize that many of our college kids are here on this afternoon, and I was wondering, as the children were singing, do they remember when they were up here singing and doing those kinds of things?

Welcome home, kids from school. We're glad that you're here on this afternoon. What a Christmas passage that we have for today. Around your tables and in your families over the next few weeks, there may be some strange guests.

Some guests that you may wonder, how did they get in the family? Where did they come from? And if the truth be told, there are people who are in our families, you might say, who entered the side door.

[6 : 15] Some of whom actually entered our families by adultery. Have any family members like that?

In that, they didn't come the route that we normally, or perhaps even would like for them to come in.

Even so in our text today. How did Bathsheba, or otherwise known as Uriah's wife, how did she get in the family?

By adultery. 2 Samuel chapter 11, we find actually the story behind the statement that's in Matthew chapter 1 and verse 6, and this is how it reads.

And Jesse, the father of David the king, and David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.

[7 : 32] In my humble opinion, 2 Samuel chapter 11 is one of the saddest chapters in the Bible. Why?

Why? Because one of our biblical heroes bites the dust. The reader of Scripture discovers that the person who has done so well, and if you follow the David narrative, there's a part that goes that just about everything that he touches turns to gold.

He brings the ark in successfully. He has his family. God gives him promises. 2 Samuel chapter 7.

But here, tragically, David blows it. And he blows it big time. We find out that one of our heroes, just like we do, has feet of clay.

Here we have, even in our world today, larger-than-life figures whose miscues are magnified because of their prominence.

[8 : 52] The recent death of Elizabeth Edwards had the added pain of the memory of a spouse who had been unfaithful. A prominent person who failed to honor the covenant and the protective boundaries of marriage and violated that particular covenant.

Up to this point, in the biblical narrative, we've read the account of one who had been elevated, that is David, from watching over flocks of sheep to watching over the flock, a human flock, of God's people.

Don't you just love David? The breadth of who he is or was. He was both a worshiper as well as a warrior. He was as comfortable with a sword as with a delicate musical instrument, as adept at giving commands on the battlefield, as directing choirs in the sanctuary.

He wrote songs. And not only did he write songs, at least one song was written about him during the days that he was serving Saul.

But more important than the gifts that David possessed was the fact that he was a man of integrity. Even when he was scorned by Saul, he refused to put his hand on God's anointed king.

[10 : 28] He respected God so much and God's region or God's agent on earth that he dared not to touch him even when he had opportunity.

David alone in Scripture has the label of being a man after God's own heart. So, that's why this is such a tragic kind of episode and chapter in the life of one who otherwise set the gold standard.

Notice in our text on this afternoon, the ESV header says David and Bathsheba.

And certainly one legitimate way of looking at this particular text before us and has been handled in similar kinds of ways over the years is how do you handle temptation rather than letting temptation handle you.

While something like that is certainly relevant for us because all of us wrestle with temptation absolutely every day, there are lessons to be learned but we don't want to miss the underlying larger issues that are in play in the text before us.

[11 : 54] A better, more comprehensive approach focuses on the key word that we have in this particular chapter. As a matter of fact, it is a key word that stretches from chapter 10 through chapter 12.

And that big word in these chapters is the word sent. Sent. The first place that we see that word is in verse 1.

Look there with me. In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David, notice what he did, sent Joab and his servants with him.

Notice in the latter part of the chapter, as a matter of fact, the last verse, you see that same word. And when the morning was over, David sent and brought her to his house.

That is the word. The picture that we get in this particular chapter is that of a person who is in charge. He sends people and they answer to his every back-end call.

[13 : 10] And again, we'll see that. But here he is, he's exercising his authority over those who are under his rule. And with that word, as I've tried to click on it and bullet it for you, look at the next verses 1-5.

And here's the deal, what we have there. In verses 1-5, David sent for Uriah's wife and engaged in sin with her.

Notice in verse 1, it was the springtime. And in the springtime in that day, the roads were more passable, soldiers, the food for soldiers and horses was more plentiful, and it was the time in the ancient Near East where the kings went out to battle.

They would lead, these rulers would lead their armies in battle. They were expected to do so. And if you recall in 2 Samuel, this was one of the things that Israel wanted in their leader.

2 Samuel, excuse me, 1 Samuel chapter 8 and verses 19 and 20 says this, But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, No, but there shall be a king over us that we may also be like all the nations.

[14 : 32] and that our king may judge us, and here it is, and go out before us and fight our battles. But rather than going out and fighting battles as the kings in that day did in the springtime, David finds himself sending Joab in the armies, and he remains in Jerusalem.

And as the count goes, during the course of the day, on his rooftop, he observes a woman taking a bath.

And according to the text, this woman is an absolute knockout. She's beautiful. She is stunningly beautiful. So the question on this afternoon, what do you do?

Huh? When you happen to encounter a thing of beauty or a person of beauty that could lead you into temptation, when desire begins to mount, what do you do?

when an attractive man or woman crosses your path or when a computer ad pops up on your screen or unexpectedly on the centerfold of a rather benign publication, do you let such things pass or do you, like David, enter into pursuit mode?

[16 : 15] in verse 3, that's what we see, David, look at what he does. And David, here's our word, sent and inquired about the woman and one said, is not this Bathsheba, and check this out, daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, huh?

He sends. He inquires about her. But check the answer out, folks. This answer should have been a blinking light for David, huh?

Sometimes when you and I resist our internal alarms, when we put our conscience on mute, sometimes the Lord gives us things external to us that helps us to see or tries to get our attention that we're doing the wrong thing, that we're going the wrong way, huh?

The person sent, she said, her name is Bathsheba. She's the daughter of Eliam. You know, Eliam? 2 Samuel chapter 23, verse 34, lets us know that Eliam was one of David's mighty men.

and not only is she the daughter of Eliam, she is the wife of Uriah, another one of your choice servants, one of your dedicated men, huh?

[17 : 48] David, she's somebody's daughter. David, she is somebody's wife, huh? What are you going to do?

What are you thinking? What you're thinking about doing can damage relationships. It can destroy your home. The alarms, externally speaking, should have went out for him.

But rather than the man who had wives and concubines to indulge his legitimate sexual appetites, rather than going that route, huh?

He crosses the line and he pursues the wife of another. You might even call her an army wife, huh?

That's what she was. Notice that the author is careful to note that the bath in verse 4 was one to purify herself after her monthly cycle.

[18 : 53] The point is, she's not pregnant. up to this point, this is not Uriah's kid. Notice verse 1, he sent Joab and the men of Israel into battle.

Verse 3, he sent an inquire about the beautiful woman that he sees from the rooftop. He sends messengers, verse 4, to get Uriah's wife.

and he engages in love making outside of marriage, huh? According to verse 5, their tryst resulted in Uriah's wife's pregnancy, huh?

The scene that we see here, and her words actually take us back to Genesis chapter 38, where we hear the following report of Tamar's words, huh?

She's pregnant by immorality. By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant. We hear that. This was David's ancestor, huh?

[20 : 05] Judah, and there seems to be that kind of connection. It's that common ground in these two accounts, huh? David in verses 1-5, he sent for Uriah's wife, but notice in verses 16-13, he sent for Uriah to cover up his sin, huh?

In an attempt to cover up his sin, David sent for, she sent for the woman, now he sends for her husband, so he could, so with the intent that he could make love to his wife and thereby hide his sin.

Notice our word used three times in verse 6, so David sent word to Joab, send me Uriah the Hittite, and Joab sent Uriah to David, huh?

He beckons for Uriah to come home, huh? Well, and what soldier? And I was a soldier, and it was a great thing to get a three-day pass.

Now, I wasn't married at the time, until later on when I was in the military, but it was a great thing to get a three-day pass to come home, to get a break.

[21 : 22] Well, I wasn't worried about what was going on at Fort Laughton, Fort Seal in Laughton, Oklahoma, when I was home. I was enjoying home. Not so with Uriah, huh?

David has this plan, but Uriah didn't bite the bait, huh? The king instructed him to go home, verse eight. Uriah refused to do so.

Here's the deal, the question that we need to ask the text is silent on it. Did Uriah know that there had been a little hanky-panky going on, huh? Could he have been apprised by those who were around who may have seen the comings and the goings?

Huh? We don't know. David had run a red light number one when he didn't respond to when he asked for the messenger to go get Bathsheba and those words.

But here, rather than recognizing that his plans were not working, David persisted. Huh? He persisted.

[22 : 27] Well, I mean, grace works in various kinds of ways, doesn't it? Sometimes when we try to do something that we should not be doing and it doesn't work, which should be a sign that we shouldn't be doing it.

But then what do we do? We are trying again. Try it again. That's what David did here. Uriah's actions in verses 10 through 8 through 10, and his words were also red lights that David ran in order to cover up his sin.

He had messed up, but he had refused to confess. Huh? Some feel that the reference to Uriah's wife in the genealogy is more about Uriah as a person and his integrity versus David than it is about Bathsheba.

Perhaps that's why she's there. But though David literally whined and dined Uriah, still he refused to go down to his house.

So, what does David do? Verses 14 through 25. David sent Uriah to his death and compounded his sin.

[23 : 47] That's what he did. Uriah, the dedicated warrior, was sent back with his own death warrant in his hand. And though there's a modification in David's initial plan, the result was the same.

Uriah was put in a no-win situation and he died in the battle. Note verse 18.

Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting. Sends word about the fighting, the battle, and the fact that Uriah had died.

But not only had Uriah died, there were other innocent soldiers who had also died by reason of this plan that David had concocted. Though the word sin or sent is not used in verse 25, the essence is there.

David sent the messenger from the battle back with word. David sent Uriah in verses 26 and 27, sent for Uriah's wife, and he completes the cycle of sin.

[24 : 57] Let me read that for you. When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. And when the morning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son.

But notice, the thing that David had done displeased the Lord. The chapter began with David sending and inquiring about this stunningly attractive woman that he had observed from his room.

Here the text says that David sent and brought the wife of Uriah to his house to be his wife. It was this episode that tainted David's record in Scripture.

We see that in 1 Kings 15 verse 5, and let me read it. Because David did what was right in the sight of the Lord and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

What do we see in this chapter? In this chapter we see a man who is in charge, but he's really not in control.

[26 : 14] People are at his back and call. He speaks, they respond, and even when they don't respond, he finds another way to win, which is actually a way to lose.

He's in charge on the one hand, but he is out of control. Proverbs 25, 28 speaks about a man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.

That's David in this particular chapter. But there's a warning here, friends, for us. It's a warning, first of all, to people with power.

Those in charge of households and institutions and organizations, those who control resources, those who speak and people and systems fall into place.

One can rule over a nation or a household and may exercise great authority in the realm of government or business or education, nation, but still be out of control in one's personal life.

[27 : 25] One can rule armies and not exercise personal self-control. But it's not just for the powerful, but it's also for those who consider themselves spiritual.

spiritual. Therefore, the one who thinks that he stands, let him take heed lest he fall. There's a warning here to us to exercise caution, not to ignore internal and external signs, not to run yellow lights or red lights, not to allow our passions and our desires, our lusts to rule to the point where the Lord's voice is muted, where he's no longer in our vision, where God that becomes so large in the sanctuary becomes so small outside of it, that the Lord that is clear and evident in our devotions, outside of that, he's nowhere to be found.

He is not in our vision. There's a warning. Interestingly, what we have in this chapter, in the very last verse, that the Lord enters into the picture, explicitly into the picture, in verse 27.

For the first time, we don't see him and David and all of his conniving and what he does, but here we see in verse 27, but the thing that David did displeased the Lord.

Displeased him. Certainly, the chapter doesn't end, the story doesn't end in chapter 11. The rest of the story is actually about to begin.

[29 : 15] But a close observation of chapters 11 and 12 shows that verse 27 is right at the center of this broader structure. David, the earthly sovereign, had done his thing, and the Lord, the heavenly sovereign, was going to do some sending of his own, and we see that in chapter 12, verse 1.

Look at there with me. And the Lord, what, sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, there are two men, so he goes on with this story.

Huh? Did some sending of his own. And you know, those of you who have read the Bible, you know what goes on to happen in chapter 12, the result of that and the havoc that really enters into David's life and to that of his family because of these things.

There's a Christmas connection to this text, too. I may not be as explicit as you want. At the first glance, it's not there. You don't hear angels singing.

You don't hear shepherds inquiring or see them inquiring. But there are several Christmas connections here. The readers of Matthew's genealogy would have been familiar with David's flagrant sins that involved Uriah's wife.

[30 : 48] But they would also know that God, in his brilliant grace, had triumphed over the sin of David and others who were in the earthly line of Messiah.

The imperfections, the sins of the seed of Abraham and David are met head on by the one who was from them.

He came through their earthly line, but he was over them. He was both son of David, son of Abraham, but he also is and was the son of God. God sends his son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin.

And the shadow that is cast in Matthew chapter 1, verses 1 through 17, is shattered by the light of Christ that we see emanating from verses like Matthew 1, 21 through 23.

Turn there with me in your Bibles, if you would, please. Matthew 1, 21 through 23. Some of you know this by heart, at least verse 21.

[32 : 00] And she will bear a son, and you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people. All those people in 1 through 17, and all the folks that are like them, from their sins, all this took place to fulfill what the Lord has spoken by the prophet.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which means God with us. Christmas in this story, man's mess, man's rebellion, God's pursuit.

Isn't that what Christmas is about? It's about God's arrival through his son to rescue man in his mess. He's not left us to our devices.

He pursued and continues to pursue us. We're reminded in this story about several gifts from the heart and the mind of God.

And thank you, Grace and Tom, for highlighting some of the things that we have received from God. the gift of grace to resist.

[33 : 20] Did you know that's a gift from God? What do you do with temptation? How do you handle it or do you allow it to handle you? Resist it.

Don't run to it. flee from it. God's gift of grace in the hour of temptation must be received.

Not resist it. He stands ready to give it to you and me, for there is no temptation taking you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above that you were able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it.

God's grace to resist in the time of temptation. The Lord's gift includes Scripture and His Spirit and God's servants to challenge us and to hold us accountable.

Given, these things are given for our restraint and our accountability and for conviction when you and I do. sin. What does one do when temptation knocks and wins?

[34 : 43] The Lord's gifts include the gift of forgiveness. David's story doesn't end in chapter 11. There is chapter 12 and then there's Psalm 51.

There's confrontation and confession and repentance and cleansing. God's gifts include the gift of forgiveness for you and me. So how then does one get ready for Advent, arrival, His coming?

Repentance readies us for His coming. Puts us in a position to receive His grace. the wife of Uriah.

David was the main focus in chapter 11. She's not alone. Both are included, David and Bathsheba, in Jesus' family record.

So how is it that adulterers and liars and cheats get around the table?

[35 : 59] How is it that they enter into Jesus' family? By grace. The coming of our Lord is ultimately about the triumph of God's grace over our sin.

Paul put it well in Romans that where sin abounded, what? Grace did much more about. And so what's our response to God's gracious gift of grace?

How do we respond to this priceless gift of grace? I was struck this week by the Oprah Winfrey show on Friday.

This was her holiday gift giveaway. I was both initially very saddened because of the way that these dear people were responding.

I was saddened first but then amused. I really was very saddened because of their, I mean, they clapped. They cried. They jumped up and down.

[37 : 07] I mean, you might do a little of that if you got a \$2,000 watch and all the other things. But my point was there was the response of these dear people to things that will perish with the using.

How do you and I respond to these priceless gifts from God that are good for both time and eternity? John Wesley has put it so well.

Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing. my great redeemer's praise. The glories of my God and King.

The triumphs of his grace. That's something to sing about, is it? Hear him, you deaf. You praise, you dumb.

Your loosened tongues employ. You blind. Behold, your savior come his advent and leap your lane for joy.

[38 : 15] That's the way you respond to gifts from a gracious God who includes people like Tamar and people like Rahab and people like Ruth and Uriah's wife and you and me around the table in the family because of God's grace which is to be celebrated by those who have been given the invitation and who have embraced it for his glory.

Shall we pray? Dear Lord, we give you praise today for your matchless grace in the family by adultery in the family in spite of adultery because of the grace of God.

And Lord, may we not abuse that grace. May there be evidence in our conduct that we have been recipients of your grace because we resist temptation and when we do fall, we confess our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So we give you praise today. Thank you for sending your son for sinners like us. We bless your name. Amen. And so let it through