

The Fall

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[0 : 00] Well, hey, good morning. My name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. As always, we want to encourage you to check out our website, FCCGreensburg.com, or you can go to the FCC Greensburg Facebook page and check us out that way.

But hey, thank you so much for tuning in today. Our prayer is that as we get into the Word of God, that most of all, it will get into us and transform these hearts more and more into the image of Christ.

Now, I'll never forget in our ministry in Tennessee, we were looking for a worship pastor, and somehow we were introduced to a guy who lived in kind of the general area.

And immediately, I liked this guy, very likable, very personable, easy to get along with. And that voice, I'm telling you, was golden, good musician. In fact, he had been the lead singer of a Christian band that opened for some very well-known artists.

And while he didn't have much ministry experience or a biblical education, he seemed coachable. He seemed willing to learn. And I can also tell you in the process of interviewing, he got a background check that came back clear.

[1 : 09] He was even asked some tough questions to make sure that we were getting what we expected. And he gave all the answers that you would hope to hear. Well, less than a month or two in, he calls me, and he needs to meet immediately.

And he's just distraught. He confesses to a moral failure from his previous church that had just been uncovered. And while I don't want to get into any specifics, he could have really done some jail time.

However, no charges were pressed. This left us as an eldership to work through the facts that we knew. And although we hated the very tough decision we had to make, we knew it was the right one.

And we felt confident that he was not in a place where he should be entrusted to lead the worship ministry as a staff member. We paid for the Christian counseling to help restore his family.

We also tried to walk alongside him. But I can tell you, anytime something like this happens, it really has ripple effects that wounds the precious church of Jesus Christ.

[2 : 14] I can also tell you that my jaw has hit the floor many times in the last couple of decades as well-known pastors that I listened to, that I admired, that I read their books, that they also had a moral failure.

Names like James McDonald, Tulian Chavidgin, and here recently, even Tony Evans. Now, that doesn't mean that they're evil or that everything they've ever preached or written is wrong.

It just means that they fell into temptation and that sin has caused massive damage. And today we see, as we continue in this series all about the life of David, we see the golden boy David in a situation where if they had the media capabilities that we have today, this story would have been bigger than the names I just mentioned.

This would have been the story of the century. Here was this man who had so hungered and thirsted after righteousness that no one else could really be put in the same category.

A man after God's own heart. And he had proven it over and over again. His triumph against Goliath. His patient endurance through everything Saul tried to do to him.

[3 : 25] His victories in battle. Wisdom as king. Fierce loyalty to God and doing the right thing no matter what. And now we see David make probably the dumbest decision of his life.

One that you would shake your head and say, A man after whose own heart? And yet we're going to see today that failure does not have to be final.

That we have a God who restores. So go ahead, if you got your Bibles, turn to 2 Samuel chapter 11. 2 Samuel chapter 11.

That's the 10th book of the Bible of the Old Testament. Just real quick in your Bible. You can always check out the table of contents if you're kind of new to the Bible.

And we'll be at 2 Samuel 11 here in just a couple minutes. But the first thing we can learn from our story today is that anybody can fall into temptation. Anybody is susceptible to temptation and falling into it.

[4 : 26] It doesn't matter who you are, how much power you have, or the self-control you think you have. Satan is crafty. He's deceptive. And he's always looking for you and me to let our defenses down so he can drive a wedge between us and God.

Even destroy our witness. And I'll tell you one reason why I so admire the late Billy Graham, the ministry he had for decade upon decade, is because this guy was always on guard against the attacks that could destroy his ministry.

He was wise. He was intentional about what he did. And one thing he always did, no matter where he went, is he would have someone with him so that he was never in an office or an elevator or anyone else alone with a woman other than his wife.

He knew that even if he was innocent, it only took one allegation to bring his ministry down. One hint of immorality could tear everything apart.

So Billy Graham was wise to guard his heart. And unfortunately, this is where we see David, in this season of his life, miss the mark. And it starts, honestly, with spiritual complacency.

[5 : 41] Spiritual laziness. So 2 Samuel 11, starting here in verse 1, It says, It's no accident that this verse says in three different ways that David didn't do what he was supposed to be doing.

First it says, In the spring when kings go off to war. Guess what, David? You're a king. So man, go off to war with your men. That's what you're supposed to do.

And then next it says that instead of going, David sent Joab out with who? The king's men. And then third it says, point blank, David remained in Jerusalem.

So basically we have this warrior David, who's not a wimp whatsoever. No stranger to battle. In fact, he has more experience than probably any other soldier in the army.

And for whatever reason, he stays home when he should have been defending his country. He stays put when he should have been leading the charge, proclaiming to all the world that the God of Israel is the one and only true God.

[7 : 01] We see spiritual complacency in David. And it's not that the scriptures just come right out and say that David had become lazy in his walk with the Lord. But we see symptoms right here.

Remember from previous messages when we talked about him becoming king? David barely took a breath before he went charging out into the battlefield to drive the enemy out of the promised land.

And now we see such an unhealthy switch. Here he is saying, well, I know you'll do a good job, Joab. So go ahead and I'll see you in a few months.

And you know, if we're not careful, we can get the same way as well. Such an easy trap for you and me both to fall into. The well-known leadership guru John Maxwell once said it like this.

There is an old saying, champions don't become champions in the ring. They are merely recognized there. And then he says, that's true. If you want to see where someone develops into a champion, look at his or her daily routine.

[8 : 05] So David was so committed to the word of God. A man of deep prayer and reflection before his God. He was devoted to purity and holiness before his heavenly king.

His sincerity is impressive. And yet in this dangerous season of his life, it appears that he basically got fat and sassy. Spiritually complacent.

And you know what? It doesn't matter your past success and how many spiritual battles or Goliaths that you've slayed. Does it matter how you trusted in the Lord and walked faithfully with him 10 or 30 years ago?

Where are you and I in our relationship and our walk with Christ right now? Am I hungering and thirsting after his word? Memorizing and studying deeply his eternal truth that sets me free?

Am I daily spending time with him? Giving him the adoration that he's due? Confessing my sins and my insecurities? Leaving them at the foot of the cross?

[9 : 06] Spending time reflecting on? Letting the Holy Spirit reveal to me areas in my heart that need some renovations? Even putting godly mentors in my life who will not only love me well, but

also love me enough to speak real truth into my heart that I need.

Thanking Jesus for all the blessings that are big and small that he brings in my life. And then laying every concern before his throne, knowing that Romans 8.28 says that we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. And I can tell you from serving now at three different churches, I have seen men and women that I deeply admired for their godly leadership and faith go from a pastoral role or a leadership role in a church or even just a faithful volunteer there every single Sunday to now not even attending church or even living like a follower of Christ.

Sometimes you even see them standing up for something on social media with a post that you think, wow, man, that goes against the heart of God and what he has revealed to us in his word. And here they are standing up like some champion for what they are saying is right when it's emphatically wrong according to the word. And listen, I'm not here to pick on anyone, but instead to say that this can happen to any of us if it could happen to a man after God's own heart like David.

[10:44] And the answer to spiritual complacency is more of Jesus. More of Jesus, less of me. And making him the treasure that you seek more than just a Sunday morning to-do list.

And then second, anybody can fall into temptation when pride takes over. So go ahead and pick back up with me here in 2 Samuel chapter 11.

And let's start here in verse 2. It says, Now, this is David, who has shown such a humble spirit. It's a humble spirit. It's a humble spirit. It says, But now, because of his spiritual laziness, we see him dripping wet with pride. Here he is out on the roof with maybe too much idle time because he's supposed to be in battle with his soldiers.

He looks down, sees a beautiful woman bathing. And I'm going to give him the benefit of the doubt here. I'm going to say that he was out there to collect his thoughts. We don't know for sure.

[12:08] Maybe relaxing. And I'm going to say he just couldn't help that this girl caught his eye. But the real problem happened with the second look. See, it's the second look, the third look, that steals our hearts.

And so David, with his kingly authority, he sends someone to find out who this girl is. And right away, his servant tries to warn him in a very submissive way.

He says, Well, isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, you know, the well-respected leader in our community? And then he even says the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

You know, David, the soldier who's out fighting for you in our country right now, the husband of Bathsheba. In other words, man, she's married. Don't do this. But David ignores all of it because at this point, he's not worried about God or a dad or a husband or anything else for that matter.

His focus is on his desire and his passion, his lust to have this woman. So he calls her in. They both commit adultery.

[13:14] And then David sends her home thinking the rendezvous is over until a little while later when maybe Bathsheba gets morning sickness and she sends word to David that she's pregnant.

Now he's in big trouble. Her husband has been gone in battle for months. No way it's his. Everybody knows that. They would know she's been unfaithful. And word would eventually come out that David was the father.

So he gets desperate. He decides that he's going to cover this up. He sends for Uriah the Hittite to come back to Jerusalem. He pretends that he has questions for him about their battles.

And then he tells him, just go home, see your wife before you go back to the battlefield. The only problem with that is that there was a vow that these soldiers would take where they would stay pure during these war campaigns.

On top of that, here are all these other soldiers unable to see their wives. So how would that be fair to any of them if Uriah went home and saw his?

[14:21] It wouldn't. So apparently being a man of integrity, he basically says, no thanks. And he sleeps at the gate of the palace. Never goes to see his wife. Huge sacrifice.

Can you imagine how close he was? How desperately you would miss her? But he was a man of his word. And so here's where it gets really bad really fast.

And that's what happens when deception and lies enter the picture. The ball gets rolling. And you've got to keep it going. You've got to keep telling more lies and more deception to keep it rolling. And David does the unthinkable.

He decides to just eliminate Uriah from the picture. You know, the very thing, do you remember, that Saul tried to do to him when he was trying to take him out? He sends him back to the battlefield with a note to his commander.

He tells him to put him on the front lines and then withdraw from him and let the enemy kill him. And you know what? It worked. They did. Bathsheba mourned.

[15:23] David breathed a sigh of relief. And God's anger boiled over. See, what started with an accidental glance turned into a second look, which turned into full-blown temptation.

Next came the sin of adultery and then deception and even murder. It really is tragic what spiritual complacency and pride can lead our hearts to do when Satan gets a foot in the door.

And there are a lot of people in this country, in our community, maybe even in this church, who've experienced this firsthand. Maybe your life has been ripped apart or severely wounded by your own bad decisions or maybe someone else around you.

And Bruce Wilkinson gives us some pretty good advice here when it comes to whatever it is that we struggle with. He says, by far, our most important strategy for defeating the roaring lion is to stay out of the arena.

In other words, and you've heard me say this before, but run, Christian, run! Don't even put yourself near that temptation. And I like how 1 Corinthians 10.13 puts this.

[16:31] I'm going to read it from the New Living Translation just because I love how just precise and just clear it makes it in our own language. It says the temptations in your life are no different from what others experience.

And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure.

Listen, in God there is victory over temptation and sin. But it starts with keeping our eyes and our hearts fixed on Christ. Seeking His face.

Seeking His will in everything I do. Devoting ourselves to study His word. To seeking His heart in prayer. Even being a part of regular fellowship with other believers where I'm growing closer to Christ and I have real accountability.

Those things make all the difference. David makes it very clear that anyone, anybody can fall into temptation. And then next, I want you to see that nobody is exempt from the consequences.

[17:37] Nobody is exempt from consequences. Now, I'll be honest with you. This is the part that none of us like. But in the big picture of our lives, this is the refining fire that God can use to mold and make you and me more and more into the image of our Savior.

So go ahead. Look at 2 Samuel again with me. Chapter 11. And let's start here in verse 26. When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him.

After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.

The next thing we know, if you look at 2 Samuel 12, we read about Nathan the prophet, a godly man who God would use. Nathan the prophet is sent by God to share a story with David.

Nathan had to be a good storyteller because he draws David right in as he begins to share about a rich man and a poor man in the same town. The rich man had a ton of sheep and cattle, but the poor man only had a little ewe lamb.

[18:49] He raised it. It grew up with his children. And it was a pet. It shared his food, even slept in his arms. Now, a traveler came to visit the rich man and he decided to prepare a meal for the man.

Instead of taking one of his own mini sheep or cattle, he steals the poor man's lamb and serves it at his feast. As David heard these words, he began to burn with anger.

And finally, he just yells out, As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die. He must pay for the lamb four times over because he did such a thing and had no pity.

And that's when Nathan the prophet looks his king square in the eyes, knowing that he could be in jeopardy of losing his own life, knowing that this is dangerous, but trusting and being obedient to his God, he says to David, You are that man.

You did the same thing with Uriah's wife and even tried to cover it up by having him killed. But know that your sins have found you out. Your God sees everything and you are guilty.

[19:57] And not only, Nathan says, will this child you conceive not survive, but you will deal with family strife, not only during your life, but even for generations to come.

Now, in our culture today, we've tried to do away with consequences, right? I mean, we see this all the time. Apparently, if you do something wrong, then you just are supposed to do a half-hearted apology and everything's supposed to go back to the way it was.

No consequences. And we wonder why so many seem to care less about any kind of authority over them or any kind of trouble they could get into. The reality is that we will never raise godly and spiritually mature disciples without proper consequences for actions.

Yes, God is mercy and he is grace and he is forgiveness. And listen, I am so grateful that he is mercy, grace, and forgiveness. But that's not a complete picture of God's character because he's also things like righteousness and he's just and he is wrath.

All of that at the same time and even more. He is the perfect judge. And I like how Revelation 15 verse 3 puts this as we see the people of God worshiping and singing about Jesus.

[21 : 13] And it says, They sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb. Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Now listen to this. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations.

Because he is just, there are consequences to our actions. There have to be because what kind of God would we have if there were no consequences?

He wouldn't be just. What kind of parents would we be if there were no consequences? More importantly, what kind of kids would we produce? And our God wants nothing more than to create in each of us hearts that truly love and seek his face.

He's not afraid to let you walk through the fire. He's not afraid to let us walk through the consequences of our actions. If that means that my heart or yours can be drawn back to him and we are being transformed and shaped more and more into the image of Christ.

Anybody can fall into temptation. Nobody is exempt from the consequences. And then last, and this is my favorite part because I need it. Just like you, everybody can receive grace.

[22 : 25] Everybody can receive grace. So flip with me here to 2 Samuel 12. And let's talk about David's response, not only to being called out for his sin, but also to his consequences.

And I'll tell you, this is what kept David as a man after God's own heart. Even after doing these awful things that were not okay that we've talked about today. And how we respond, how you and I respond to our sin and even the consequences of our sin says everything about our faith in Jesus. Here's what verse 13 says in 2 Samuel 12. Then David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. So he's admitting it. Nathan replied, the Lord has taken away your sin.

You are not going to die. And I even like to hold a passage like that up to Revelation chapters 2 and 3. And if you know your Bible, you know that's the seven letters that Jesus wrote to the churches. And to some, like the church in Philadelphia, he's praising their faithfulness. To others, like Laodicea, he's flat out calling them out and disciplining them for their hearts and their actions.

[23 : 39] And here in Laodicea, we have this very arrogant church that thinks they got it going on spiritually. But Jesus tells them that they're neither hot nor cold.

Now, that doesn't mean that you're either good or bad. Some people think hot is good, cold is bad. That's not what it means. If you understand the context, he's saying you're neither healing, which is hot, nor refreshing, which is cold.

You are neither healing nor refreshing as the body of Christ. And then he says this in Revelation 3, 19 and 20. Those whom I love, I rebuke and I discipline.

So be earnest and repent. That's the key word, repent, repentance. Jesus says, here I am. I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person and they with me.

So here's what I want us to see today. In our walk with the Lord, each of us will have times where we fall flat on our face, where we do make a big mistake, where our mouths fly off and we say something we shouldn't or we're rude or disrespectful or whatever it may be.

[24 : 52] It could be a million different things. Some of it may be in the public eye. Others, maybe not. But God sees it all. And our response to our own failures will say more about our heart for the Lord than our successes will.

And here we see David truly repent of his sin. He seeks God's face. Now, let me tell you what repent doesn't mean. Repentance is not just getting emotional.

Crying because you're caught up in the moment. There's a lot of people who've repented a lot of times, okay? And it's just an emotional show. It's not just feeling bad because you've been caught,

okay?

The word repentance is a military word in the Greek that literally means about face. About face. To turn 180 degrees.

So, emotions are okay and they're God-given. Saying I'm sorry to the Lord is important. But it means nothing if your heart and mind isn't willing to fully surrender and turn and follow Jesus with a reckless abandon.

[26 : 00] So, listen to me here. Your response to failure will say more about your faith than your response to success. Let me say it again. Your response to failure will say more about your faith and trust and obedience in Jesus than your response to success.

Do you remember the man I started off this message talking about? The man who committed the moral failure in the church I was a part of. Who had to be let go from the worship pastor role.

You know, I'm so thankful for God's grace. He repented of his sin before the Lord and repented before his wife. He repented of his life. They've stayed together. They've dealt with everything.

They've built an even stronger marriage.

They've added children to their families since then. And he's back in ministry using that golden voice I talked about for the glory of God. And I'm so thankful.

Even in my own life, I am so thankful for a God of grace who picks us back up. Sets us on the solid rock so that we will pursue purity in his name.

[27 : 04] The fall doesn't have to be final because we have a God of grace. Pray with me.

Heavenly Father, we just worship and adore you because you are good and you are holy and you are righteous and you are grace and you are mercy and you are sustaining us constantly.

We just give you the worship and adoration and praise that you are due as the one true God. We just pray as we look at David's story and as we end this series, that quick five-week series on David's life.

The first four weeks we looked at what made David such a man after God's own heart. But maybe this last one is most important, God. How we respond to our failures and whether we turn back to you and let you restore these hearts is probably most important.

So, Father, you know where we have sinned and struggled. You know where our pride has flared up. You know the spiritual complacency and laziness that maybe we walk in daily.

God, will you have your way? Will you transform these hearts? And may we give it all to you. You are good and you are awesome. We worship you, Jesus.

[28 : 29] Thank you for opening up your word. In your name we pray, Jesus. Amen. Hey, thank you so much for joining us for the message today. Once again, my name is Ray Sweet, the lead pastor at First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana.

Hey, just want to give you a quick invitation. If you have questions about your faith, maybe you want to talk about giving your heart to follow Jesus, becoming a Christian and walking in this grace that we've talked about because God can forgive you for anything.

And so if that's you, we would love to come alongside you and help. Here's a couple ways you can reach out. Our number here at First Christian Church of Greensburg, Indiana is 812-663-8488.

That's 812-663-8488. Or you can email me at ray at fccgreensburg.com. Hey, God bless you and I hope you have a great week.