

II Samuel 11-12 - The Gospel Is Really for You

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[0 : 0 0] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

One of my favorite lines, you have beaten death at death's own game. What a great line. I've been at our Denomination's General Assembly this week, which was a really good week.

I'll tell you some more about that next Sunday. I know you're looking forward to that. We will be back in Daniel next Sunday for our last two weeks studying the book of Daniel together.

But this week, we have the great privilege and joy of having Lyle Lee here with us to open God's word for us. Some of you may know him as Lyle Mahesh. I don't know that.

He has been claimed by one of our elders in his family over the last few years. That is not, in fact, his last name. It is Lee. They love him, but he's not actually theirs.

[1 : 0 1] Lyle has been serving at our daughter church, the village church. Has been serving there while he's been training for gospel ministry and going through his seminary courses. And he has completed those now and is looking forward to where God is going to use him going forward.

But for now, we get to keep him in Huntsville. So he and his wife have been married about a year. And we're delighted to have Lyle come and open God's word for us this morning. Thanks, Lyle. Thank you.

Thank you so much. Well, good morning. It's absolutely a pleasure, joy to stand before you all.

It's something that I do not take lightly. Any opportunity to preach the gospel, to preach God's word is a time that I enjoy.

But I also know that there is a lot of seriousness to come along with it. Charles Gardner Taylor and James Earl Massey describes preaching as the sweet torture of Sunday morning.

[2 : 1 2] And so you have that juxtaposition there. He is correct on a lot of things. I am from Lincoln Village now. I've been there for five years.

August 1st will be a year of marriage. The one thing he was wrong with is that I actually am the Mahesh's child. I don't know. So I don't know where he got that information from, but I should take it back.

Being in Lincoln Village, I've had the privilege of meeting a lot of you. And it's been awesome to be able to work alongside some of you. I would like to say a couple of names, even though that means that a lot more people will be upset.

But I don't think Cynthia Mann is here. I haven't seen her. But she has done an amazing job at the Village Church. She was a co-worker of mine and your family member here at this church.

She was a co-worker of mine for five years. And she and I had a lot of fun making Alex's job very hard. So I miss her on this Sunday, but I miss her even more working with her.

- [3 : 21] A few people that I've been able to see do great works with Lincoln Village Ministry, the Noehead family. My wife and I personally are very grateful for your services.
- But they do great works in the community. And their daughter, I had the privilege of serving alongside her last summer at our camp that I'm the director at in Lincoln Village.
- So I'm so grateful for that. And Dr. Koss, I don't know if he's here, but I came here with a lot of injuries mainly because of sports, but also because I just didn't go to the doctor.
- And when I came here, he's been able to help fix a lot of those kinks. And the Judge family, the cool thing about Mr. Allen Judge is that actually he helped me buy my house in Huntsville.
- He was the guy that made sure all the paperwork was legalized. And so that's when all the confusion started because I was like, so last night you're a judge, but you're a lawyer.
- [4 : 22] And he had to explain that to me. All right, so his son, Joseph, is working with us this summer at Lincoln Village.
- And he's been doing marvelous works there as well. So it's just a privilege to know so many of you all here. And last but not least, my family, the Mahesh family, they, of course, took me in.
- I had the privilege of living with them up until after I got married. And so that has been one of the greatest moments and experiences of my life. So I'm so grateful for them.
- And so I let you guys know that I know a lot of these people. That way you wouldn't boo at me while I'm preaching. You would at least wait until you get to the parking lot or inside your car.
- And to the session of the church and to especially Will for giving me this opportunity, I'm so grateful. I do want to make one more mention and notice.
- [5 : 26] And that is that recently I heard out of the foyer there that Zach and Carlita Howard celebrated their 10th year, I believe, of marriage. So if y'all would, y'all clap for that.
- That's amazing. Like I said, we've almost been married a year. And one secret that I've learned in marriage is communication is very important.
- There was a couple that had been married for over 45 years. And the husband one morning decided he was going to be safe on the romantic. And he said, dear, after 45 plus years, I can honestly say that you are tried and true.
- And his wife didn't have her hearing aid in. So she put it in and she said, say that again. And he said, after 45 plus years, I can honestly say that you have been tried and true. And she looked at him and said, after 45 plus years, I can honestly say I'm tired of you too.
- And so just make sure that you communicate very well. So make sure you communicate very well. If you will, will you pray with me? Lord, I'm so grateful for this opportunity.
- [6 : 39] Right now, Lord, we ask that you will bring our ears closer to your word and bring our hearts closer to submission. Father, we ask that you will allow us all to decrease and that you may increase, that they may see all of you and none of me.
- In Christ's name, amen. Amen. I will read just for a moment 2 Samuel 12, verses 1 through 7, the first portion of verse 7.
- But we will look at chapter 11 throughout the sermon. And then towards the end, if you want to have your Bibles ready, we will look at a few snippets here and there of Psalm 51.
- But the bulk of our time will be 2 Samuel chapter 11 and 12. Chapter 11, excuse me, chapter 12, verse 1. It says, And the Lord sent Nathan to David.
- He came to him and said, There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought.

- [7 : 59] And he brought it up and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms. And it was like a daughter to him.
- Now, there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guests who had come to him.
- But he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him. Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man.
- And he said to Nathan, As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing and because he had no pity.
- Nathan said to David, You are the man. We're going to look at the idea or the subject for a few moments.
- [9 : 03] The gospel is really for you. The gospel is really for you. It has been given to Peter, the apostle of our Lord, the credit of having said the two greatest confessions a man could possibly say.
- The first greatest confession and profession being found in Matthew 16, 16, when he said, You are the Christ, the son of the living God.
- The second greatest confession and declaration being found in Acts 10, 26, as he tells Cornelius, who had just fell down to worship him, Stand up.
- I, too, am but a man. It would do us very well to daily recite these two declarations.
- God is God and I am just human. We have a hard time remembering those two.
- [10 : 07] We have a hard time remembering that God is God, that he is omnipotent. He has all power in his hand. We have a hard time remembering that God is omniscient.
- That means he sits high, he looks low, he sees everything. We have a hard time believing and remembering that God is omnipresent. He is everywhere at all times.
- And as the African-American church used to say, that God is so big that when he moves, he bumps into himself. We have a hard time remembering that. But perhaps the thing that we share equally in forgetfulness is that we are just human.
- We are limited because limitless is for God alone. We get hungry because self-sufficiency is for God alone.
- We are finite because infiniteness is for God alone. We forget that we are just human.
- [11 : 14] No matter how strong you get, you still got to go to sleep. No matter how smart you get, you still get confused.
- No matter how big your house is, we all get the same size coffin. Because we are just human.
- Sometimes we forget that. We would like to believe, we want to believe that we are perfect. That we like to believe we're superheroes.
- That we are above so many things. When the fact is, when it comes to the need of Jesus and his salvation, we are all on the same level.
- Now here, we find King David. The one that has been chosen to be king even though he was the youngest of eight.
- [12 : 13] The one that defeated a bear and a lion that came to harm his sheep under his care. King David. The only one that was bold enough to fight Goliath even though he was just a shepherd boy in the midst of soldiers.
- King David. King David. The one whose rhythmic fingers could calm the angry soul of Saul. This David.

The one that would not disrespect or kill King Saul even though he knew that the throne would one day be his. Here we have King David.

The one who Paul said was a man after God's own heart. And with all this being true about David, he was just a man. If we look at chapter 11, quickly we will see what leads up to Nathan's rebuke in chapter 12.

Chapter 11 verse 1 opens up with, Now some like to look at this verse 1 and say, see, this right here, that's the problem.

[13 : 39] They reprimand David for not going to war. It says it was the time that kings went to war and yet David stayed at home. Whether it's laziness or idleness, whatever it is, here we already have a problem.

You can look at it that way, but I don't think that's necessarily the case here. I don't think that we're looking at David's idleness or lack of going to war as the beginning of this great sin that we see here in chapter 11.

I think the author was just telling us that this is a time that they usually go to war. So David sent his army and he decided not to go this time. My professor at Beeson said, David is the king.

He can do whatever he wants to do. Whether the author is trying to foreshadow David's sin or not, we don't know. Nevertheless, David stays at home.

And what does he do? He does what most people do. He began to walk around the house and then he does what most people don't do. He begins to walk on his roof. And he walks on the roof and he sees a woman bathing.

[14 : 47] And we're looking at the story and we're watching the movie and we're saying, oh no, David, turn away. Turn away. Close your eyes. But the Bible says that he was mesmerized and he inquired about her.

Who is she? I must know. This would probably mean that the people he was asking, he had to go get them, bring them to look at her if she was still bathing, and ask, tell them, look at her, who is she?

Now, he has pulled other people into his sinful lust and desire. The description is pretty detailed, right? If you read it, it says this.

That's Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. So, they give him pretty good description. David, this is Bathsheba.

You know her. Well, all right, if you don't know her, surely you know her father, Eliam. Yeah, that's his daughter. All right, you may not, I know you know Eliam, but just to be sure you know who she is, this is the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

[15 : 55] So, what is this? Uriah was known and recorded in the Bible as one of David's most loyal fighters. And we will see even later on in chapter 11 that when David brings him home, he refuses to go home because he says, I can't go to fight when my brothers are on the war field.

I can't stay here and relax at home. I want to go fight with my brothers. He was a loyal fighter. Well, that's who Uriah is. He's her husband.

David, you know her, right? The daughter of Eliam. Eliam was known as one of David's elite 30 soldiers and warriors that stayed close to him at all times.

It would be like, I guess, a mixture of the Navy SEAL and the security next to the president all combined. And then you mix in some Bruce Lee and all that stuff. He's an elite warrior.

So, David knew Eliam and he knew Uriah the Hittite. And what does David do? Does he say, huh, I can't believe I even thought about that.

[17 : 01] I'm sorry. I'm sorry. You can go about your business now. No. He says, bring her to me. He's completely inconsiderate because his sin has caused him not to care about who these people are and what they have done for him and their loyalty to him.

He knows that Bathsheba is the wife of one of his top soldiers, soldiers that is off to war. And he knows that she's the daughter of one of his elite warriors.

And their loyalty and service means nothing to him right now. He sins for her. And she came. And he lay with her. Now, if you look in verse chapter 11, after this, we find out a key detail that David probably knew before he laid with her.

She was bathing as part of her purifying ritual from her uncleanness. It's more than likely one of two reasons.

One of two reasons that she was purifying herself. Because of Old Testament laws, she may have just came off her menstrual cycle. And the Bible says that you cannot touch a woman during or after until she has cleansed herself.

[18 : 15] Or she could have been on her way to worship, which is probably what was going on. Before Israelites went to worship, there was about two or three cleansing ceremonies they had and rituals they had to perform.

Usually they would clean herself at home. And this cleansing is a reminder that they need to be cleansed spiritually as well. Their soul needs to be cleansed. And so they would travel to the temple.

And the temple would have another area where they can cleanse themselves again in case their feet or legs or whatever got dusty along the way. If it's the latter, if she was cleansing herself because she was heading to the temple, it is possible then that her husband is headed for war.

She is headed for worship. And David has chosen neither one of them. He's headed towards wickedness. And now this woman, Bathsheba, that has just cleansed herself, has been tainted by the king they are all supposed to be able to trust.

Now we know the rest of the story. If you don't know, I will try to fill you in real quick. She sends a message to David. I'm pregnant. He sends a message for Uriah to come.

[19 : 37] Now, Uriah comes home and relax. And he tells him, go home, enjoy your wife, be merry. And Uriah decides he's going to stay there in the king's palace and sleep instead.

Because he cannot see himself enjoying his wife, enjoying drinking from his cup, eating his own meal while his brothers are off at war.

Uriah does not go home. So David says, I know what. I'll get him drunk. And then convince him to go home.

See, I got to get him to lay with his wife so when he finds out she's pregnant, he would think it's his. But even a drunken Uriah shows more character than David does at this moment.

He refuses to go home. So David decides, I have to kill him. So he writes a letter saying, put Uriah on the front line.

[20 : 42] And when the battle gets heavy, everybody fall back and leave Uriah by himself. He writes in a letter, he seals it, and he has Uriah, he has Uriah send his own execution letter to their commander.

So you can kind of see how one sin, one act can cause so much pain, so much more sin.

Uriah is killed. Belshazzar, Belshazzar, Belshazzar, Belshazzar, Belshazzar, Belshazzar, Belshazzar, Belshazzar, Belshazzar, Belshazzar, Belshazzar. David no longer has to worry about the husband knowing, right?

He's good. He's safe. Come home to me. I will take care of the child. No one has to know about this. He's good. He's in the clear.

Except for one very key detail at the end of chapter 11, verse 27. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

[21 : 54] So now we get to chapter 12, and it opens by saying that the Lord sent Nathan to David. Now there's been a lot of sending going on in chapter 11.

I don't know if you ever read it or noticed it. There's a lot of sending. It's a lot of sending. David sent Joab and his servants to battle in chapter 11, verse 1. David sent and inquired in verse 3.

He sent messengers to Bathsheba in verse 4. Bathsheba sent news to David that she was pregnant in verse 5. In verse 6, David sent word to Joab saying, send me Uriah.

And Joab sent Uriah to David. David wrote a letter in verse 14 and sent it by the hand of Uriah. Verse 18. Joab sent and told David that Uriah is dead.

Verse 22. The messengers told David all that Joab has sent them to tell. And lastly, in verse 27, when Bathsheba was done mourning, David sent and brought her to his house.

[23 : 02] It's been a lot of sending going on. And now we get to chapter 12. And since everything in chapter 11 is being sent either to or from David, the Lord decides, I'm going to do some sending.

And what does he do? He sends Nathan to tell David this parable. David, there was a rich man who had plenty.

He had all kinds of cattle. He didn't even have to work hard for it. Had plenty. And then we have this poor man who with his own money bought one female lamb.

And this lamb, oh, David, he loved the lamb. He treated the lamb like his own child. The lamb ate from his plate, his drink out of his cup. At bed, sometimes he would lay with the lamb and he would hold the lamb and his children all together at one time.

He loved the lamb. And then there was a traveler that came, David. And he went to visit and stay at the rich man's house. Now, Israelites law required that if the sojourner needed somewhere to stay, you gave it to him.

[24 : 13] And not only that, you gave him food to eat and water to drink. You took care of the widows, the poor, the orphan, and the sojourners. So he says, all right, I'll obey the law.

I will take care of them. But instead of David, of using all the options he had of his own sheep, he decided to take the only sheep whom the poor man loved to feed the stranger.

David got angry. David is angry. And he says, this man deserves to die.

If nothing else, he will repay that sheep fourfold, which was their law. If you stole something or you took something unlawfully, you had to return it and pay four times the amount.

And Nathan looks at him and says, you're the man. Gosh.

[25 : 17] Can you imagine how David felt? His friend and prophet Nathan knows the secret.

He, David, now knows it clicks what actually happened. And even more importantly, he realizes the Lord, Yahweh, knows what he has done.

What must it have felt like for David to be humbled by the realization of sin?

He realizes that he's the king of Israel and he's no better than anyone else. Everyone sees him as a hero.

And he faces the realization that according to his own word, he deserves to be put to death. My brothers and sisters at Southwood, has Nathan come to your house?

- [26 : 27] Has Nathan told you the parable of people addicted to bad drugs?
- And as soon as you get angry and start condemning and convicting them, he says, you're the man. Because you can't go to a house without caffeine.
- Has Nathan knocked on your door and told you about the people that go to the strip clubs and sleep with prostitutes.
- And as soon as you get finished condemning them, he says, you're the man. Because it's no different than pornography. Has he? Has Nathan come to your house and turned on your TV so that you can see all the burglars and robbers out there?
- And as soon as you get finished saying what the law ought to do to him, he says, you're the man. Because you lied and cheated on your taxes. Has Nathan come to your house?
- [27 : 35] Has he revealed to you that you judge people that sin differently than you? Look, we're all sinners.
- David was not perfect. No one, except for Jesus. Get it? I want you to understand this. No one in the Bible was perfect. Not even that great apostle Paul who said of himself in Romans 7, for I do not understand my own actions.
- For I do not do what I want, but I do the thing that I hate. So it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.
- For I know that nothing good dwells in me. That is, in my flesh. For I know that nothing good dwells in me. For I have the desire to do what's right, but not the capability to carry it out.
- Paul was not perfect. The older Paul got, the more he saw how big of a sinner he really was.
- [28 : 47] He says this in one of his earlier letters. He says this, For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle. What is that?
- He's the least of what, 12 people? And then later on, in Ephesians 3.8, he says this, I'm the very least of all the saints.
- He's getting a little bit more perspective. But then, in one of his later writings, and the older he got, he said this in 1 Timothy 1.15, Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.
- See, Paul said, I'm the worst of all the apostles. Then he lived a little longer. Then he said, I'm the worst of all the saints. He lived a little longer and found out, I am the chief of all sinners.
- And as you're nodding your heads, and as you're agreeing, Paul is right about himself. I'm here to tell you, this isn't about Paul anymore. You're the man.
- [29 : 57] How could Paul say this and still feel safe with God?
- Because he knew what he wrote earlier in Romans 5.20, where sin increased, grace increased more.
- See, this is the time for David to know that God's grace is not just for the bad people.
- It's for the believers and followers of Yahweh. Too many Christians act as if Jesus did not die for them. If he didn't die for my sins, I'd still be okay.
- He didn't have to die on the cross for my sin. Maybe just one nail. I think that would have done. Maybe a little bit of a whooping.
- [30 : 56] That would have taken care of my sins. He did not die just for the rapists and serial killers. He did not die just for the people in the jailhouse and the courtrooms.
- The gospel message isn't just for them. It is for each and every person in Southwood today. So whether or not you don't know Jesus, the gospel is for you.

And even if you're here to advance the kingdom of God and experience and express his grace, Jesus and the gospel is still for you. Jesus is for everybody.

The gospel is for everybody. And it's only by God's grace and mercy that you are the person you are today. Now, if you're realizing what David is realizing right now, and that is, I'm not as good as I thought.

I have sinned against God. I continue to fail over and over. I abandon my responsibilities. I cheated on the one I love. Well, hear these words today.

[32 : 11] Where there is sin, there is grace. Where there is sin, there is grace. Where there is more sin, there is more grace.

Well, shall I sin so that grace may abound? By no means. But no matter how big or small you think your sin is, Jesus died on the cross for you.

It took the cross for you. David, thanks to Nathan, is confronted with his sin.

Have you faced your sins? Have you realized that against God and only God have you sinned? Yes, yes. David, he sinned against Uriah and his family.

He sinned against his entire king, but more importantly, he realized, I sinned against God and God alone. So as I was reading this and reading Psalms 51, I could not get one of the artists, one of the singers that I really like out of my head.

[33 : 28] He ended up cheating on his wife with another singer's wife, another Christian singer. After a couple of years of repentance to his own wife, he came out with another album called The Whole Truth.

And it's a wordplay, The Whole Truth. It's basically saying, I'm telling everything now. But he goes by the name The D-A-Truth. He's educated, but he's a rapper, so he has to misspell it.

And so he goes by The Truth. And the reason he's saying The Whole Truth is not just because I'm telling all the truth, but also because he says, me, going by the rabbit of truth, I'm whole again.

I'm whole again. Here's some of these words that he says in his song. When I was dead, he revived my soul. He takes the broken and makes them whole.

He takes the bound and makes them free. Takes the weak and makes them strong. All of my sins have been erased. He has lifted my disgrace.

[34 : 31] I'm overjoyed. Oh, the joy that Jesus will make me whole. See, these are words of someone that understands grace.

And to be honest, it's a lot of people that understand God's grace. That's not the reason they're not coming to church. They don't come to church not because they don't think God's gracious.

They know he's gracious. The problem is his people aren't gracious. And his people hold sins over people because it makes you feel better. At least I'm not like that person.

At least I didn't do what she did. Let me read a few more. And we're getting... It says, It's impossible to keep secrets covered. Who would have known that my indiscretions would reach my cousins?

I apologize to me, me, my niece, and others. You should have been able to trust, but I breached the covenant. I knew you all before you was able to reach the cupboard. Now, when I preach in public, it's all out the window.

[35 : 33] Consent contradicted a lot of what my pen wrote. It wasn't hardly right. What I did was wrong. And it ticks me off. And it sets me off. And I hate the consequences because death results.

But I know that I reap what I sow. He didn't tempt me, but he let me fall. Now I carry all that pain. Sin left me scarred.

He let me fall, but he didn't let me go. And I know I went astray, and sin left me broke. At times, I'm quiet. I just get a chair.

I sit and stare. Think about the ways that sin affected my fiscal year. The tide is turning now and shifting gears. And though I'm weak, he's giving strength in the midst of tears.

That's the sound of someone who messed up but understands God's love and grace. Will there be consequences? Yes. He will save you from your sins, but not the consequences.

[36 : 37] Will some things change? Yes. But your sins are the very reason that Jesus came, died, and rose. Learn from David real quick these three pointers.

He tells us three things that Satan does in Psalms 51. And he teaches us three things that we can do. He teaches us that the devil tempts us.

The devil tempts us. If you fall for the temptation, Satan then accuses you. He becomes your accuser. Not only does he tempt you, but he then tells God what you did.

And he tells everyone. He tries to get everyone. After this, the third thing that Satan does is he discourages you. He makes you believe no one will forgive you.

God is so disappointed and upset he will never love you again. Your wife won't believe you. Your children won't look up to you again. Those are the lies that Satan tells you. But here's what Psalm 51 teaches us.

[37 : 41] It teaches us that you have confidence. David in verse 1 asks God to have mercy on him. Not because he deserved it, but according to your steadfast love and your abundant mercy.

After confidence, confession. Against you and only you have our sin. And lastly, after confidence and confession, you can have cleansing.

He will blot out your transgressions. He will wash you thoroughly and cleanse you. He will purge you with hyssop. You will be white as snow.

My brothers and sisters, if you don't get anything else from today, I want you to understand this. Joseph and Allison and all of you, I want you to understand this.

Being a Christian is not being perfect. It is saying, God, I need you every hour of the day.

[38 : 48] Being a Christian does not mean you are happy all the time. Because happiness is based on what's happening. But you will say that the joy of the Lord is my strength.

And again, I say at all times, I will rejoice. That is what it means to be a Christian. Being a Christian does not mean you finally have it all figured out and together.

Or that you're flawless. That's not what it means. Because no matter what, you can try harder and it won't be enough. You can get smarter and it won't be enough.

You can keep all the rules. You can keep all the rituals. And it won't be enough. Being a Christian means you say I put all my hope and trust in Jesus Christ and what he did for me on the cross.

So parents, you don't have to be perfect. Just be present. Children, you don't have to be perfect.

[39 : 49] Just be grateful. Spouses, you don't have to be perfect. Just be forgiving. Christians, you don't have to be perfect.

Just be faithful. Not perfect. Faithful. You won't be perfect, but be faithful. Your life won't be perfect, but you must have perfect faith in the cross.

And know that Christ loves you. He died for you. He forgives you. He will not forsake you.

Because the gospel is real. And it's really for you. Amen? Let's pray.

Father, there are so many times that we look at our sins. And we think that these are the easy ones for you to forgive.

[40 : 53] And when our rougher sins come along, we say you will never love us again. Father, give us the confidence to approach your throne and ask for mercy and forgiveness.

Father, give the spouses here the faith to trust the gospel, not just when their spouse lied to them, but even if they cheat on them.

Father, give the parents the faith to trust the gospel, not just when the children are having a bad day, but even if they commit a crime.

Father, give the parents to still trust that the gospel is real, it is true, that we must place our faith in you, and that you will love us, you will forgive us. And Father, draw us closer to you.

Remind us that these kind of messages aren't for the person to our right or left. It's not for the person that should have come to church today. But that these kind of messages are always for us.

[42 : 00] Amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org.