

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...

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...

He 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 stopped 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 as we'll see today...
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...

I believe that his spirit wasn't so steadfast at that moment...

I think desire has been 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...

But he's so much more complex than that!

He 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 is absent...

We read most of chapter 11 and it seems like David got away with it...

In fact the LORD says that David acted in secret... (12:12)

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 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.

**Regardless of how it went down...
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...
It's like a nice 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; 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 or cattle...
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 Hebrew law that punishes stealing with death.
But 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.”

There was no compassion or kindness...
This guy was evil.

And yet...
Nathan said to David...

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

And before David can even 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 automatically mean David was sleeping with Saul's wives...

Giving them into David's "arms" is the same kind of image of the poor man taking the lamb into his arms...

David was to care for them...

They were his responsibility.

And if all this wasn't enough...

The LORD would've given David 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?

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...

In the moments when David gave into temptation and tried to cover it up...

He treated God’s Word as if it didn't matter.

He took what he wanted...

Despite how it affected others...

And despite the fact that the LORD would never approve.

And so 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.'

“You despised Me.”

That’s heavy.

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

And now, because of David's sin...

The sword will never depart from his household.

Think about that...

David has 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.

And so the LORD says...

[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 [we’ll see this in chapter 16 - David’s sin affects a lot more people than just him]. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’”

And these aren’t the only consequences of David’s sin...

If I kept reading we’d see that the son Bathsheba has will be struck ill and die...

I mean...

This is horrible...

It doesn’t get any more rock-bottom than this...

David could deny everything...

He could run away from it...

But instead, David simply 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...

His strength was sapped as in the heat of summer...

But...

[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.

I imagine this is what he was thinking when Nathan confronted him.

And now that the weight was lifted...
David's ready to suffer the consequences.
He probably thought he was deserving of death.

But...

[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."

That's the worst news a parent can get.

And honestly, it's hard to read.

I bet all of us are wondering:

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

How's that fair?

How's that show the goodness of God?

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

This isn't the time to say the LORD works all things for His good.

This is a terrible situation — and there's not really a way around it.

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.

[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!

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 here...

With what we know about His goodness?

Honestly, there's really no clean or easy answer.

But there's something I wanted us to notice...

We know what Nathan said to David...

But we also have David's response to Nathan's confrontation...

[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 even after unimaginable judgment...
 David trusts the LORD because of who the LORD is.

And he asks...

[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.

**The one who's said to be a man after God's own heart...
 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.

It strikes me that when Nathan confronted David...
 He used the same word...

The LORD accused him of despising the Word of the LORD...
 AND despising the LORD Himself...

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.
 But our sins had very real consequences too.

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

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

“He who had no sin...”
Died because we have a heart problem.

But more than that...
He chose to be a sacrifice for us...
So that our sins would be forgiven.

The reality is...
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...
Only Jesus can...
But we do have to come to Him in true humility...
We can’t just say the right words and expect everything to be good...

Because...

[SLIDE 19] Jesus doesn’t just want our words... He wants our hearts.

That requires surrender...
It means placing our believing loyalty in Jesus...
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 admit our sins to Him...

As He said long ago...

He is the LORD...
The compassionate and gracious God...
Who is 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

¹ Exodus 34:6-7a