

Lust – 2 Samuel 11

Somebody tell me what your favorite Bible story is. Is it Noah's ark? Moses parting the Red Sea? Daniel in the Lion's den? My favorite is David and Goliath. I love, love, love that story! I love to study the life of David and I really enjoy learning about and talking about his high points. I told you before that I feel like he and I are friends because it seems like we grew up together and so it almost feels like I'm bragging on a friend when he does good things like that.

So maybe you can understand how the passage in **2 Samuel 11** makes me feel. I'm embarrassed for him. I'm a little bit mad at him, to tell the truth, because he has really let me down and it hurts me and I almost wish the Bible had not included the story of his affair with Bathsheba but it does and it doesn't sugar coat it either. I appreciate that about the Bible because it doesn't sugar coat the sin of anybody even a man after God's own heart.

I believe that is a big problem in this world today. We don't want to offend somebody so we excuse or justify or re-label sin and that is just like re-labeling a jar of poison and calling it candy. It's not a mistake or a shortcoming or a deficiency. It's not a disease. It's not an oopsie. It is sin and it is sin that put Jesus on the cross and **Romans 6:23** says that the wages of sin – what we deserve for it – is death, eternal death in hell. Does that sound like no big deal to you?

A friend of mine told me a while back about a lady at her church who often used the Lord's name in vain. That bothered the other lady so she quietly called her off to the side one day and said, *"You know, unless you are talking about God or to God, you shouldn't use His name and to do so is to break the third commandment of not using the Lord's name in vain."*

She said the woman kind of giggled and rolled her eyes and said, *"Oh, I know"* and went about her business and still does it. That is somebody who does not have a grasp on the severity of sin and its consequences nor about how God sees sin. So, like it or not, we are going to see some things about sin today from the life of my friend David. You know the story but I want you to read along with me and be watching for how easy it is to sin, how one sin leads to another and how our sin affects others.

So, let's turn to the Old Testament book of **2 Samuel** and let's read most of **chapter 11**. **1st and 2nd Samuel** are between **Ruth** and **1 Kings**. And at this point in David's life he has taken the throne of the King of Israel, has fought lots of battles and God has blessed him in every way. This should be another one of David's high points but...well, let's look at it.

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. ² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant." ⁶ So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. ⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. ⁸ Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?" ¹¹ Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents,^[a] and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!" ¹² Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home. ¹⁴ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. ¹⁵ In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." ¹⁶ So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. ¹⁷ When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died. ¹⁸ When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. ¹⁹ After

the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.

A young boy lived in the country. His family had to use an outhouse, which the young boy hated. It was hot in the summer, cold in the winter, and always smelly. The outhouse was located near the creek so the boy decided that he would push it into the water. After a spring rain, the creek swelled so the boy pushed it in.

Later that night his dad told him that he and the boy needed to make a trip to the woodshed. The boy knew this meant punishment. He asked his father why to which his dad replied, *"Because someone pushed the outhouse into the creek and I think that someone was you. Was it?"*

The boy first tried to lie but he knew his dad could tell so finally he said, *"Remember when George Washington's father asked him if he had chopped down the cherry tree? He didn't get into trouble because he told the truth."* "That is correct," the dad said, *"but his father was not in the cherry tree when he cut it down."*

Most of us have never toppled an outhouse, however we can identify with the boy in at least three ways. First, we find it awfully easy to sin. Second, one sin often leads to another sin and third our sin often affects other people. (Amended from Perry Greene)

Let me first ask you a question. What is sin? Sin is anything that displeases God. Look at the very last sentence we just read. *But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.* David obviously sinned but what started it? How did it get to the point where David broke at least 3 commandments? What was the first step?

We see it in the first verse if you read closely. *In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men.* David had gone to war lots of times and he always led the army. Yes, Joab was his general but it was the king himself who was the Commander-In-Chief. But evidently, for whatever the reason, David just wasn't feeling it this time. *"I think I'll just hang out here at the house for today and chill out."*

Now, I am not against taking a deserved break every now and then and I like a good nap as much as the next guy but sin is so easy to do that you literally don't have to do anything...and it will find you. **Romans 13:14** tells us to make no provision for the flesh. And that means that we are to make sure that we don't give our fleshly desires any help.

If you are an alcoholic, don't work where alcohol is served. In fact, don't even drive past the liquor store. Go 4 blocks out of the way if you have to but don't make any provision for

it. If porn is your problem, don't get on the internet - for anything. Stay away. Maybe you need to stay away from certain people or places or even songs or smells. I don't know what triggers you, but you do, so don't play with it. Get rid of it.

And here we see that David was just taking a little break, being a little lazy that day and took a little walk on the flat roof of his palace. It wasn't his fault that he saw Bathsheba a few doors down on her roof taking a bath. He couldn't control that but he shouldn't have been there in the first place and when he saw her, he should have done like Joseph did in Genesis and just run away.

1 Corinthians 10:13 says, *“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”* The sin of lust is so easy to do that when we run in to it, we have to run away from it. But David took his time and checked Bathsheba out.

I remember hearing a missionary from India tell a story about going down to the river one evening to get a drink. It was just about sunset when he got there and when he walked to the river's edge he glanced west and saw just the silhouette of a woman taking a bath in the river. She didn't see him so he kept looking and finally decided he would ease down the bank and get a closer look.

When he finally got close enough he could see what had once been a beautiful woman was now covered in scabs, a victim of leprosy from head to toe. What, from a distance, looked inviting and beautiful was really infected with a horrible life-taking disease which is just what all sin really is. Sin is so easy to do that all you have to do is give it an inch and it will take your life.

I hear you when I say something like that. You're thinking that is a bit dramatic, right? That giving in to sin will take your life? **1 Peter 5:8** says that Satan is like a roaring lion looking to see who he can devour or destroy! He wants to kill you, destroy you, take everything from you and the problem with one little sin is that it so often it has friends that show up. One sin so easily leads to another.

Look at **verse 5**. It's amazing how three little words can bring some people so much joy and to others they are an awful consequence. *“I am pregnant.”* With those words, David's mind and probably his stomach both start churning. He immediately starts to think of some way to get out of this. Do you know what David has in common with other men like

Bill Clinton, Anthony Weiner, Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker? Not just that they were all involved in sex scandals but also every single one of them thought there was no way they were ever going to get caught and every single one of them tried to cover it up.

Do you realize that? Every time you hear about some famous person getting caught doing something immoral, just know that when they started, they just knew they would never get caught. That's how Satan works and how he destroys you. He destroys everything you have. I tell people sometimes to make a list of everyone and everything they love. List out mama and daddy and the spouse, the kids, the house, the dog, your money, your job, your good name. List it. Write it out on a piece of paper and when you are tempted to do that thing that Satan is tempting you to do, look at that paper and be prepared to lose all of it. Just be prepared to be destroyed by Satan because that is how it happens.

Your sin may not be as horrible as what David did but when you get caught it is going to lead to another sin when you try to cover it up. Then somebody is going to find that out so you need to come up with something else and pretty soon Satan is wiping your blood off the corner of his mouth and saying, *"Mmm, that was tasty!"*

That would be bad enough but rarely does Satan get a one course meal when he devours a person. So many times he gets others as well. So many times our sin affects innocent people around us. Look at how David's sin affected others around him. It affected Bathsheba physically and spiritually. Uriah lost his life. But it also affected who knows how many other people who found out about it and now David has lost their respect and he also lost his witness.

Let me ask you something. Don't raise your hand but how many of you have been personally affected by a spiritual leader or church leader's moral failure? Have you been affected by the sin of a pastor or a Sunday School teacher? I know some of you have and what happens when a leader sins big like that and people find out? He not only loses his witness but it affects the whole church and even the community. It has a devastating effect on the whole Kingdom of God.

I would ask for you to pray for my wisdom and my purity when you think of me. Satan hates this church and most of you know how he hammers on you when you try to be salt and light and let people see Jesus in your life. He does it to pastors too but he also does it to the heads of families or companies or any group and does it to every individual. He knows that on a battlefield, if you shoot one enemy, it takes two people to get him off the field and that's great. But without a leader, like David, the whole army suffers.

I see this played out to the end all too often in the jails. I meet men all the time who once had everything they needed and wanted. They tell me about the family and the good job and cars and the stuff and how people respected them and they were leaders in their communities and even their churches but now all of it is gone and they often get this look on their face like *“How did this happen?”* One day they have everything and are enjoying the benefits of obedience and the next they are wallowing in the consequences of disobedience.

It all starts with one little thing. It just takes taking your eye off the ball one time, just being in the wrong place even at the right time or the right place at the wrong time. It's so easy. It all starts with one little sin which leads to others which leads to a ripple effect of hurting many, many people.

Do you know where sin always starts? It starts in the mind, doesn't it? **James 1** says, *“But each one is tempted when by his own evil desires, he is lured away and enticed. 15 Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.”* We all have evil desires. It comes from our old fleshly nature, that “old man” inside of us even as believers. Satan starts to work in our minds encouraging those evil desires.

Have you ever been minding your own business and realize that from out of nowhere you are thinking something you shouldn't? We all do that kind of thing. It may be an attack of Satan. It may be because we live in a fallen world. Or it may just come from that old man inside of us. But we have to take that thought captive like **2 Corinthians 10:5** says. Realize what we are thinking about and stop it in its tracks. Understand that whether it is an attack from Satan or not, he wants to use it to kill you and everything you hold dear. So, take that thought captive.

Next thing to do when you feel that temptation, do what Jesus did and quote scripture. Not just any scripture. Make a plan and find a scripture or a passage that talks about the thing you struggle with and memorize it. I know memorization is hard but so is losing everything you hold dear so just do it and when Satan says, *“Hey, let's go do that thing we like to do”* you can say, *“Get out of here Satan. The Bible says _____.”* But nowhere in scripture are we told to argue with Satan. Don't debate him. Don't discuss the merits of blah, blah, blah. Get out of there. Run! That may be a physical run or it may be mentally. Mentally run to cover and that cover is **Philippians 4:8** that says, *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever*

is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things."

When it comes to lust, sometimes we can't help being tempted. We are to keep ourselves from being in position to be tempted the best that we can but sometimes it's impossible not to be tempted. The good news is that temptation is not sin. Jesus was tempted but He didn't sin. But temptation is the step before sin and we have to make sure we don't take that step. Think what would have happened if David was out strolling on the rooftop that evening and he saw Bathsheba but he immediately bounced his eyes off of her, quoted some scripture and thought about something else. Do you know what would have happened? Nothing. No lust, no murder, no lies, no death of a child. Just God's blessings on a powerful king and country.

I read this online the other day. "While my wife and I were shopping at a mall kiosk, a shapely young woman in a short, form-fitting dress strolled by. My eyes followed her. Without looking up from the item she was examining, my wife asked, *"Was it worth the trouble you're in?"* (Drew Anderson (Tucson, AZ), *Reader's Digest*.)

Music

God is asking you the same question and the answer is always "No!" No, it's not worth the trouble you will be in because your sin almost always affects other people. I'm out of time but we will talk more about this tonight.

As believers we are still sinners but we don't have to be slaves to sin anymore. When God says He has made you free, that is what He is talking about. We don't have to sin but it takes a plan. It takes some fore-thought. Unbelievers are slaves to sin. That's what they do. That's all they know. Don't be surprised when they do it. But you don't have to.

The extra good news is that when we do sin, God is waiting for us with amazing grace and eternal forgiveness. Have you received those gifts? It's not only the only way to get to Heaven but it is also the only way to have real peace and joy in this life even during the bad times. Ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life today and ask for and receive forgiveness right now. We are not guaranteed another breath.