Sermon Title: My Sacrifice
Series: Seeking God's Kingdom, Part 44
Scripture: 2 Samuel 12
Main Takeaway: The LORD desires more than our words. He wants our hearts. When we come to Him in genuine repentance, He forgives our sins and makes us new.

Last week we talked about David's sin with Bathsheba…
And we saw what started as an evening walk on the roof…
Ended up in adultery, lies, and even murder.

And honestly…
It wasn't easy to talk about because I feel like we've been rooting for David!

He's been trusting the LORD…
He's been dedicating his wealth to the LORD…
He's been doing what's just and right for all his people…
He showed kindness to someone that would normally be an outcast…
He tried to show kindness to the new Ammonite king (that backfired)...

So how in the world did he get to the place where he was willing to take what wasn't his?

I can't prove it…
But I think his sin wasn't something that just came out of nowhere…
I think it was a desire that had been growing in him for a while…

In fact, one thing I didn't talk about last week…
Is that we've got a couple Psalms written about his struggle with sin…
Jim read one of them.
But in another one, David said…

[SLIDE 1] Psalm 32:3-4 - When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

The sin that David was keeping hidden inside was eating away at him…
It was heavy on his heart…

It's like trying to walk through the desert when the heat's so oppressive…
You can barely keep moving forward.

I actually had an experience like that…
In the summer of 2019, before I went to Israel,
We spent a day at Petra in Jordan.

[SLIDE 2] Petra Pictures

It's the desert…
The heat was beyond anything I ever experienced…

And as we were hiking up those hills…
I actually had to stop a few times because I was pushing myself too hard.

Let's just say by the time I got back down the mountain…
I was happy to pay $8 for a gatorade!

I don't know if you've ever felt heat so intense that you lose all your strength…
But that's how David felt…
Not because of the heat…
But because he was keeping his sin hidden rather than confessing it.

But when he finally did confess…
He prays about it in Psalm 51…
He said to the LORD…

[SLIDE 3] Psalm 51:10 - Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Again, it seems like somewhere along the way his heart became infected…
And the results were catastrophic.

As he looked out on that roof…
His spirit wasn't so steadfast at that moment…
I think desire was eating away at him for a while…
To the point where he was willing to use his power for something that would displease the LORD.

But what's really difficult is that we *want* to see David as the hero of the story…
We might even expect to hear sermons that say: *Just be like David!*

But he's so much more complex than that!
David can genuinely worship the LORD…
While also being genuinely tempted by evil.

And so…
Last week we saw that he did everything he could to cover up his sin.
But the LORD saw everything.

Look at the last verse of chapter 11 and the first verse of chapter 12…

[SLIDE 4] 2 Samuel 11:27 - 12:1 - But the thing David had done displeased the LORD. The LORD sent Nathan to David…

This is the hinge between the two chapters…
And it's the first time the LORD is mentioned in this entire scene.

At first it seems like the LORD was absent…
When we read chapter 11, it really seems like David got away with it…

In fact the LORD says in a later verse that David acted in secret… (12:12)
So even Bathsheba might not have known that David had Uriah killed…

For all we know, most people only heard that Uriah died…
Then David took his wife to be his own…
Maybe people saw this as an act of kindness?

A king taking responsibility for a soldier's widow…
How nice of David, right?

But that kind of public perception was very different from reality.

And even if most people didn't know what really happened…
The LORD saw the whole thing.
And in His timing…
He acted.

He sent the prophet Nathan to confront David.

I wonder how Nathan felt?
I imagine him saying to God:
You want me to tell David what?!

So he does what prophets sometimes do…
He goes to David and starts with a story…
Just something to set him up before he tells David the real reason he came.

His story is like a little parable…

There was a rich man and a poor man.
The rich man had tons of cattle and sheep.
The poor man had nothing except one little lamb.
He raised it; He took care of it…
It ate from his table…
It slept in his arms…
It was like a daughter to him.

One day a traveler came to the rich man.
The rich man invited him for dinner..
But instead of using his own sheep for the meal…
He took the little lamb that belonged to the poor man.

That's the story.
Here's how David reacted…

[SLIDE 5] 2 Samuel 12:5-6 - David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

Notice that David could still tell right from wrong.
The rich man took what wasn't his.

But talk about having a log in your own eye!
It doesn't seem like David caught what Nathan was trying to say.

Instead, he was so angry that he said:
As surely as the LORD lives…
*The man who did this **must die**!*

Other translations say the man *"deserves to die!"*

If that feels extreme, it's because it is.
There's no ancient Hebrew law that punishes stealing with death.
But there is a law that says the thief is supposed to repay the person 4x over!
That's straight from Exodus 22.

So David knew the law…
He knew the problem with the rich man's heart…
The rich man *"had no pity"* for the poor man.

And yet…
Nathan said to David…

[SLIDE 6] 2 Samuel 12:7 - "You are the man!"

This wasn't a 'Thank you bro' kind of moment!
Judgment just came down hard!

And so, before David could say a word…
Nathan continues with the Word of the LORD…
As I read it… notice what the LORD *gave* David…

[SLIDE 7] 2 Samuel 12:7-8 - This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more.

The LORD gave David all Israel and Judah…
He even gave David everything that Saul had…

And honestly…
I spent some time looking into what it means that the LORD gave Saul's wives into David's arms.

Basically, David inherited all that was under Saul…
That doesn't necessarily mean David was sleeping with Saul's wives…

In fact, giving them into David's "arms"...
Is the same image of the poor man taking the lamb into his "arms"…
(see 12:3 – It's the same Hebrew word and imagery)

David was to care for these women…
They were widows…
And now, they were his responsibility.

And if everything the LORD gave David wasn't enough…
The LORD would've given him even more…

This speaks to a question someone asked me last week:
Why in the world would David take someone else's wife when he had his own?
Why take Bathsheba?

I think the answer is in the LORD's question to David…

[SLIDE 8] 2 Samuel 12:9 - Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes?

That word “despise” is the same word used for how
David’s wife, Michal, felt about him.
She despised him in her heart (2 Samuel 6:16).

And now the LORD says David “despised” the word of the LORD.

In other words…
Temptation became so strong that…
David treated God’s Word as if it didn't matter.

That’s why he took Bathsheba.
It’s as simple as…
The king took what he wanted…
Despite how it affected others…
And despite the fact that the LORD would never approve.

And so…
The Word of the LORD continues…

[SLIDE 9] 2 Samuel 12:9-10 - You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’

Did you catch what the LORD said?
“You despised Me.”

That’s heavy.

That’s the kind of truth that’ll sap anyone’s strength.

And now, because of David's sin…
He’s going to have to face the consequences…

First: The sword will never depart from his house.

Think about that…

David spent so much of his life fighting Israel's enemies.

But now, some of the greatest conflicts he'll face…

Will come from *inside* his own family.
(12:10 – "the sword will never depart from your house")

And that's just the first consequence…
There's more…
The LORD said…

[SLIDE 10] 2 Samuel 12:11-12 - 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"

We'll talk more about this when we get to chapter 16.

And these aren't the only consequences of David's sin…
If you look down to verse 14…
The son Bathsheba has with David…
Will be struck ill and die…

I mean…
This is horrible…
It doesn't get any more rock-bottom than this…

And at this point, David could deny everything…
He could run away from it…

But instead, David said to Nathan…

[SLIDE 11] 2 Samuel 12:13 - "I have sinned against the LORD."

He didn't try to make excuses…
He just owned up to it.

I honestly wonder if he was relieved that someone finally called him out?

Because when he kept sin to himself…
Psalm 32 says his bones wasted away through groaning all day long…
And that his strength was sapped as in the heat of summer…

But just after that, he said…

[SLIDE 12] Psalm 32:5 - Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

And so now that the weight of keeping his sin hidden was gone…
David's ready to accept the consequences.
He probably thought he was deserving of death…
At least that was his reaction to the rich man in Nathan's parable.

But instead, the LORD would forgive him…

[SLIDE 13] 2 Samuel 12:13-14 - Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die."

So… David's forgiven…
But there will still be consequences…
Including the worst news a parent can get.

"...the son born to you will die."
Honestly, that's hard to read.

All of us are probably wondering:

Why in the world would God punish an innocent child?!

How's that fair?

How does that show the goodness of God?

This is where "Christian-ese" language doesn't help.

When someone gets incredibly hard news like this…
It's probably not the time to say:
"The LORD works all things for His good."
(That's not what Romans 8:28 says anyway)

So…
This is a terrible situation.

Uriah lost his life…
Bathsheba lost her husband…
Other soldiers died alongside Uriah…
Innocent women would eventually suffer…
And now an innocent child is going to die.

The thing to notice is that…

[SLIDE 14] The innocent are bearing the consequences for the sins of the powerful.

It's like Nathan's parable of the rich man and the poor man.

The rich man took what he wanted — So did David.
The innocent lamb died — So did the innocent child.

And here's what makes this passage even more difficult…

Some of these consequences were given by the LORD Himself!

Like, it's not just that these things will happen…
It's that the LORD will bring these things on David.

The LORD said:
“I am going to bring calamity” and “I will take your wives.”
And in verse 15, it says that the LORD “struck” David's child with illness.

So how are we supposed to understand that?

How do we reconcile what the LORD does…
With what we know about His goodness?

Honestly, there’s really no easy answer.

This is Divine Judgment in response to David’s actions.

So how will David react?

Well, he pleads for his child for a week straight.

But in the end, his unnamed child dies.

Despite all that…

David can still go to the LORD in worship….

And he prays…

[SLIDE 15] Psalm 51:1-4 - Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

David knows the LORD’s unfailing love…
He’s experienced the LORD’s compassion…
He knows only the LORD can wash him of his sins…

And because of who the LORD is…
David can say…
Despite everything that happened…
“You are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.”

That doesn’t solve the tension we feel in 2 Samuel…

But regardless…
After unimaginable judgment…
David still trusts the LORD **because of *who* the LORD is.**

It's not really about fairness…
It's about accepting divine judgment for his actions…

And so David prays…

[SLIDE 16] Psalm 51:10 - Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

David's admitting he needs help.
He can't do this on his own.

It's interesting that…
The one who's said to be a man after God's own heart…
Admits that he has a heart problem.

And so, he humbles himself and says…

[SLIDE 17] Psalm 51:17 - My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

His sacrifice…
Is surrendering his heart to the LORD.

And so David's like:

Have mercy on me LORD…
You're right to judge me…
I've sinned…
I've despised You and Your Word…
Create in me a clean heart…
So that You won't despise me.

And ultimately…
We *know* that David was forgiven…
Even though his sins still had very real consequences.

And maybe the most humbling thing about all this…
Is that our sins have very real consequences too.

Sometimes we might make light of them…
But the reality is…

[SLIDE 18] Our sins put Jesus on the cross.

Jesus…
"He who had no sin…"
Died, because *we* have a heart problem.

But that's why He chose to be a sacrifice for us…
So that our sins would be forgiven.

This means that…
No matter who we are…
No matter what we've done…

Jesus invites us to come to Him…
To lay down our selfish desires…
To ask Him to wash away our sins…
And renew our hearts to be more like His.

We can't fix our sin problem by ourselves…
Only Jesus can heal our brokenness…

That's why He invites us to come to Him in true humility…
Not with fancy religious words or offerings…

[SLIDE 19] Jesus doesn't just want our words… He wants our *hearts*.

That means sacrificing our own desires for His…
It means placing our believing loyalty in Jesus…
And recognizing Him as our LORD, Savior, and King.

And thankfully, as we saw last week…
We *can* go to Him, *confidently*, in prayer…
And trust that He *is* good…
He *will* forgive when we confess our sins to Him…

As He said long ago…

He is the LORD…
The compassionate and gracious God…
Who's slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness…
Who maintains love to thousands…
Forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.[1]

That's who our God is.

Amen?

Let's Pray

We pray as Jesus taught us to pray:
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into testing, but deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

[1] Exodus 34:6-7a