

Mouthpiece of truth and justice David Chang

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[0 : 00] Thank you, brothers and sisters, for this opportunity to study God's Word together this morning. Before we begin, let us pray. Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for your Word, and we pray that you give us understandings that we may know you better through your Word.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, so today we will continue our preaching series on the fruitfulness on the front line.

And in this series, we are learning about how to live out our Christian faith in every part of our lives, including work and family. And today, as Debbie has already mentioned, we will focus particularly on how we can become the mouthpiece for truth and justice.

In Matthew chapter 5, Jesus said to his followers, You are the salt of the earth. And by that, he meant for Christians to live a life that can influence their surroundings, like salt that can preserve and season the things that it is in contact with.

So Christians can influence their surroundings through their actions and characters, as we've seen in previous weeks. And there's a Chinese proverb that says, It is better to educate by deeds than by words, which points out the importance of what we do over what we say.

[1 : 28] But important as our actions and our characters are, it is also indispensable to use our words sometimes, especially when we're ministering to others, especially in confrontation with sin and evil.

And 2 Samuel 12 gives us a good example of this. 2 Samuel 12 is a story about Prophet Nathan confronting David and his sin.

I believe most of us are familiar with this passage, as well as the background in 2 Samuel 11. So I won't go into the details here about chapter 11, because the story is very intricate and complex.

But the gist of the story is that David had an affair with a married woman called Bathsheba, and then he killed her husband Uriah by the sword of the enemy.

David devised scheme after scheme to cover up his crime. He did quite well. Uriah's death on the battlefield seems like nothing but an unfortunate accident.

[2 : 40] And marrying his widow Bathsheba makes David look like a godly king who looks after orphans and widows. Although David used or misused his power to cover up things, God sold everything and sent his prophet Nathan to deal with this.

And I believe today's passage shows us that there are three things we need to know in order to be the mouthpiece for truth and justice. And those three things are first, to know God's holiness, verses 1 to 4.

And also, under that heading, we need to beware of the log in our eye, verses 5 to 6. The second thing we need to know is to know God's disciplines, verses 7 to 12.

And lastly, we need to know God's mercy, verse 13. So firstly, to know God's holiness, verse 1 to 4. The first verse tells us, And the Lord sent Nathan to David.

And this particular action reveals to us that God is a holy and righteous God. He cannot tolerate sin. So when David tries to hide his sin under the carpet, God must do something about it.

[3 : 59] It is imperative that God's people should live a life that exemplifies God's holiness. As it says in 1 Peter 1, As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

God even sets physical boundaries to restrain sin, such as laws and disciplines, that is established in society and in churches.

But in cases where these laws and disciplines are unable to reach, or when sins are intentionally covered up, as in David's case, God will sometimes himself intervene.

God knows every sin, whether big or small, in the open or in the dark, and God will bring each one of them into account. As it says in Romans 12, He will render to each one according to his works.

We never know when God will intervene, but judgment will eventually take place for each and every sin, whether in this life or in the next. According to Revelation 20, there will be a day of judgment when everyone will be judged according to what they have done.

[5 : 12] This judgment is universal and will happen to each one of us. The only way to survive this judgment is not by money, not by high moral standards, and not even by piety or religiosity.

But through Jesus Christ, who has died on the cross for our sin. But before this judgment day comes, Christians have the obligation to be the mouthpiece of God for truth and justice on the earth.

As the mouthpiece for truth and justice, it is also important to know that we do not speak of our own values or opinion, but we speak the word of God.

Nathan did not tell David of his own opinion. Nathan did not even criticize David's action, although we all know that it was very wrong. He only spoke of what God wanted him to say.

The job of a mouthpiece is not to express his or her own opinion. The job of a mouthpiece is to pass on the message that had been entrusted. The message that God has entrusted to us is in the Bible.

[6 : 26] The Bible provides all that we need to be the mouthpiece for truth and justice. 2 Timothy 3, Paul says, So back to the passage.

This passage shows Nathan's incredible courage and wisdom. He did not expose David straight away, but he sets a trap for him. He 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. The expression here creates a huge contrast.

The rich man, he had so many flocks and herds, but the poor man only had one little lamb. The passage does not say how the rich man got his flocks and herds, so we can presume that it is an inheritance, which means that he made no effort in getting this.

But the poor man had to buy his own little lamb. And this little lamb meant everything to him. He had nothing except this little lamb, and he treats it as if it were his own daughter.

[7 : 54] Verse 4, Nathan continued to say that, Now there came a traveler to a 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. Now this story is very telling. Nathan used this story to stir up David's sympathy towards the poor man.

And indeed, David became very angry as the story is being told. So in verse 5, 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 land fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

Now the literal translation of verse 5 is similar to the ESV translation, David's anger greatly burned against the man. He's very, very angry.

He's very angry, but he also forgot that, you know, what he did was even more evil than that rich man. The Bible says that Uriah was a Hittite, and Hittite was one of the ethnic groups that originally occupied Canaan.

[9 : 17] When God gave Canaan to the Israelites, they were meant to drive out all the Hittites and all the Canaanites, but they didn't. So some Hittites and Canaanites remained within Israel.

So Hittites are likely a minority group that has little status in the Israelite society. And by the time of Solomon, he subjected entire Hittite and Canaanite population to hard labor, and they set Israelites to rule over them.

So Uriah the Hittite probably grew up in this ethnically discriminated and even oppressed condition. And his wife, Beersheba, is probably the only blessing in his life.

But David coveted even this little blessing and took it away from him and even killed him. David is just like this rich man of the inner story, but worse.

Being selfish and self-serving, he did not consider at all the rights and the life of the marginalized. He can see the speck in other people's eyes, but he cannot see the log in his own eye.

[10 : 28] So in Matthew 7, Jesus said, Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, Let me take the speck out of your eye when there is a log in your own eye?

You hypocrite. First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. So as a mouthpiece for truth and justice, we have to notice the log in our own eye.

And before we speak to others about his or her sin, do we see ourselves in that person? According to Romans 3, All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

I am no better than the person I am about to speak to. And as we seek to take out the speck in the eyes of others, let us humbly come before God first and ask him to show the log that is in our own eye.

It is only when we see the log that is in our own eye and repent for it, can we speak the truth in love rather than criticize in our own self-righteousness.

[11 : 44] The second thing we can learn from this passage is to know God's discipline. When Nathan saw that David has fallen into his trap and he turned his own words against him, Nathan said to David, You are the man.

And in Hebrew, there's only two words in this phrase. It's very direct and very powerful. Nathan is very courageous to speak in this way to a person who has the power to kill him.

But as a prophet of God, he does not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, he fears him who can destroy both soul and body in hell, namely God.

And God not only rebuked David through Nathan, he also gave him some real discipline. Verse 11, Nathan says, Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house.

I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor. And he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this son. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the son.

[13 : 01] There are consequences that comes with every sin. And even these consequences are limited and temporal. God is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and rich in faithful love and truth.

But that doesn't mean there are no consequences for sin. Christ died for us on the cross and made us righteous before God. It is eternal and spiritual.

But in this present world, we still have to bear the pain and brokenness that comes with sin. And for Christians, some of these are considered as God's discipline.

God disciplined David very severely and partly because of his high profile. Luke chapter 12, Jesus said, Everyone to whom much is given, of him much will be required.

God has higher expectation for those he put in high places. Moses is another example. And that's why in James 3, we see that not many should become teachers knowing that we will receive stricter judgment.

[14 : 09] So God brought many troubles to David later on. And he saw the death of three of his own sons. And his wives were violated publicly. And he was persecuted by his own son at an old age.

So what he did to others in secret, God multiplied unto him in broad daylight. By doing this, God is showing the whole world that his holiness and righteousness cannot be compromised, even for a man after his own heart like David.

As Christians, I think we need to take God and his word very seriously. The book of Hebrews says that God is a consuming fire.

And as Paul warns us in Galatians, that God is not mocked. But besides all this, we need to remember that every discipline is an act of God's love for us.

Hebrews 12, the author says, the Lord disciplines the ones he loves and chastises every son whom he receives. So finally, being a mouthpiece for truth and justice means to uphold God's mercy and love.

[15 : 26] Verse 13, David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David, the Lord also has put away your sin. You shall not die. When David confessed his sin, God forgave him straight away.

Yes, as children of God, we will be disciplined when we sin. But it is called a discipline, after all, and not punishment. The motivation for discipline is love for the purpose of maturity and sanctification.

As one Puritan puts it, the worst thing God can do to his children is to whip them into heaven. This is God's mercy in the Old Testament, and it is even more radical in the New Testament.

God sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross and declared that his son has borne the sins of the whole world. So for all who believe in Jesus, Nathan's word to David is also to us.

Because of Jesus, the Lord has put away your sin. You shall not die. Just as Paul says in Romans 8, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ.

[16 : 42] In conclusion, the text shows us that there are three things we need to know as we seek to become the mouthpiece for truth and justice. The first is to know God's holiness and also beware of the log in our own eyes.

The second is to know God's discipline, and the third is to know God's mercy. God's mercy. Furthermore, today's passage also reveals to us human frailty and weakness.

David was undoubtedly the greatest king of Israel. He was especially chosen and blessed by God. But even a king such as David can still disappoint us deeply with his behavior.

He does not deserve our absolute allegiance. There is only one king who truly deserves and indeed demands our total allegiance. And that king is Jesus Christ, who loved us and redeemed us from the bondage of sin and darkness.

Jesus is the promised king in 2 Samuel 7. His kingdom will be established forever, and we have no end. Isaiah prophesied about this Jesus and called him the wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, and the prince of peace.

[17 : 57] And Psalm 2 says, blessed are all who take refuge in him. Hebrews says, after making purification for a sin, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.

And he will come again from there to judge the living and the dead. Revelation 19 calls him that he is the king of kings and the lord of lords. So let us today put our trust in this king of kings and lord of lords, who loves us deeply and will never disappoint us.

Amen.