

2 Samuel 11

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Preacher: Geoff Stevens

[0:00] Well, good evening everyone. How are you?

It's a bad question to ask from up here. You can't really answer. I love the parable of the unforgiving servant.

Parable of the unforgiving servant. It's one of my favorite parables. So it kind of goes like this. There's someone that owes a lot, a lot of money to someone very important. And someone very important drags the someone that owes bags and bags of gold and money to court.

And the servant throws himself on the mercy of the court. And the important person forgives the entire debt.

And the unforgiving servant walks out of there a free man. But then he encounters someone that he knows that owes him money.

[1:12] And instead of bags of gold, it's just a pittance, some small amount of money. And he chokes the man and demands repayment and wants to press full charges.

And of course, the important man hears of this and gets very angry and throws the unforgiving servant into jail. And the reason I love this parable so much is because it's about sin.

And it's about underestimating sin. It's about undervaluing the debt that we owe to God.

And tonight we have a passage that's all about sin. We're going to be looking at 2 Samuel chapter 11.

It's the famous passage about David and Bathsheba. A quick note, by the way. Next week's passage is chapter 12.

[2:23] And that's where all the repentance happens. So this week we're not going to be talking too much about repentance. Of course, it's a very important subject and I would love to preach a whole sermon about it.

So our passage is on page 262 in the Pew Bible if you want to follow along. And let me pray for us as we get started.

Our Father in heaven, I simply pray that you would be here by your spirit tonight. That you would be at work in each one of our hearts. And that your word would accomplish what you have for it.

In Jesus' name, amen. So as we approach the text tonight, I'd like us to keep in mind that David was not just an ordinary Israelite.

He was God's anointed. He was specially chosen by God and called by God to a particular task.

[3:29] And he had several responsibilities as God's anointed and as the king. Such as to save the people from their enemies.

And to protect the people. And to establish and uphold God's law in the land. And to judge the people.

The kings back then, they would hear people's cases. And they would discern between people's arguments. And they would also execute justice. When David was faithful, the people were blessed.

And when David was unfaithful, the people suffered. So David was also a representative of the people to God.

Okay, so with that in mind, let's read this familiar passage. In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel.

[4:46] And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Graba. But David remained at Jerusalem. It happened late one afternoon when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house.

That he saw from the roof a woman bathing. And the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman.

And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? So David sent messengers and took her. And she came to him. And he lay with her.

Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness. Then she returned to her house. And the woman conceived. And she sent and told David, I am pregnant.

So David sent word to Joab, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked Joab, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going.

[5:52] Then David said to Uriah, Go down to your house and wash your feet. And Uriah went out of the king's house and there followed him a present from the king.

But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord and did not go down to the house. When they told David, Uriah did not go down to his house.

David said to Uriah, Have you come? Have you? Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house? Uriah said to David, The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths.

And my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go down to my house to eat and drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.

Then David said to Uriah, Remain here today also and tomorrow I will send you back. So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. And David invited him and he ate in his presence and drank so that he made him drunk.

[7:01] And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord. And he did not go down to his house. In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

In the letter he wrote, Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting and then draw back from him that he may be struck down and die. And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men.

And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab and some of the servants of David among the people. Uriah the Hittite also died. Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting.

And he instructed the messenger, When you have finished telling all the news about the fighting to the king, Then, if the king's anger rises and if he says to you, Why did you go so near the city to fight?

Why did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who killed Abimelech, the son of Jerubbosheth? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone on him from the wall so that he died at Thebes?

[8 : 10] Why did you go so near the wall? Then you shall say, Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. So the messenger went and came and told David all that Joab had sent him to tell.

And the messenger said to David, The men gained an advantage over us and came out against us in the field. But we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. Then the archer shot at your servant from the wall.

Some of the king's servants are dead. And your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. David said to the messenger, Thus shall you say to Joab, Do not let this matter displease you.

For the sword devours now one and now another. Strengthen your attack against the city and overthrow it. And encourage him. When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, She lamented over her husband.

And when the morning was over, David sent and brought her to his house. And she became his wife and bore him a son. And the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

[9 : 21] Or literally, But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord. Well, if the charges were brought against David, Here's how it might read.

Stealing another man's wife. Committing adultery with her. Betraying a close friend. Murdering innocent men.

Commanding other people to commit sin. And then belittling the whole thing as no big deal. And you know, when we read it, we say, Ah, these are the real sins.

These are the big ones. Adultery and murder and plotting and scheming and lying and covering it up. And this is what, now we're talking.

This is real sin. But I'd like us to take a closer look, a deeper look tonight. The first move of the heart in sin is a dethroning of God.

[10 : 44] Off of his rightful position in our hearts. As our number one love. And enthroning ourselves.

So to use familiar language from 2 Samuel, David has become a man after David's own heart.

He has stopped loving God in this period of time.

And is now living by a different set of values. All sin is vertical first before it's horizontal.

And by that I mean all sin is sin against God first before it's horizontal. And that's an interesting thing to observe when we have a passage like this.

[11 : 58] Because it's all these sins as they come at us in the passage are horizontal sins. It's lust. He sees.

He takes. It's adultery. It's pride. And now I have to cover it up. And all these things are happening against other people.

But it's interesting if we look in chapter 12 and we see the way God responds. I'm just going to read a couple. I'm going to paraphrase a couple verses from chapter 12.

And God says through Nathan, By what you have done, you have utterly scorned the Lord.

And David says in Psalm 51, his famous Psalm of repentance, he says regarding the sin, Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

[13 : 12] And I'd like us to see that not only for David, but for all of us, this is the dynamic of sin.

This is how sin works. If we go back to the law, if we go back to what God wants from us, here's how Jesus puts it.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.

And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets. In other words, we love God.

We see his goodness. We see his, for Christians, we see his grace. We see his undeserved mercy and love for us.

[14:16] And then we turn to other people and we live out of that paradigm of love and grace.

So all sin in its first instance is against God. And that's why I think that when we hear Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, when we hear Jesus say things like this, when he says, you say it's sin to commit adultery.

I say it's sin to even look at a woman lustfully at all. You say it's sin to commit murder. I say it's sin to even be angry with your brother and call him a fool.

Now, how is Jesus saying that? What is the dynamic? If you are in a state of heart to look at a woman and lust, you haven't done anything, but you've lusted.

God has been dethroned off out of your heart in those times. You have taken God from his rightful place as king of your heart, love of your life.

[15:41] You've put him down and you've enthroned yourself. If that makes you a little uncomfortable, the ramifications of that are pretty dramatic.

Because the core of the sin is that we've take the God of the universe who created everything out of nothing, who is all-powerful, all-knowing, infinite, eternal, on top of that gracious, loving, merciful, kind.

And we have put him in a position subordinate to us. If I can put it that way.

When you pull God down off of his throne and erect yourself, you are putting God in a subordinate position to you. And what I want to argue, what I want to try to get us to think about tonight, is that that sin is the sin.

That's the root of it. That's the heart of sin right there. Then it blossoms into actual evil that we do.

[17:32] And I think that if we don't see that, we're on the path to undervaluing sin.

We're on the path to being able to read a passage like we just read and go, that's not me because I don't go that far.

And we know we're not supposed to say that. I know no one's sitting in this room. But deep in our hearts, we minimize the standard.

It's an inclination of our heart to pull the standard down so that we squeak under it. But when we actually see the standard, that it's a heart issue, and that we all know what it's like to just turn our heads, and all of a sudden God's down off the throne.

And when we do that, that's the root of sin. So I want to talk a few minutes about the consequences of sin.

[18:48] The consequences of sin. Here again, I think, so often what we look at is David's and Bathsheba's baby died, okay, as a result of this.

David's whole career now takes a turn for the worse. David starts making other mistakes, sinful errors. He begins, his rule begins to spiral down.

God has, as we'll see next week in chapter 12, has responded by removing some of the blessings that he'd been giving to David and enacting some consequences for David that are temporal, that are in the here and now, as it were.

In fact, as a result of David's sin, the people end up suffering. The people that David represents, they end up suffering because down the road, David starts making other bad choices and sinning.

And further down the road, David's descendants, not too far after David, the wheels come off. And even though God had promised to bless David and set his steadfast covenant love on David and had promised that an heir of David would be on the throne forever, even though that promise was there in chapter 7, just three chapters later, four chapters later, we have this fall.

[20:50] And the descendants of David don't last long in their faithfulness to God. In fact, as we know, Israel ends up in exile.

And there is not only no Davidic king on the throne, there's no king on the throne at all. The people are dispersed. Now, what I would like us to be careful about is that we do not view the temporal discipline of God on David as David paying for the sins that he committed in chapter 11.

The temporal judgments of God are never payment for sin. The reason is because no temporal punishment can cover the sin of us dethroning God from his place as God of the universe.

Us, created human beings, rising up in rebellion against God and putting him down. None of these temporal disciplines or punishments pay for that sin.

Those sins are out there. God is infinite. The offense against God is infinite.

[22:23] The price to be paid, if it were to be paid by a person, could not be paid in space and time. And that's what hell is.

Hell is us paying for our sins against God himself. And it never runs out because God is that holy.

He is that majestic. However, David doesn't die.

Nor does God revoke his covenant promises that he made back in chapter 7. I would like to suggest that when we're thinking rightly about God and who God is and when we're reading the Bible through the lens of seeing God properly, questions like, how is David survive this?

Like, how is it that David goes on to be blessed by God, continued to be loved by God, established by God, forgiven by God?

[24:01] In other words, how is a good judge going to just pass over our offenses of sin against him?

Well, the answer is that God himself has to come and become a man and pay for our sins by dying in our place himself.

He is the only payment that will satisfy that kind of debt for David or for us or for any human being.

And I'd like to go back and I've been trying to move along because I have several segments of scripture that I want to read to you and I'm just going to tell you up front.

It's going to be a little bit of reading but I want to drop this on you. It's so beautiful. It is so as bad as the bad news of sin is.

[25:44] This is better. This is the good news. Okay. So God made a covenant promise to David to love him forever.

When he made that promise he knew what he was getting into. He knew all of David's sin past, present, and future.

He knew what was going to happen in chapter 11. And I want to read from Psalm chapter 89.

You just listen along with me. It's about the covenant. God's covenant with David. I, God, will maintain my love to David forever.

And my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my rules, if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments, then I will punish their transgressions with the rod and their iniquity with stripes.

[27:06] But I will not remove from him my steadfast love or be false to my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips.

Once for all have I sworn by my holiness I will not lie to David. His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me.

Now, what I want to say is that when God says, if his offspring disobey my covenant and do not meet the terms of faithfulness that the covenant demands, I will discipline them.

But as we've seen, what sin demands as a price is not temporal discipline.

So God's talking about some other kind of discipline to some other son of David. Listen to this from Isaiah, about 300 years later.

[28:22] It's Isaiah chapter 53. This is talking about Jesus. This is familiar, but it's so beautiful.

Surely he has come to bore our griefs and carry our sorrows. Yet he was esteemed, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace.

And with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.

And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Jesus is the one that took the stripes of the rod of God's wrath against the sin of our unfaithfulness.

[29:39] We see that the promise to David is fulfilled in Jesus. I'm going to read a short passage from Luke.

It's the angel Gabriel speaking to Mary. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and he will be called the son of the most high.

and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

I think that if you're a Christian long enough, you begin to see how God is not just forgiving our sins.

That's just the beginning of what God's doing. God is restoring us, renovating us. He is taking even our sins and turning them into things that he uses for his good purpose.

[30:54] And do you know that Jesus was a fulfillment of God's promise to David, God's love.

And it came, and so Jesus, the line from David to Jesus includes Bathsheba, the very person that David went and stole and committed this horrible sin with.

But through the fruit of David and Bathsheba comes the savior of the world. So we're not only forgiven, we're being restored.

The bad things are being turned into good things. And I have one more passage to drop on you. Back to Isaiah chapter 55.

this is an invitation from God to us.

[32:02] Come all you who are thirsty, come to the waters. And you who have no money, come buy and eat. Come buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

Why spend money on what is not bread and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me and eat what is good and you will delight in the richest affair.

Give ear and come to me, listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you. My faithfulness, my faithful love promised to David.

The same covenant love, that God set on David, we are all invited to partake of.

And I want to add one more thing and then I'll close. When we see sin for what it is and when we see the magnitude of it, faith as a response, faith in Christ as our substitute becomes a joyful, wonderful, logical, reasonable thing to step into.

[33 : 38] When sin isn't sin, when sin is not an offense against the God of the universe by us, but it's just, oh, bad things we do, everyone's, no one's perfect.

You know what, no one's perfect, you know how many people are probably going to hell right now because of no one's perfect? It's true, no one is perfect, but we need to see how bad sin is and let it drive us to Jesus and if we're already trusting in Jesus, we need to see how bad sin is and see what we're being saved from and let that grace grow in our estimation of it and let it fuel are living for God and a life of loving other people as we love ourselves.

Let me pray for us. Our Father in Heaven, we pray that you would grant us eyes to see reality. We pray that you would not let us diminish the debt that our sin creates and Father we are so thankful and grateful that you came yourself to pay this debt for us.

I pray that you would break our hearts. I pray that you would help us to love you in response and that you would help us to love other people.

Thank you for your word. In Jesus' name, Amen.