

Lesson 11: “Can Someone’s Sin Really Cause a Lifetime of Trouble for Others?”

David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11:1 – 12:15; Psalms 38:1-8

2 Samuel 11:1–5. *“Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. ² Now when evening came David arose from his bed [couch] and walked around on the roof of the king’s house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. ³ So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” ⁴ David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. ⁵ The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, “I am pregnant.”*

Don’t you think it strange that a proven warrior King like David climbed to the roof of his house at the end of the afternoon instead of going out to march with his men in war? Why did this thirty-eight-year-old king stay behind? Why was he not where he belonged, on the battlefield with his men? That’s where he belonged. That’s what kings did. That’s where warrior kings belonged. That’s where warrior kings were expected to lead. On the battlefield was where he should be. But let me tell you this. “When you are not where you are supposed to be, you will find yourself where you ought not to be.” It seems to be a universal problem for all people. It seems to be the universal start of trouble. David was in trouble before he knew he was in trouble. He was in the wrong place, at the wrong time, and his eyes were looking in the wrong direction. They were looking down. They were not looking up. His eyes were not on the LORD. His eyes were on the lady. He should have been interested in worship on behalf of his men; instead, he was interested in a woman on behalf of his bed.

Now you might try to explain what happened with David that day as an accident. When he went for a cool rooftop walk just before nightfall, it was an accident that he looked over into his neighbor’s yard and saw his neighbor’s wife soaping herself up in a lather and rinsing herself off. Oh, that was an accident. But what you do with an accident determines your character and who you are. David did not look away in haste as a godly man would. He had to have known this lady. She was the wife of Uriah, one of his mighty men. David had surely known him from his days on the run from Saul. He had surely gazed at Uriah’s wife before. But this time, he was getting to see her as he had never seen her before – in all her birthday glory – the full beauty of a woman. Instead of looking away, as he should, he decided to throw a sporting event and get a closer look. He became a peeping Tom first and enjoyed the free advertisement before the game began. But it would be a game of just two – himself and his neighbor’s wife. He accidentally saw. He attentively looked. His look became lust. His lust became a deed. His deed became a sin. His sin changed the status quo in the neighbor’s household forever. His sin changed the status quo for the whole nation of Israel forever. With all the shenanigans David had been through with sinful King Saul, he should have known there would be a reckoning day, a payday for the playday, when the LORD’s invoice for sin would be sent and due, payable in full. *“Can Someone’s Sin Really Cause a Lifetime of Trouble for Others?”* You better believe it!

Most likely, as the sun was setting in the west, Bathsheba was drying off and getting ready for bed. The picture show was over for David, but he had not seen enough. He wanted to see on the little screen what he had been viewing on the big screen. He wanted to see up close and personal. He asked his servants about her. He sent his servants for her. He did not commit this sin alone. He took his servants on the journey with him. He dragged them along. After all, he was the king. He was the sovereign ruler of Israel, God’s chosen nation. Besides that, he was handsome. Michal, Saul’s daughter, has fallen for him at first sight. Ahinoam had fallen for him at first sight. Abigail had fallen for him at first sight. Maacha had fallen for him at first sight. Abital had fallen for him at first sight. Eglah had fallen for him at first sight. How many first sights do you need? He knew he was handsome. These women were all already his wives, and he had children with all but one, the first, Michal, Saul’s

daughter. Oh, he had to have the stuff to flatter a woman. He had to have that certain knack to charm a woman. He had to have the cues to arouse the passion of a woman. No doubt, she, too, had seen him before. He was the king, you know. After all, David's most trusted counselor, Ahithophel, was Bathsheba's grandfather. They had to know each other. Then came the invitation to visit with the king. It wasn't an invitation for tomorrow, during the daylight hours. It wasn't an invitation to a state dinner in a week or so. It was an invitation for that night – ASAP. Come now, as you are, with haste. The king had urgent business with her. He could not control himself. But yet, he could control how he got her into his bed chamber. It was done the proper way, the kingly way, through the proper protocol of using his servants to invite her from across the street. As if this was national business instead of personal business. And besides that, she was so far across the street, you know. He couldn't walk across the street; he was the king. I will let your minds wander off through the night at this point. I will let you imagine in your mind's eye what transpired.

This night ranks right up there with Kennedygate, Watergate, Clintongate, Trumpgate, and Bidengate. A scandal at the highest level of the most powerful kings of the nation. This is not a Russiagate; that will come up in a story later on in Second Samuel. Nothing has changed under the sun. *“Can Someone's Sin Really Cause a Lifetime of Trouble for Others?”* You bet your life it does. Why is it that the sinner seems to get off “almost” Scott-free? Why is it that the people surrounding a sinner are the ones who seem to pay the greatest penalties instead of the sinner? David was the sinner, and his crime was about to rock the nation of Israel and his family forever. In addition, his sinful crime had altered the family next door and blown it apart. David's sin was not only against the LORD, it was against one of his most loyal mighty men. Why do sinners sin against the loyal ones, the ones who are doing what they are supposed to be doing, loyal and righteous. Uriah was loyal to the end. David was unloyal to Uriah.

Pregnant? Oh my, in a rush, David had to make a plan.

2 Samuel 11:6-13 *“Then David sent to Joab, saying, ‘Send me Uriah the Hittite.’ So Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked concerning the welfare of Joab and the people and the state of the war. ⁸ Then David said to Uriah, ‘Go down to your house, and wash your feet.’ And Uriah went out of the king's house, and a present from the king was sent out after him. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ Now when they told David, saying, ‘Uriah did not go down to his house,’ David said to Uriah, ‘Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?’ ¹¹ Uriah said to David, ‘The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelters, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing.’ ¹² Then David said to Uriah, ‘Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will let you go.’ So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ Now David called him, and he ate and drank before him, and he made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his bed with his lord's servants, but he did not go down to his house.”*

Now, just in case you have never thought about his, Canaanites were descendants of Ham – they had a dark complexion; David was a descendant of Shem – they had an olive complexion. David planned to use Uriah as a cover. When the baby arrives, there may be a complexion surprise! If the baby is dark skinned, dark eyes, and dark haired, all is well. If the baby is olive skinned, ruddy, and red haired, there may be a conspiracy there.

“Send him home,” the message said to Joab, the commander. Let him bring news from the battlefield. “Eh,” David thought, “Uriah was a man like me.” He would surely want to enjoy relationships with his wife while on vacation from the front line. Hey! David would. He would make it a high priority. But which wife? Maybe all. But Uriah was not like David. Oh, wait a minute, Uriah was like David. He had modeled his life after David's. Uriah had seen David in normal circumstances and most likely molded his character after David, his king. But this time, David was in trouble. Uriah had never seen David in trouble like this before. When David found himself in trouble of no cause of his own, the LORD always stepped in to help him. So, Uriah only knew David's integrity as a

“basically” sinless man protected by the LORD. Why would he think any different now? But the LORD was not going to help this time. The LORD never helps someone sin. David was the cause of all this. Uriah had never seen David squirming in his own sin, desperate to save his integrity. Even in Jerusalem, Uriah was symbolically standing with his men as they stood on the other side of the Jordan on the battlefield instead of enjoying his wife on the other side of the street. Uriah chose to sleep where David’s bodyguards slept, the Philistine Cherethites and Pelethites that Benaiah had assigned for duty that night. These were David’s own private Secret Service. And the secret service knows all the secrets of the king – everyone who comes and goes before the king. David’s plan didn’t work. Plan “A” didn’t work. David had to move to plan “B” – another great sin by this king. It was not the LORD’s plan. Plan “A” was not the LORD’s plan. If your plan is not the LORD’s plan, it is the wrong plan.

2 Samuel 11:14-17 *“Now, in the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. ¹⁵ He had written in the letter, saying, “Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him, so that he may be struck down and die.”¹⁶ So it was as Joab kept watch on the city that he put Uriah at the place where he knew there were valiant men. ¹⁷ The men of the city went out and fought against Joab, and some of the people among David’s servants fell; and Uriah the Hittite also died.”*

You can read the rest of the story. Uriah was dead, dead because of David. And David did not do it alone. Uriah’s blood was on Joab’s hands now for David’s sin. The sin of a willing tool is just as sinful as the sin of the sinner. By this time, David had included his servants, his neighbor’s wife, his army commander, and some lone Ammonite warrior who shot the arrow that killed the Canaanite Hittite, Uriah. Sin never claims just one person. Its tentacles reach out to even the unknown archer who unexpectedly became a part of David’s sin.

Uriah was dead. Oh, but David needed to look like a compassionate king willing to care for his mighty man’s widow. Marrying her would bring honor to him as king in the eyes of the people. Thirty days later, when the official grieving time was over, Bathsheba was in his bedroom again, but this time for keeps – pregnant. In David’s mind, no one would know. Well, all the king’s Secret Service, who knew the truth, kept their mouths shut, but they knew. They might have thought since David had turned on his neighbor, his loyal warrior; he might turn on us too. They knew, but they also knew the penalty if someone told the king they had told the secret. No doubt, with the mention of Bathsheba’s delivery date counting down, the eyes would roll. That’s what people do, you know, who do not want to say a word, but they speak volumes with a roll of the eyes, and everyone knows there is something stinking wrong behind the curtained entryway to the bedroom room just off the throne room of the king.

Sitting on his throne day by day, David must have looked forward to the Sabbath. No one had mentioned Bathsheba accept in terms of praise to David for taking her in. He was such a good king, you know. On the Sabbath, no cases were brought before him. His mind could rest on the subject. An answer to an awkward question was not needed on that day each week. But every time David looked at Bathsheba’s pregnancy, he must have thought about poor Uriah.

Then one day, David’s court clerk must have said, “An adultery case is next. It will require the stoning of the man and the woman. To make things worse, the adulterer killed the woman’s husband.” Now in those days, when adultery occurred, divorce was not an option. Stoning was the penalty under the LORD’s law. Only men could divorce; a woman could not. For example, if a husband did not like something as simple as how his wife smelled, he could divorce her. That was not a good reason. But because the husband’s heart was hard and determined to rid himself of a stinky wife, he could divorce her. But the divorce was a gift to the wife. It meant that she was free to marry another man without the penalty of committing adultery in the new marriage against her former husband. But for the former husband, he was in a mess. If he divorced his wife because she was stinky and married another woman, he was guilty of committing adultery against the wife he divorced. That is why Jesus answered the question about divorce in Matthew 19:9 like this, *“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife,*

except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” When a man divorces and marries again, he commits adultery against the former wife with the new wife. Now you say, what about the phrase, *“except for immorality [adultery]?”* What does that mean? It doesn’t mean it is a reason for divorce. It is not an exception clause; it is an explanation clause that all the religious leaders knew. They knew Leviticus, the driver’s training manual for Israelite life. The sin of immorality/adultery meant the death penalty by stoning, not a divorce. Once the wife was stoned, she was dead; the man was free to marry without the stigma of adultery. Among the 7.6 billion people in the world today, most still live under this kind of law. Women cannot bring a charge of divorce. But in the America, as well as many of the westernized nations, we allow women to divorce. In Mark’s account, written to the westernized Roman world where women could divorce, he said in Mark 10:12, *“and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.”* Mark has just updated the Old Testament Levitical Biblical principle and transferred it to the Gentile world.

And so, the Biblical principle of who becomes an adulterer when remarrying after the divorce comes down to the question, “Who filed for the divorce?” The one who filed is the one guilty of the sin in the divorce. The one who was divorced is free to marry without the stigma of adultery. That is why my first question when a divorced person asks me about remarriage is, “Who filed for the divorce?” When someone tells me their spouse is going to file for divorce but dragging their feet, I always say to the person, “Don’t you commit the sin by filing for the divorce. Let them bear the sin before the LORD. Who knows, the LORD may change their heart.” David knew all this well.

The story was too close to home for David. I can see David with his hand on his chin. I can hear him say, Hmm! And then he asked the clerk, “Who is the plaintiff?” “Lord, it is the prophet, Nathan,” the clerk replied.

Now David was not afraid of Goliath, if you will remember. Neither was he afraid to cut the hem from Saul's robe or enter Saul’s camp to get his spear and water jug. Neither was David afraid to become friends with the Philistines of Gath. Neither was David afraid to destroy the Amalekites who raided his village of Ziklag. David was not afraid of the Philistines, Arameans, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Egyptians, Canaanites, or any fierce animal. David was not afraid of anyone - except Nathan. Nathan’s voice was the voice of the LORD in David’s mind. When Nathan spoke, it was the truth. When Nathan pronounced it, it was going to happen. If Nathan had told David it was Easter, two thousand years before Easter occurred and Jesus rose from the grave, David would have known he better get a basket. Easter was coming!

Nathan was let in, and David heard his voice. Like any good preacher, Nathan had an introductory story to explain the scope of the problem in this case.

2 Samuel 12:1-4 *“There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. ² “The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. ³ “But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb Which he bought and nourished; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, And was like a daughter to him. ⁴ “Now a traveler came to the rich man, And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; Rather he took the poor man’s ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”*

David listened to Nathan with his ears, and he watched Nathan with his eyes. Nathan was serious. Rich vs. Poor – that is surely a sure case for Nathan to take up, David must have thought. It was settled in David’s anger.

2 Samuel 12:5-6 *“As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. ⁶ He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion.”*

“Thank goodness,” David must have thought to himself. “This one isn’t about me.” After all, Nathan was prone to stick his nose in the king’s business from time to time, but it always turned out for David’s good.

Wait, not too soon. David showed his hand in his judgment anger, and Nathan showed his hand in David’s plan. *“You are the man!”* It is not in the Scripture, but for some reason, I always picture

Nathan pointing his arthritic bone crooked finger in David's face as he says, "You are the man!" I don't think he said loudly. I know he didn't say it proudly. I think he said it calmly and in his normal voice. A loud voice really does nothing to help. But a quiet voice will heap burning coals on the head and knocks a person off his feet. David will be knocked off his feet with Nathan's quiet reply.

2 Samuel 12:9-12 *Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. 10 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.' 11 Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. 12 Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.'"*

From the throne to the floor, David collapsed to say, "I have sinned against the LORD," Then came the first blow of trouble for David's household. It will start with the baby in Bathsheba's womb. Nathan continued, 2 Samuel 12:13b-14, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. ¹⁴ However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die." ¹⁵ So Nathan went to his house." David wept. The defeat of the Ammonites would not bring joy to David now. The sounds of his other children, all under the age of eight years old at this time, would not fill his heart with delight. Bathsheba was carrying a baby that was sentenced to die all because of what he did. David might think that if the baby were stillborn, that could help hide his part in the sin. No! By the Lord, this baby would be born alive, alive for a Sabbath week before it would Rest in Peace. But that week would trumpet the sin of David far and wide through every tribe of Israel and right onto the pages of God's Holy Word forevermore. All eyes would be on David, the sinner. How would he respond to the Lord now? Second Samuel does not tell us what David was thinking, but he did write a sad song during these sad days. Psalm 38:1-8. Here is the first stanza from David's pen.

O LORD, rebuke me not in Your wrath, And chasten me not in Your burning anger.

² For Your arrows have sunk deep into me, And Your hand has pressed down on me.

³ There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation;

There is no health in my bones because of my sin.

⁴ For my iniquities are gone over my head; As a heavy burden, they weigh too much for me.

⁵ My wounds grow foul and fester Because of my folly.

⁶ I am bent over and greatly bowed down; I go mourning all day long.

⁷ For my loins are filled with burning, And there is no soundness in my flesh.

⁸ I am benumbed and badly crushed; I groan because of the agitation of my heart.

One last time. "Can Someone's Sin Really Cause a Lifetime of Trouble for Others?" "Oh, yes! Absolutely. It always does." David knows that very well now. For all involved with David, the trouble is about to come quickly, for the babe is about to take his first breath.

This story is a universal truth. Think of your sins. Have you repented before the LORD? It is better to repent at the Mercy Seat here on earth and wipe your sin away from the Books of Remembrance before the LORD and receive His forgiveness forevermore. If you do not, you will have to face your sin again at the Judgment Seat with the LORD in heaven, where your rewards will be determined by your moments of repentance. It is silly not to handle your sins here on earth instead of later in heaven. Handling them here means they will be over and done with and wiped clean from the record. Handling them there means they will be forever in the record books.

Today, the LORD makes the Mercy Seat available to you at His feet.