

## Lessons from Israel 10

### The failure of Israel 2

Our previous lesson ended at the Lord's displeasure with David's sin.

While we made note of Nathan's confrontation of David about that sin, even mentioning God's mercy and grace that would be extended, we were left perhaps more shocked with his spiral downward than hopeful at his prospects for the future.

It was fitting for us to end that lesson shaking our heads and wondering how it all could have gone that wrong. It was fitting to end it thinking about how we can prevent our next step into deeper and then deeper sin. It was fitting for us to have a warning.

And we must begin today by again coming to grips with all of the messes sin can (and always does) make for us in life. By realizing the cost of sin - because it always does cost - more than we want to pay.

Let's not forget where David had been:

- He neglected his responsibilities
- Secretly watched a woman bathing, in lust
- Used his authority and influence to have her brought
- Committed adultery
- Sought, with great effort, to cover it up
- Betrayed his own, honorable servant
- Plotted to have, and indeed had him killed
- Involved others, by means of his position, in his sin
- Displayed arrogance and disdain throughout
- Making a continual effort to save his own skin
- Never, seemingly, caring who else was getting hurt or being impacted

All of this seems to come into sharp focus when Nathan arrives in 2 Samuel 2:

1. And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.
2. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:
3. But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

Think of the wrong and injustice and lack of care for others that is shown in this act. It is maddening, but perhaps even minor compared to the wrong and injustice and lack of care David has shown.

It leaves us shaking our heads again, as we wonder how this can be.

But this is just an illustration, really, while David's account is coldly and shockingly real, impacting real people in real life.

5. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:

6. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

7. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

8. And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

9. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

10. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

11. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

12. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

The secret-keeping was over. It hadn't worked. God had known everything, all along. Now the reality of it all was coming up before David - and he was having to face it. And it was placed within the context of his life and the Lord's blessing in it. And it could not be ignored.

13. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

14. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

The consequences of it were also beginning to come to light. He had done damage he was never thinking about in the midst of it all.

The narrow focus David held during that sinful time was broadening now and he was beginning to see the bigger picture.

15. And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

16. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

17. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

18. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

19. But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

20. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

21. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

22. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23. But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

24. And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.

We are finally beginning to see some right and some restoration taking place in the life of David. Though the circumstances are tragic, there is understanding of God's work in his life. And we see him, undoubtedly turning a corner.

It is when the lie of his lusting and plotting and covering up is revealed and he is confronted with truth that this takes place. Truth, reality, is key. But there is much more that we see in his story based on Psalm 51:

(To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the Prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.)

1. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Mercy is certainly what was needed. This is not receiving what you certainly deserve.

In this appeal to mercy, there was an acknowledgement of God's character - His lovingkindness and multitude of tender mercies. We must remember who our God is - allowing Him to deal with our transgressions.

2. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

After reading the account, we see the need for washing and cleansing. There is a dirtiness to it that we see and feel.

3. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

We have seen already that he acknowledged this sin, but was dealing with it in heart and mind and conscience and in circumstance.

Spurgeon writes of this verse: "My sin as a whole is never out of my mind; it continually oppresses my spirit. I lay it before thee because it is ever before me: Lord, put it away both from thee and me. To an awakened conscience, pain on account of sin is not transient and occasional, but intense and permanent, and this is no sign of divine wrath, but rather a sure preface of abounding favour."

4. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

There is an understanding of the situation and of self shown here. David, as we are, was a sinner by birth and by choice.

There is a desire for the change to go deep here. Not just a change of behavior or even disposition, but of the inner man, that which is inside.

This is the only way lasting change comes - if it is from the inside out.

Truth must grip us inside. It must replace the lies Satan tells and the lies we tell ourselves.

7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
8. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
9. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

The purging and washing (and the broken bones) must come before the gladness and rejoicing.

Our sin must be blotted out by God.

10. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
11. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.
12. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.
13. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.
14. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

There is a desire for cleansing that leads to singing. Without the clean heart and the right spirit and the deliverance from guilt, we cannot come to the place of praise.

15. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
16. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.
17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.
18. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
19. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

Instead of the displeasure of God that we ended with last week, we see God pleased with sacrifice here. But this is only after the sin is dealt with in a deep and lasting way - in total reliance upon him, never self.