

2 Samuel 12

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Date: 22 November 2015

Preacher: Justin Hawkins

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And though he had never met and knew nothing about any of these men, on this intuition he sent to 12 men the following telegram anonymously.

Thank you.

So let's not do that. What are you hiding? What are you hiding?

[1 : 56] Right now. Sitting politely and publicly in this congregation. What are you hiding?

The knowledge of which would shame you. What is it that shames you even now to think of it in your mind?

What? What grave and heinous sins have you done that you were not thinking of until this moment?

And now what does your conscience say to you? Does it accuse you of some guilt? Does it tell you still to hide?

To maintain a perfect posture to avoid all eye contact with anybody? With me? For fear of incriminating yourself? I have for you this evening horrifying news.

[3 : 05] All is discovered. The jig is up. You are found out. And if you let it. This discovery of your great evil will be to you a great mercy.

On whether you will evade, deny, plead your own innocence, or instead confess, I am guilty, Lord have mercy.

On that choice depends everything. In Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth, after organizing the murder of one who stood in the way of her husband's ascent to the kingship, she's found sleepwalking, rubbing her hands together feverishly, incessantly, before she yells out in despair, Out, damned spot, out, I say.

Who would have thought the old man to have so much blood in him? Will these hands never be clean? Here is the smell of blood still.

All of the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. The hand with which she murdered King Duncan. And if all the perfumes of Arabia could not conceal the blood of this one man, what, I beg you, will conceal the blood on your hands.

[4 : 32] Our text tonight will answer for you this question. But only if you let it. Only if you decide now, at this very moment, to permit this word from the Lord to read your soul.

Will it have anything to say to that shame, guilt that you conceal so well? You must decide now, at this very moment, that the word of the Lord tonight is aimed directly at you.

Forget for these moments a friend you came with, a neighbor to whom you are witnessing. This medicine will only heal you if you receive it.

Our text for this evening is 2 Samuel chapter 12. Turn with me there, if you will. If you've been coming to these evening services now, you recognize the context.

David is well ensconced in his throne in Jerusalem. And as his armies go out to war in the previous chapter, he sees a woman bathing on her rooftop.

[5 : 42] He knows her husband to be off at war, and therefore he invites her in. He sleeps with her. They have a child. He brings back her husband from war.

Try to cover up his tracks. And when the husband won't do so, he has him killed. That's the context. And that brings us to our text this evening.

We're focusing on verses 1 through 25. Let's read those together. 2 Samuel 12, verse 1.

And the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, 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. And he brought it up.

[6 : 43] 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. Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul.

And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more.

[7 : 52] Why have you despised the word of the Lord to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.

Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. Thus says the Lord, behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house.

And 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.

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. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child who is born to you shall die.

[9 : 11] And Nathan went to his house. And the Lord afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David and he became sick. David therefore sought God on behalf of the child.

David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. And the elders of his house stood beside him to raise him from the ground, but he would not. Nor did he eat food with them.

On the seventh day, the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to us.

How then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm. But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David understood that the child was dead.

And David said to his servants, Is the child dead? They said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the Lord and worshipped.

[10 : 16] He then went to his own house. And when he asked, they set food before him and he ate. Then his servants said to him, What is this thing that you have done?

You fasted and wept for the child when he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food. He said, While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, Who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me and the child may live.

But now he's dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me. Then David comforted his wife, Bathsheba, and went into her and lay with her and she bore a son and he called his name Solomon.

And the Lord loved him and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah because of the Lord. This evening, I want to note two things together from this text.

The first is that sin brings sure consequences and condemnation. Sin brings sure consequences and condemnation.

[11 : 31] Secondly, fleeing from sin brings sure consolation. Fleeing from sin brings sure consolation. First then, number one, sin brings sure consequences and condemnation.

in chapter 11 the chapter previous to this one we see david comfortably ensconced on his jerusalem throne where instead of going out to fight battles on behalf of his people he sends others to do his bidding this is the operative word david sends six times in previous chapters he would go out and come in he would wage the wars but in this chapter he sends he has you see all the authority to move men and women around like pawns he sends this one and he sends that one and they go wherever he wills but in verse one of this passage in our chapter tonight we see there is another authority sending someone to david the lord sent nathan to david and with what tidings does nathan the prophet come but with a pressing legal question demanding immediate adjudication nathan tells a beautifully crafted story that could not help but appeal both to david's poetic soul after all this was the king who wrote all those glorious psalms and also to his kingly sense of justice and when presented with this heinous evil this rich man has done to this poor man david responds precisely as he should verse five his anger was greatly kindled against the man 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 david's moral calculus is spot on in the abstract to this strange thought experiment david declares an unequivocal verdict condemnation and that's the right answer david knows his law david knows his law perfectly and in that perfect knowledge of the law he hides himself he hides himself even while he condemns himself without knowing he does not yet know that he has condemned himself until nathan delivers it to him straight you are the man you are the man you are the man who has trampled on the joys of those in your control you are the man that has abused your authority for murder you are the man that has stolen the precious possession of another simply to be your own plaything you david you are the man who must make restitution you are the man who must die you are the man and all at once david realizes that his sin is not concealed from god though it is concealed from every other person in the world and now he will die as saul died he has delivered the condemnation himself he deserves to die the kingdom must surely go to another sin brings sure condemnation david sees his sin for what it is for the first time not a simple lack of sexual self-control but the presumption that he the king can perform whatever he pleases with the pawns in his power he had ample wives to entertain himself this was not about that this was about him believing that he was the highest law of the land what did david lack that caused him to flee outside of god's direction for him several centuries later god will ask through his mouthpiece jeremiah

what fault did your fathers find in me that they went far from me and it went after worthlessness and they became worthless and the answer here is simple david found no fault in god nathan opened up the royal histories and regales david with all the blessings that god had showered upon him like a very flood of grace i anointed you king over israel god says i delivered you out of the hand of saul i gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and i gave you the house of israel of judah and if this were not enough i would add to you much more there was no fault in god's provision for david he simply looked grace right in the face and said i am bored with this david felt the smiling face of god upon his soul and said in response i do not love you as we sang in the song in the hymn just now i have sinned against thy grace and provoked thee to thy face and now death must ensue the sword shall never depart from your house says nathan prophesying about the civil war into which israel will soon be thrown after absalom's rebellion 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 the sun says nathan foreseeing that absalom david's rebellious son will soon drive david out of the city into hiding and he himself will go into the palace and sleep with all of david's concubines and wives in a tent on the roof of the palace in the sight of the sun for all of the sun and he has learned well from his father the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge absalom looks just like his father and though david will escape this sin with his very life as we will see by only the pure grace of god he will lose the life of his son the heart of bathsheba will be shattered as her son dies the kingdom will shortly be thrown into disarray all because david did not apply to himself all his knowledge of the law he did not think it applied to him what then will we make of this will we do with david will you do with david what david did with this rich man and poor man will you think of this as a thought experiment or will you hear nathan's voice saying to you even now you are the man you have done this do you see yourself in david with that shameful sin you committed that i made you think of at the beginning of this sermon do you see yourself in david do you recall how your conscience speaks against you while you did that sin do you remember how you are recognized you recognize and admitted in the abstract that this is a sin but you somehow are exceptional doesn't apply to you you are not the man this is a mere thought experiment did you think you would not be found out sin this passage tells us brings sure consequences and certain condemnation and the harrowing thing about our text is that that condemnation and those consequences might fall on those around you more than they fall on you

do you consider that those who pay the penalty for your sins may be your children your friends your parents while you get off with a minor sentence do you realize the very real possibility of leading a child of god astray you do you hear nathan saying that you you are the man you must hear it that way if you are to hear that sin brings consequences and condemnation i do not mean sin in the abstract i mean your sin brings consequences brings condemnation that's my first point of the evening sin brings sure consequences and condemnation secondly fleeing from sin brings sure consolation david knows himself to be found out the jig is up all is discovered he must flee he makes not a shade of an excuse plainly simply unequivocally he states i have sinned against the lord where first in nathan's story he may have said that such and such a man sinned against the lord now he says i have sinned against the lord and between those two is a world of difference between those two is the knowledge of the law the knowledge of what god demands the knowledge of sin the knowledge that i am a sinner the knowledge that i have sinned in fact in the 51st psalm that david writes after this whole affair he will confess to god that against you and you alone have i sinned you and you alone he's not trying to hide it and this i think is why david keeps his life while saul didn't this i think is why there is a note of consolation here in the middle of the consequences and calamities that are caused by sin there is still some consolation you david will not die the kingdom will not go to another it will remain with your house even though there will be a sword in your house so nathan can say to david a sword will never leave your house and still david can have another son and name him solomon which is derived from the hebrew word salem shalom peace the sword will never depart from your house and you shall name your son peace there is a note of consolation how does david have access to this consolation how might you have access to this consolation i have three suggestions for you first see yourself in the mirror of the word see yourself when the word comes to you condemningly see yourself when the bible says what can a man gain if he loses his soul ask yourself not in the abstract what can a president or world leader or senator gain if he gets the whole world but loses his soul ask yourself what can i gain if i gain the world and lose my own soul what does

it profit me if i gain the world and lose my soul you must see yourself in the word the sin of the king is not hidden from the eyes of the lord he thought it was it wasn't the new testament says everything that is done in secret will be revealed on that day the lord is already keeping a catalog of every sin we've done all will be revealed everything is found out fully at once to receive some consolation you must not hear nathan saying only to david that he is the man you must instead hear that you are the man it is you to whom every command in scripture is addressed kirk guard soeren kirk guard has a glorious sermon called what is required to see oneself in the mirror of the word and his second requirement is you must remember to say to yourself incessantly it is i to whom it is speaking it is i about whom it is speaking when you read the bible is it for you a set of morality tales about other people but is it reading your soul in order to receive the consolation that comes with fleeing from sin you must allow the word to read your soul charles spurgeon in a sermon called the special call and the unfailing result says this to repeat the old saying of john branford when he saw a cart full of men going off to tyburn to be hanged he said to himself there goes john branford me but for the grace of god when you see the swearer in the street or the drunkard rolling home at night there are you there am i but for the grace of god who am i and what should i have been if the lord in his mercy had not stopped me in my mad career i know there are some of us who can remember the old story of roland hill when a good scotchman called to see him and without saying a word sat still for some five minutes looking into the old gentleman's face roland hill is a preacher famous evangelical preacher advocate of the smallpox vaccination at last roland hill asked him what engaged his attention so much and the scotchman said to him i was looking at the lines of your face well what do you make of them i make of them this that if the grace of god had not been in you you would be the biggest scoundrel living spurgeon says and some of us feel just that that if it had not been for the grace of god we should have been out and out ring leaders in every kind of infamy and sin i know for myself i can never do things by halves if i had served bail i would have built him an altar and made victims smoke upon it day and night and if we serve god zealously and earnestly we have the more reason to be humble and to lay low in the dust for that very zeal of spirit would have been turned to the very worst account unless divine grace had been pleased to transform us do you recognize in yourself the possibility of great sin the reality of great sin and the possibility of even greater sin it is necessary before you receive consolation to hear this word to you secondly how can we receive consolation

[27 : 49] seek out a nathan seek out a nathan nathan you see has the king's ear and he comes into the king's court and the king listens to him there is nothing that keeps david from killing nathan right there on the spot always revealed he can kill nathan right there he doesn't david had at least one person around him to whom he gave permission to be lovingly intrusive in his life david willed himself not to see his own sin and we are very liable to the same blindness therefore find for yourself a person several people perhaps who are to be lovingly intrusive in your life this is one of the functions of the local church you give to the people around you the permission to hold you accountable to the standards of the faith that you profess you have given them the opportunity to be lovingly intrusive in your life and the reason for this is that this word you are the man is a word of mercy if you will hear it before the judgment comes faithful says the proverbs are the wounds of a friend but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful if all the people around you are those who flatter you beware find some at least one who will say the true things to you will hold you accountable to the faith you profess this finding for yourself a Nathan is required for you to feel the consolation that comes from fleeing from sin thirdly and finally simply put flee in order to feel the consolation to have the consolation that comes from fleeing from sin you must simply flee flee from your sin flee with everything in you from that sin do you not know that the living God the head of the armies of heaven has sworn eternal hatred toward all sin and evil in this world and he is coming revelation 19 depicts him like this i saw heaven opened and behold a white horse the one sitting on it is called faithful and true and in righteousness he judges and he makes war his eyes are like a flame of fire and on his head are many diadems and he has a name written that no one knows but himself he is clothed in a robe dipped in blood and the name by which he is called is the word of god do you think this is jesus do you understand this making war robed dipped in blood this is jesus and the armies of heaven arrayed in fine linen white and pure were following him on white horses and from his mouth from jesus his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron he will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of god the almighty on his robe and his thigh he has a name written king of kings and lord of lords god jesus has pledged holy warfare against all sin and he has with him all of the armies of heaven to execute his wrath on that sin why would you coddle his enemy in your bosom why would you make peace

with the very thing he hates do not dare to take the battlefield with the forces of sin against the armies of heaven led by jesus christ himself do you see this is what david does he does not vacillate he openly says i have sinned against the lord i am the guilty one i am the man who has done this i will not coddle the sin that i have committed i will separate myself from it i realize now that it is worthy of the wrath of god which will be revealed against it one day i will not make peace with it i will flee but the question is to where will you flee david has no immediate refuge except simply repentance and the amazing thing about his repentance is that as soon as he says it nathan turns to him and says the lord has put away your sin you shall not die how can the lord put away sin like this how can he pass over sin like this it's a massive theological problem for hundreds of years he has sworn warfare against those who commit this sort of sin and yet he's put this in a way how will he do this and the christian knows that he does this by punishing that sin in his own body on the cross that is where you must flee if you would escape the wrath to come if you would escape the sure condemnation that comes with sin and receive the consolation that comes from fleeing from sin to

Jesus is where you must flee look to the cross and you must hear both of these words of Nathan you are the man the Lord has put away your sin you will not die this is the message the cross has for you you are the man who pinned Jesus to the cross you and you are the man who because of the cross will not die you and that consolation can only apply to you if you apply also that condemnation only if you recognize yourself to be a great sinner can you realize yourself to be a recipient of great grace when you look at Jesus on the cross do you see him dying for your sins do you realize it was for you he did this for you he loves you so all of this condemnation is washed away there is now no condemnation to those who are in

Christ Jesus Romans 8 says there is no condemnation you shall not die the Lord has put away your sin yours you shall not die Jesus paid it all all to him I owe I owe all sin had left a crimson stain he washed it white as snow the blood stain of Lady Macbeth that could not be stamped out by all of the perfumes of Arabia sin had left a crimson stain Christ washes it white as snow Martin Luther would say often that the devil would come to him and tempt him and say Martin you are a great sinner and to this he would respond I yes devil but Christ came to save great sinners and therefore you are defeated with your own weapon do you see that the consolation of salvation comes not from denying that you are the man who is sin but confessing this running to the bar of

God's mercy saying I plead guilty be merciful to me and Christ will say to you your sin is put away you will not die Jude he he's given you a hope and a future not because of what is owed to you but because of what is owed to him the possibility of eternal life and glory forever more it's yours it's yours if you let the word read your soul recognize yourself to be a sinner flee to Christ believe in him despair of any possibility you have of earning your salvation through the work that you do and cling only to the goodness of Christ then you will hear the words your sin is put away you shall not die then you can sing truly Jesus paid it all all to him I owe sin had left a crimson stain but he washed my crimson stain white as snow let's pray

[37 : 35] I thank you for these words Lord I thank you for the way your word reads us I pray that you would apply your Holy Spirit to open up our souls and not be defensive but open up the wound to the great physician who will cut out the tumor and replace it with health thank you Lord that you have given us the opportunity to hear from you from you Lord your sin is put away you shall not die I pray that we would revel in these things this week that just as we hear from the Bible that we are sinners we would hear in even greater tones that we are forgiven that we are redeemed that I am saved that my sins put away that I shall not die because Christ died for me thank you for these glorious words of consolation and hope and comfort Lord work them deep into our hearts even tonight in the name of Jesus I pray

Amen Amen