



DIVINE GRACE • God is Faithful Despite Human Foolishness

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

2 Samuel 11:1-12:31

Have you ever done something and afterwards said, “Uh, I wish I wouldn’t have done that.” In this episode from in 2 Samuel 11-12, David experiences just that. He sees a beautiful girl named Bathsheba, calls for her, sleeps with her and gets her pregnant. Suddenly, David has a lot of problems on his hands. Instead of confessing and repenting, he tries to cover up his sin. He kills Bathsheba’s husband and has no guilt until the prophet Nathan accused him. The Lord promises through Nathan that evil will never depart from David’s house, and we see part of that in this chapter as Bathsheba’s child dies. The chapter ends with a victory in battle, but I assume it will leave a sour taste in every reader’s mouth because of David’s foolish sin.

David and Bathsheba (11:1-26)

This is a familiar story to many. David wakes up from a nap and plays a peeping Tom, looking out his window at a beautiful woman who is bathing. David asks who this woman is and someone says, “Is not this Bathsheba?” (v. 3). David does not care that she is married – or that he has other wives. David lets the lusts of his flesh take over and immediately calls for Bathsheba. “She came to him, and he lay with her” (v. 4). You can’t help but shake your head at David’s foolishness. In verse 1 of our chapter, the text says that it is springtime – when kings go out to battle. David, on the other hand, stayed in Jerusalem. This is David’s first mistake. He is leading passively as he shirks his responsibilities to take a nap! If he had gone to battle, this scenario possibly might not have happened.

Things don’t get much better for David. He later finds out that Bathsheba is pregnant! David tries to cover it up by bringing Uriah, her husband, home from battle to sleep with her and make it look like the baby is Uriah’s. Uriah is a man of honor and refuses to go to his home with his wife because his men are on the battlefield struggling for victory. David, frustrated by now as he tries to weasel his way out of this sin, tells Joab to put Uriah on the frontlines that he might die in battle. This is easily the lowest point of David’s life that we read about in 2 Samuel. It shows our selfish nature as humans that despite all the grace God gives us, we turn away to our own desires. When we treasure anyone or anything other than God Himself, sin can easily snowball like it did in David’s case. Discuss with your group the need to treasure Christ above all things, depend on His grace and love His words as safeguards against falling into grave sin.

Nathan Rebukes David (12:1-31)

What’s the Big Idea?

While at the height of his reign as king, David rejects God, falls into grave sin and finds himself in desperate need of God’s grace. This passage teaches that although David’s sin is vile, God’s grace washes over it and gives him hope. This should lead us to the eternal grace, mercy and hope that are found in Jesus Christ.

What’s the Problem?

We forsake the satisfaction and joy we can have in God for other sinful pleasures that are offenses against God and His word, and we tend to run away after we sin instead of turning to Him for forgiveness.



God was not going to let David go unpunished. He sends Nathan the prophet to David, and Nathan tells him a story. The story is a parallel to what David did to Uriah, how he took his wife and then killed him. David is outraged at the man in the story who stole the poor man's lamb. Nathan looked at David and scolded, "You are the man!" (v. 7). Nathan asks, "Wasn't it enough that God gave you deliverance from Saul, the throne, and many wives?" God gives Nathan a prophecy for David's family. God says, "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" (v. 11). God shows His sovereignty by saying, "I will raise up evil against you." This might make you or your group uncomfortable, but in it we can see that God is in control and that eventually all things work out for good if we love God (see Rom. 8:28). God is infinitely good, so could you imagine evil coming from something that is not good? That would be terrible! The evil God sends to His people is always for testing, refining and discipline.

David confesses right away, saying, "I have sinned against the LORD" (v. 13). He doesn't beat around the bush or make excuses. He owns up to his wrong. Nathan comforts David and assures him that he will not die, but the son that is to be born to Bathsheba will. Despite this, David begs God for the child's life. He pleads with the Lord for mercy; he fasts and prays; but as promised, the child dies. When he's told the child is dead, he rises and washes himself and eats. His servants are surprised that he eats, but David wisely responds, "I fasted and wept [before the child died], for I said, 'Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?'" (v. 22). In spite of his sin, David turns to the Lord and seeks Him. Lead your group to see that God's grace welcomes us into His presence no matter what (see Heb. 4:15-16). When we are guilty of sin, we should not run away from God; we should run into His arms and seek His grace and mercy.

Conclusion

As the chapter ends, Solomon is born to David and Bathsheba and Joab fights against the Ammonites again. After a while, David comes to fight and defeats the Ammonites. However, this military victory is a little watered down and rings hollow. It's great that David wins, but his terrible sin overshadows the victory. This passage shows us what happens when sin builds up, but it also puts God's grace on display as the great conqueror of sin.

What's Our Response?

We must trust in God's grace to reject sin and receive His love and forgiveness.

What Are the Questions?

2 Samuel 11:1-12:31

LAUNCH

If you could “redo” any choice you’ve made in life so far, what would you choose and why?

EXPLORE

Read 2 Samuel 11.

1. What is the setting of this chapter?
2. What happens in verses 2-5, and what do the verbs attached to David suggest about his actions?
3. What does David do in verses 6-25, and what do you observe about David in this section?
4. David is both a success and a failure at the end of this chapter. In what way is this true?

notice and that you’re despising His word and despising God Himself when you sin?

9. What does verse 13 say about the way David views his sin?

10. What are the consequences of David’s sin?

Read 2 Samuel 12:1-15a.

5. In what way do you see God’s grace to David in verses 1-7a?
6. How does God frame David’s sin in verses 7-8?
7. What do verses 9-10 say about the way God views David’s sin?
8. What difference do you think it would make in your life to realize that nothing you do escapes God’s

Read 2 Samuel 12:15b-31.

11. How does David respond both before and after his child dies and why?
12. What do David’s actions say about his understanding of God’s grace?
13. How do you see God’s grace in verses 24-31?
14. In what way is there emptiness to the military victory at the end of this chapter?

APPLY

15. Read Psalm 14:2a. How does this statement summarize God’s presence in 2 Samuel 11 and His presence in our lives amidst all our sin?
16. Although God tells David that he won’t die, He substitutes the death of his son as a consequence for his sin (verses 13-14). In what way does this serve as a pattern for our experience with God through Christ?
17. Read Psalm 51 and Titus 3:1-7. What similarities do you see between the way God lavished grace on David and the way God lavishes grace on His followers through faith in Jesus Christ?
18. How does David’s experience motivate you to turn to God instead of away from Him in the face of your sin?

What Are the Answers?

1. It's spring, when kings go out to battle. David sends Joab to lead the army while he stays in Jerusalem.
2. He sees Bathsheba, pursues her, sleeps with her and gets her pregnant. The verbs portray a man who knows what he wants and does what it takes to get it.
3. He calls for Uriah, tries unsuccessfully to get him to sleep with his wife and cover up her pregnancy, then has him killed when that's unsuccessful. David is in command yet frustrated. He's callous about his actions.
4. He's a success in that he's covered up his sin from a human perspective and has Bathsheba as his wife. He's a failure in that he's done what is evil before the LORD.
5. In spite of David's sin and hardened heart, God takes the initiative to pursue David and expose his sin in a powerful way.
6. He frames it in the context of his grace. David has done these things in spite of all the kind things God has done for him.
7. He sees it as evil. He sees it as despising His word and despising God Himself.
8. Allow the group to discuss.
9. He realizes that he has sinned against the LORD.
10. The sword will never depart from David's house, he'll experience evil against him from his own house, God will give David's wives to others in a very public way, and the child born to him through Bathsheba will die.
11. He fasts and prays for him while he's sick, but he worships the LORD after he dies. He believes there's still hope for God to save him while he's still sick. Once he dies, he can only worship God and accept His choice for the child.
12. He understands that though his sin is great, God's grace is great as well.
13. He allows Bathsheba to conceive and give birth to a son. The LORD loves this son, even as reflected in the name Jedidiah, which means beloved of the LORD. He allows David to be a part of capturing Rabbah.
14. David's sin overshadows the military victory.
15. Although God may seem silent, He never has His eyes closed. Nothing we do escapes His notice or His judgment.
16. God assures us we won't die as a result of the death of His Son, Jesus Christ.
17. Just as David committed heinous sins and only experienced salvation when God's kindness appeared to him, so also we have committed heinous sins and only experience salvation through Christ's grace.
18. Allow the group to discuss.

Memorize

David said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?'"

2 Samuel 12:22