Greetings and happy Monday, everyone!

Resuming our walk through the Bible, today we will turn to the book of 2 Samuel, continuing with the so-called “historical books.”

2 Samuel is really the story of King David, who ruled over the “golden age” of ancient Israel. David was a complex man, and Scripture twice records that he was “a man after God’s own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). So, this week, we will look at four main characters in the book of 2 Samuel, and what they might be teaching us today. Those characters are David, his personal prophet Nathan, his wife Michal, and lastly, Bathsheba.

David is generally regarded as one of the greatest men in the Old Testament. His name stands together with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and so on. And with good reason. He enters the story as a shepherd boy chosen personally by the Almighty: “So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord was upon David in power” (1 Samuel 16:13).

He was a psalmist, a poet, a giant killer, a great king, and an ancestor of Jesus. God makes the profound promise to him that “your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever” (2 Samuel 7:16). This promise would be fulfilled in the person of Jesus.

And yet, David was also an adulterer, liar, and murderer. The Bible makes no attempt to hide David’s many transgressions. In fact, it uses them to teach us today the lesson that no sin, no matter who commits it, is without consequence. David’s adultery with Bathsheba, and the subsequent order to have her husband murdered, cost him greatly. God took from him the son (his firstborn) that Bathsheba had with him.

However, while David sinned greatly, he did not commit the same sins repeatedly. He acknowledged them and sought the Lord’s forgiveness. When Nathan confronts David with his sin involving Bathsheba (more on that tomorrow), David immediately takes responsibility: “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Samuel 12:7).

So, what do we learn from the life of David? Here’s what I think:

- Willingly and honestly admitting our mistakes is the first step in dealing with them;
- Forgiveness absolves us of our sin, but not necessarily its consequences;
- God greatly desires our complete trust and obedience.

Tomorrow: Nathan takes a stand.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
March 8, 2022

Grace and peace to you this day.

Continuing our brief study of the book of 2 Samuel, today we will look at King David’s personal prophet, Nathan.

Prophets to kings had tough jobs. Kings yielded absolute power, including the power of life and death. They were egotistical, fickle, narcissistic, and self-centered. David was no exception.

When he spies Bathsheba taking a bath on her rooftop, David commands that she visit him, and he sleeps with her. She would have had no choice. Then he doubles down on his sin and has her husband Uriah, who was a military commander, sent to the front lines where he surely would be killed.

The Lord then sends Nathan to David to confront David with his sin. Nathan has a choice. He can either obey the Lord, in which case he would be risking his life by confronting the king in this way. Or, he could disobey the Lord and not follow His command out of fear of David. Nathan chooses to obey the Lord and confronts David.

Here’s the scene:

Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house and your master’s wives into your keeping and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.’” So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Samuel 12:7-13).

One can only believe that the mighty King David respected Nathan’s courage by speaking the truth, but also his faithfulness and obedience to the Lord. As a result, David admits his sin.

What do we learn? Obedience to the Lord is always the right answer. Faithfulness to the Lord is always the right course of action. As my own father used to say, “You can’t go wrong by doing right.”

Tomorrow: David creates a woman scorned.

IHS, Pastor Lou
Greetings to you this day.

2 Samuel chapter 6 records the story of how King David finally brings the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. The hated enemy of the Israelites, the Philistines, had captured it and essentially held it captive. David defeats the Philistines and brings the Ark, containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments, back to Jerusalem.

The walk back was a joyous parade. This was a great cause to celebrate. This is how Scripture records it:

“Then David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet” (6:14-15).

However, Michal, David’s first wife (and Saul’s daughter), was anything but pleased. This is what happens next:

“Now as the ark of the Lord came into the City of David, Michal, Saul’s daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart…Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, ‘How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself’” (6:14, 20).

Let’s just say that David was exuberant before the Lord. And Michal was embarrassed at his unabashed display as well as jealous and flat out angry at the way he danced with the slave girls along the way. Ultimately, David responds to her by saying “I’m the king, I can do whatever I want. And by the way, you ain’t seen nothing yet.” Because of her bitterness, she remained childless for the rest of her life.

So, what do we make of this? Whether or not her feelings were justified, Michal allowed jealousy and bitterness to carry the day…and the rest of her life. She was never able to let it go. As a result, her marriage to David was ruined, as was her relationship with the Lord. She lived and died full of resentment and loneliness.

All of us have been wronged in relationship and in life. No one, and I mean no one, knows that better than the One who went to the cross.

Tomorrow: Back to Bathsheba

IHS,

Pastor Lou
Greetings to you this day in the name of the Messiah.

Today is our final day in the book of 2 Samuel, and I’d like to go back to the story of David and Bathsheba. Here’s how Scripture tells it:

“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, 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.’ 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. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, ‘I am pregnant’” (2 Samuel 11:2-5).

I find this to be one of the most tragic, and at the same time, one of the most instructive, passages in the Old Testament.

David’s sin starts as many sins do, with temptation. In this case, two human qualities collide: the power and ego of David, and the sensual beauty of Bathsheba. David’s temptation takes the next step: action. He sends someone to inquire about her, and in doing so, involves another person. The circle of sin widens. Then David’s sin takes another step: fulfillment. David summons her, and he sleeps with her.

What seems like a one-night stand in order to satisfy David’s lust and ego now takes an unexpected, but not surprising twist: Bathsheba is pregnant. And, she’s married. David’s sin now compounds itself as he tries to cover things up. He sends Bathsheba’s husband Uriah, who is a soldier, to the front lines where he is killed, as expected. Problem solved. Or so it seems.

The Lord is angry. Very angry. David is His personal choice to lead Israel. It is on his throne that God promises an eternal ruler. And what starts out at best as frat boy behavior turns into murder and treachery. The price: David and Bathsheba’s son. Actions, particularly sin, have consequences.

If ever there was a tragic figure in the Bible, Bathsheba is surely one of them. She has no choice but to go to the king when summoned. She has no choice but to sleep with him when demanded. As a result, she loses her husband and her child. As is so often the case, what starts out as a mere look, a simple temptation, a thought planted in the mind, turns into a sad tale of heartbreak and sorrow.

Tomorrow: A little gospel bluegrass.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
March 11
Happy Friday, everyone!
Here’s your music devotional. Turn up the music and enjoy!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhNxXBTljfk

IHS,
Pastor Lou