

A Fallen King (1)

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[0 : 00] The following sermon is made available by Lakeside Bible Church in Cornelius, North Carolina.

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The section of Scripture that is before us now and will be the focus of our study for the next six Sundays that I'm preaching at least is set within the context of war.

Chapter 10 through 12 of 2 Samuel actually are bound together by an ongoing war between the nation of Israel and the kingdom of Ammon or the Ammonites.

[1 : 07] In fact, you've got your Bibles open there. Just look at the end of chapter 10 at verse 14. This kind of summarizes where we are as we jump into chapter 11. It says, When we get to chapter 11 in verse number 1, we find that springtime is now upon them and it's time to go back to war.

So they resume this battle in the city of Rabba against the Ammonites. All of the personnel of Israel's primary army have gone out once again in chapter 11 to battle the Ammonites.

Everyone that is except for King David. In chapter 10, David is involved in the fighting. In fact, the last four verses or five verses of chapter 10 are a telling of David's part of the battle, whereas Joab was leading the battle against the Ammonites.

Now we get to chapter 11. They've had their respite from war. Everyone goes back to the battlefield except for David. And it's the absence of King David that gives rise to the story that makes up almost all of chapters 11 and 12.

By the time we get to the end of chapter 12, we see the conclusion of this war. And so it's set within that context. It begins with war and it ends with war.

[3 : 23] And right in the middle of it, the writer of the books of 1 and 2 Samuel pauses to ignore what's happening with the Ammonites and zeroes in on something that happens with David.

The verses contain and communicate what is one of the most tragic and scandalous events in biblical history, especially as it relates to the true worshipers of God, believers.

It describes the disastrous fall of one of the great heroes of the faith. And it serves as a warning for us as believers of the potential that lies within us to fall into extreme sin.

And it shows us the devastating consequences of that sin, even for one who's standing judicially before the God of heaven is one of forgiveness.

There are still consequences for what we do. And it came to pass after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him in all Israel.

[4 : 39] And they destroyed the children of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. And it came to pass in an evening tide that David arose from off his bed, walked upon the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself.

And the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

And David sent messengers and took her. And she came in unto him, and he lay with her. For she was purified from her uncleanness, and she returned unto her house.

And the woman conceived and sent and told David and said, I am with child. Every time we study the Bible, it's helpful to be reminded of its divine inspiration.

That is, that what we have in the scripture is the perfect, inerrant word of God given to us for a very specific reason. Now, if you think about it, there are millions and millions of people and millions and millions of stories throughout history that God could have chosen to include in the scriptures as a

part of his divine revelation to us.

[6 : 05] But his infinite wisdom chose and orchestrated the inclusion of what we have now in what we call the Bible. Of all the things that God could have told us, this is what he has determined was necessary for us to know.

And for us to know him. And for us to know what is necessary for us to be led ultimately to Christ and to salvation. So in our study of the Bible, whether it be our personal study or whether it be our study as a church together on Sundays or in another time, it's helpful to always ask ourselves, why did God choose to tell me this?

How does this fit within his divine purpose of revelation? What is it that God is trying to reveal to us in whatever passage we may be studying at the time? And that's exactly the question that is needful for us to ask now.

Of all the things that God could have included about David, and there's a lot that he has included about David in the scripture, but of all the things, why this? Why this story?

There's no real theological teaching here. Remember, the theological teaching that we find comes from outside of the chapter. It's just a story, and it's not a good one. It's a terrible story.

[7 : 27] Yet God chose, for a specific reason, to give this to us, to help us know him, to help us understand his purposes. This chapter is so much more than a historical narrative that is simply moving the story of Israel along.

It's not here by chance. It reveals to us, once again, the perfect holiness of God as it is set against the depravity and wickedness of man's heart.

As celebrated as David is in the scriptures even, and as celebrated as he is within both Jewish and Christian communities, he was a deeply flawed man.

And like the rest of us, he had a wicked heart, that fell far short of the glory that God demands that we give. So no matter how much we champion the life of David, he was utterly incapable of being what we desperately need in a champion.

So what is the purpose of stories like this? Is it just to move the history along? No, it can't be that. God's gotta have more of a purpose than that. Is it to reveal to us the dangers of sin and the consequences of sin?

[8 : 44] It absolutely is that. But ultimately, what this chapter does is it subtly points us to Christ. Where David was lacking, Christ made up.

The Bible goes to great lengths to tarnish and expose all the men that we love, except for one. Because there was nothing there to tarnish.

There was nothing there to accuse. He was perfect. The perfect son of God that came in order that we might be forgiven of the sins that we commit, similar to David and Moses and Abraham and so on.

Well, before we explore the narrative, I wanna point out the fact that the writer never comments on the thoughts and reasonings of the people involved in this story.

Did you notice that as we read through it? There's no place in the scripture where David's thoughts and Bathsheba's thoughts and Joab's thoughts are really demonstrated in any way.

[9 : 45] We have no idea what they were feeling. We have no idea what they were thinking. All we see is action. With one small exception in the words of Uriah to the king, there's no reasoning at all given for why each person did what they did in this story.

Dale Ralph Davis wrote a really fantastic commentary on both 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel. In fact, I would even encourage you to purchase it. I think I got it for maybe \$10 or less.

And I think that it would be a help to you if you wanted to study these books further. And I can give you that information later. But he gave a really helpful literary note on this. Here's what he said. The writer's most apparent restraint lies in his utter silence regarding the feelings of his characters.

He does not clarify whether Bathsheba was baiting David nor whether she considered the fling with the king in honor. We do not and we cannot know. The writer offers no help on this.

He doesn't even indicate how Joab felt about David's plan to kill Uriah. He carried it out and maybe even improved upon it. But whether he felt shock or smug satisfaction or something else, we are not told.

[11 : 00] And then he says, The writer seems to silence all feelings in order to isolate David's actions. The writer silences all feelings in this chapter in order to isolate David's actions.

But why would he do that? Why wouldn't he fill in this story? Why wouldn't he fill in the gaps? And I think the reason for excluding any reasoning on the part of the people involved emphasizes the fact that reasons and feelings are irrelevant.

It doesn't matter how you feel when it comes to the way that you behave. It doesn't matter the reasons that you may give to try to justify the wrongdoing of your life. At the end of the day, your feelings and your reasonings are irrelevant.

At the end of the day, what matters is this is what God has said and this is what you have done and you have violated the law of God and therefore you stand guilty before God, no matter how much you insist on justifying your own behavior.

And so we don't find any feelings. We only find action. Well, let's look closely at the narrative and just take a few minutes here on these first five verses. When we first study these five verses, I think the most proper place for us to begin is understanding sin's beginnings and the origination of sin.

[12:20] How was it that David was able to fall so quickly in this sin? Well, sin is conceived at the convergence of desire and opportunity.

Sin is conceived. It takes place at the moment that our desire and an opportunity converge together in a single moment and we act upon that opportunity and upon our desires.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, said it this way in his letter in chapter one. Each person is tempted when he is lured away and enticed by his own desire.

Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin and sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. So sin is committed whenever we act upon an opportunity to fulfill our own fleshly desires. It's a daily battle of both the mind and the will. For desire originates in the mind first and opportunity is then seized by the will.

[13:30] Let me explain that scripturally for just a moment. Mind, heart, will. That's the progression to the origination of sin in our life. The first thing is the battle of the mind.

Look at, or don't look at it, I'll just read it to you. You can write down the reference if you want. 2 Corinthians chapter 10. Paul writes to the Corinthians and he says this, the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

In other words, the beginning stages of sin start with the battle of the mind. Those things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, Paul says, those are the things that in spiritual warfare we are trying to pull down, whether that be disbelief, whether that be false doctrine, whether it be the temptation to sin, all of it begins in the mind and we must take captive every thought to the obedience of Jesus Christ.

Well, how do we do that? We do that with the word of God through the spirit of God. Remember, Paul wrote about the battle armor of the Christian believer and he goes through all the different facets of our armor and then he gets to the end and he gives the only offensive weapon.

[14:55] The only offensive weapon is the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. Well, how do we fight off and win this battle of the mind against sin? With the word of God. And as we commit ourselves to the study and the obedience of the word of God, the Holy Spirit himself, God himself, enlightens our minds, enlightens our understanding and gives us wisdom in order that we may obey what it is that we've read.

And whenever we refuse to study the word of God, when we do not commit ourselves to the faithful study, we then are susceptible to the reasonings and the arguments that may pop into our minds about false doctrines, the reasons and the arguments that would pop into our minds that would point us towards sin.

And because we have not exalted the truth of God, we will end up exalting the things that exalt themselves against the truth of God. So Paul says all of this begins in the mind.

If you want to win the battle over sin, it starts with your mind and then it moves to the heart. It moves to the heart. Think about this from Jeremiah 17, 9.

The heart is deceitful above all things, desperately wicked. Who can know it? We speak of the heart in our idioms these days as the seat of emotion.

[16:12] It is the place of feeling, the place of desire. So as we exalt thoughts that exalt themselves against the truth of God, those things make their way into desire and into the lust of our hearts.

And then Jeremiah reminds us that we can't trust our hearts. We hear phrases every now and then, it bothers me. My girls like Disney stuff like every other girl does and they enjoy all of these things. And I'm all about empowering my girls to be strong women. And we took some time this week to study together as a family Proverbs 31 because I want my girls to understand this is what a true, true empowered godly woman is.

And we went through that description together. The last thing I want them to do is buy the lie that says follow your heart. Or just look into your heart.

Because God's word says that our heart is wicked, desperately so. Who can know it? And what resounds in our hearts, that is the heart of flesh, are those thoughts that we have reasoned together against the knowledge of God and it only leads us to sin.

[17 : 28] And that's when we get to the part of the will. Romans chapter six helps us here where Paul writes and says, let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions.

Do not present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life and your members to God as instruments of righteousness.

Did you catch that in that phrase? In fact, you could read all of Romans chapter six and here's what the bottom line of that chapter is. We sin by choice, not by force.

Every time you fall and you do something against the law of God, it is because you have chosen to do so. You are responsible for your sin.

You are culpable for your sin. Therefore, you are responsible and culpable for the consequences of that sin. So Paul says, don't let sin reign in your body but rather exercise your will to choose righteousness as opposed to wickedness.

[18 : 38] And fortunately, God in his grace offers his people an escape hatch in every temptation. And again, Paul writing to the Corinthians, first Corinthians chapter 10 this time, says no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man, but God is faithful and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability.

But with the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to bear it. God provides this escape hatch for each one of us in every temptation, but it's up to us to take the escape.

Now I want you to consider all of the moments and opportunities of escape that David had in this story. Look first at verse one.

We've talked about it a lot already. We won't spend a lot of time on it now. But the first escape hatch was the fact that he should have never been at home to begin with. He tarried still at Jerusalem, we're told.

It seems innocent. I mean, surely after everything that David has done, at this point, he's probably reaching 50 years old or so. We've seen the way that God has used him.

[19 : 55] We've seen the battles that he's fought. Surely he has earned a little extra vacation from battle, but we know he didn't need it. He just had several months of vacation from battle. It seems innocent.

Maybe it's not that big a deal, but as you see the story unfold, you realize that was actually a big deal. The first thing was he should have never been there. He abdicated his responsibility in this moment.

A little bit of laziness, a little bit of slumber cost him dearly in the long run, but it was an escape hatch. He didn't have to be there.

Look at verse two. It came to pass late one evening that David arose from off his bed, and he walked upon the roof of the king's house. And from the roof, he saw a woman bathing herself. My brother and my dad have shown me pictures of what's known in Jerusalem as the city of David. It's a section of Jerusalem, and there's still ruins of David's palace there.

[20 : 56] And they've shown me pictures of how you could be in the palace. It's up on a hill, and the places around it are very close, but they're down. So it'd be very easy to stand on the roof of the king's palace and be able to see everything that's going on with the subjects below you.

You could see right into their homes. You could see right into their backyards. And what's happening here is, we would assume, is Bathsheba's probably in the courtyard of her home. And David walks out on the roof, and he's observing what's going on among the people that are still left there in Jerusalem.

And as he looks down, he sees Bathsheba taking a bath. But here's the thing. In verse number two, he had to walk up the stairs to the roof. Here's the escape hatch. The same stairs that went up to the roof left the roof.

What would have been best for David in that moment is after seeing Bathsheba, to shield himself and to immediately exit the same way that he entered onto the roof.

But instead of exiting, instead of taking the escape hatch, he gawked over Bathsheba. He fantasized over Bathsheba, and he developed in his heart this desire for her.

[22 : 07] And he chose the desire rather than choosing the righteous thing of just going back down into the palace and purifying his mind. And then we get to verse three.

David sent and inquired after the woman. And God does something unique here, something very helpful. Would have been. He gave a word of reminder to David before he has an opportunity to act. God puts a voice in David's life. We have no idea who this person is. Probably just a servant in the household of the palace. Puts a voice. And here's what the voice says. Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

God does that for us a lot, doesn't he? We're going through moments of temptation. We begin to follow down this path of temptation. And then God puts a voice. Most often that voice is the word of God. Sometimes it may be a sermon on a Sunday or a scripture reading.

Sometimes it may be through our personal devotion. Sometimes it may be a friend that just cares about us and loves us and is reaching into our lives to try to disciple us in a moment. But God is so gracious to sometimes put voices around us that will say, hey, is that not Bathsheba?

[23 : 21] This was no stranger to David. Eliam, her father, was one of David's mighty men. So was Uriah, her husband. They had fought shoulder to shoulder with David probably from even before when Saul was still reigning in Israel.

When David was on the run, they were fighting shoulder to shoulder. This was not a stranger in Jerusalem. This wasn't a random person. David very well could have been at their wedding.

And here he is looking at the houses that are closest to the king's palace, those who he wanted to keep closest to him. He knows these people and he looks over and he sees Bathsheba who no doubt he's probably fantasized about in his mind before and he sends to inquire and then God puts a voice there and says, David, isn't this Bathsheba?

This is your friend's daughter. This is your friend's husband. And he's faced with another choice there in that moment. Yes, then what am I doing?

And he could have easily stopped every intention, went to a place of prayer, repented and got out to the battlefield, but that's not what David did. What'd he do? Verse four. He sent the messengers.

[24 : 34] He ignored the voice and he took her and she came in unto him and he laid with her. For she was purified from her uncleanness.

That's just a statement to the bathing that she was doing was a ritualistic bathing after her menstruation, proving that there was only one person that this baby could have belonged to because her husband wasn't there and she returned to her house.

David refused to take the divine escape routes and he sent for Bathsheba in order that his lust might be fulfilled in what he probably assumed would be a secret one-night stand.

Verse four is all action on David's part. There's no reasoning. He saw. He sent.

He took. He lay. Action verb after action verb. And he thought it would just be an exciting fling while everyone else was on the battlefield.

[25 : 42] But it turned to a nightmare because now the king of Egypt, not of Egypt, the king of Israel, the shepherd of Israel, had now impregnated one of his good friend's wives.

And she simply sends word and says, I'm with child. I don't want to take too much time here, but I don't think that we can look at this passage without addressing the issue of adultery and the warning that's here.

This is a sobering passage because it's so contemporary. Alistair Begg said it this way, the contemporary nature of what is conveyed here is not simply tolerated in our culture.

It's celebrated. And unfortunately, the wicked view of marital fidelity has infiltrated the church.

Statistics are alarming about the rate of Christian divorces that are a direct result of infidelity.

A 2014 study stated that 54% of Christian men regularly view pornography, which is just another form of adultery.

[26 : 56] And if you don't have a spouse, it's just another form of fornication. Impurity. Some try to circumvent the law of fidelity by just simply cohabitating with various sexual partners.

It's sin. It's not right. There's no love in this story. There's no love in this scene.

Again, Dale Davis says, there's nothing but action. There's no conversation. There's no hint of caring or affection, of love, only lust. David does not call her by name.

He does not even speak to her. At the end of the encounter, she is only the woman in verse five.

And the verb that finally counts is conceived. But the telling verb is he took her.

Love has nothing to do with this scene. Adultery never does. Because adultery does not result from true love no matter how insistent one may be when attempting to justify their sin.

[28 : 08] Love comes from God alone. And it's impossible for true love to give way to sinful behavior. Adultery is the result of the drunkenness of lust.

And to make anything less of it is to utterly reject God's truth and sink into the depths of human depravity. And those who commit adultery don't normally find themselves following it up with murder as David did.

But that doesn't make the adultery itself any less serious. So how do we fight this battle of the mind and this battle of the heart and this battle of the will as it relates to the sin of adultery?

Let me just give you a few verses. The battle of the mind you guard what you see what you watch the thoughts that you entertain. Remember Philippians 4.8 Whatsoever is true and just and faithful and right and pure think on these things Paul says the battle of the mind in this way has everything to do with what you put on the TV and what you allow on the computer and how you allow your mind to entertain various things in your life.

Think on what is true and right and good and faithful and godly win that battle of the mind. But then there's the battle of the heart. Colossians chapter 3 helps us here.

[29 : 34] Here's what Paul writes to the church at Colossae. If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sits on the right hand of God. And then he says verse 2 set your affection on things above.

What's the things above? Christ is the things above. Godliness righteousness truth set your affection your heart your desire desire after God for you are dead and your life is hid with Christ and God and when Christ who is our life shall appear then shall ye also appear with him in glory. mortify put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth fornication uncleanness inordinate affection evil concupiscence and covetousness which is idolatry for which things sake the wrath of God comes on those who disobey.

What's the battle of the heart about? It's about setting your affection on what is Christ like and what is true not on what your heart tells you it wants the most and then there's the battle of the will in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and verse 4 or verse 3 this is the will of God even your sanctification that you should abstain from fornication that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor not in the lust of concupiscence even as the Gentiles which know not God it's the battle of the will.

He doesn't say that there's some type of magic formula that comes he just says don't do it abstain just say no this story is a sobering acknowledgement of the potential for incredible sin even in the life of a believer David wasn't a lost man he was a man after God's own heart it was through David and his seed that God was going to bring the Messiah this is significant this is a significant believer a worshiper of God and it's a reminder to us that the best of men are men at best and we might have expected a story like this to be connected with Saul or one of the other blatantly wicked kings in Israel but we would never have assumed that David would have done this and that's just the adultery part let alone the murder and the deception it reminds us that we are just as susceptible to falling as David and it's a fitting warning to all of us in fact the Bible warns us often about this 1 Corinthians 10 let anyone who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall

[32 : 25] Proverbs 16 pride goes before destruction a haughty spirit before a fall you think I would never do that think again you don't know the depths of your own depravity Galatians 6 brothers if anyone is caught in a transgression you who are spiritual restore him in a spirit of gentleness gentleness is the operative word not heavy handedly why because we are to keep watch on ourselves lest we also be tempted and when we're tempted and fall we don't want heavy handedness we want mercy and grace and then we think of others in the New Testament think about Demas Demas was a companion of Paul he was a faithful minister of the gospel but when Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 4 at the end of his life he says Demas has forsaken me

having loved this present world a man who traveled side by side with the apostle Paul and now he's forsaken him don't think that it wouldn't happen to you it's much more than a history lesson it's a divine warning that we can all fall deeply into sin so stay watchful

Robert Robinson was born to a very poor family in Norfolk England 1735 when he was 14 years old his mom sent him to London to follow a barbery trade he was going to be a barber and while he was there he got caught up in a gang of delinquents and really just lived a life of debauchery when he was 17 years old he and his group of friends decided that they were going to go to a meeting where George Whitfield was preaching and if you've ever studied anything about George Whitfield you know that he was a very evangelistic preacher he had these open door or open air meetings where he would stand in a field and he would preach to all of these people and it was a very evangelistic preaching lots of people came to know Christ through the ministry of George Whitfield well they went there not to hear the preaching of George Whitfield they went there to on his own quote scoff at the poor deluded

Methodist is what they went there to do and he didn't get saved that day but there was a phrase that George Whitfield kept repeating and it stayed with Robert Robinson after the fact it was the wrath to come the wrath to come the wrath to come and he couldn't shake that thought out of his mind so that a few days later he ended up subsequently coming to Christ and trusting the Lord and he even became a pastor and a very well known theologian at the time in 1758 he wrote and published a famous hymn that we sing here at our church in fact I think we're scheduled to sing it next Sunday evening Sunday even come thou fount of every blessing is the song that he wrote and the song asserts the confidence and wonder of the salvation that only comes through Jesus Christ it's filled with excitement and joy and love for the Lord and for God's grace but the third verse of that hymn clues us in to the dangers that we could all fall into you remember in the third verse

Robinson writes prone to wonder Lord I feel it prone to leave the God I love and this verse became somewhat prophetic in his life because in his later years he returned to the same debauchery that he was guilty of as an unsaved teenager living in London and because of that sinfulness he began to walk away from the orthodox teaching of the Bible even became a Unitarian at one point denying the Trinitarian God and as the story goes he was one day riding on a shared stagecoach late in his life and there was another woman that was in the stagecoach with him and she was reading through a hymn book and humming the tunes of the hymn book and to break up the monotony of the ride she starts a conversation with Robert Robinson and says what do you think about the hymn that I was just singing and as the story goes Robert Robinson emotionally responds madam I am the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago and I would give a thousand worlds if I had them to enjoy the feelings

I had then I would give a thousand worlds if I had them to enjoy the feelings that I had then I think both King David and Robinson would have never gone down their respective paths had they looked ahead at the devastation it would cause and their lives serve as a warning for us if you want to know what comes at the end of sin look to these men the displeasure of God and the consequences of sin are not worth a few moments of pleasure so church take warning David's not our champion Jesus is and the best thing about the champion that we have in Christ is that there's forgiveness and grace no matter what we do for all who will come not trying to justify and make excuses and tell God exactly well this is what happened it's really

[37 : 59] David's fault or it's really Bathsheba's fault or whatever the mercy doesn't await those people the mercy awaits those who come with a humble and contrite spirit and that's available to you today if your sin has taken hold of your life but it will only take a contrite spirit and a humility seeking forgiveness acknowledging your own sin that will receive that mercy and that forgiveness thank you for listening to this sermon made available by Lakeside Bible Church feel free to share it wherever you'd like please do not charge for it or alter it in any way without express written consent from Lakeside Bible Church don't forget to visit us online at lakesidebible.church!

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