

The Lord sends Nathan to David. We were introduced to Nathan back in chapter 7. Nathan is the prophet who sends the message to David that the Lord will build David a house. Nathan has another message for David. But this message begins with a prophetic story. The story that Nathan tells is an egregious story that offends the sensibilities of anyone who would hear it. In short, the story is about a rich man who takes the one thing a poor man had, his little lamb that was like a pet to him, and ate it with a traveler. This sparks outrage from David. David's morality is ignited. This is wrong and the person who did this deserves to die. He needs to restore fourfold to this poor man because of what he did (cf. Exodus 22:1) and because of his lack of pity.

It is important to see that David is correct in his assessment. What the rich man did was wrong. David sees the ugliness of sin. He recognizes that this lack of pity and egregious sin is worthy of death. Further, a fourfold restoration is required, which is what God's law demanded. This is the picture of repentance. Repentance is not merely saying that we are sorry. Repentance restores and goes above and beyond in the restoration process. This man is required to try to fix what he has done. So we see the extreme debt that is imposed because of sin. He deserves to die and he owes this poor man four lambs. Sin is ugly. What is so sad and yet so true is that it is easy to see the ugliness of other people's sins but not see the ugliness of our own sins! The story is simple and it reveals the ugliness of sin. This man has brazenly harmed someone else.

A Prophetic Rebuke (12:7-12)

Nathan now is able to get through to David. David is the awful person in the story Nathan told. God gave and gave and gave to David. Notice the emphasis of all that God had given to David in verses 7-8. God anointed David king over Israel, delivered him from Saul, gave him his master's house and wives, and gave him the house of Israel and Judah. If this were not enough, God would have given David more. But David took for himself rather than looking for God to give to him.

Verse 9 is very important to David's condemnation. You have despised the word of the Lord. You stopped caring about what God said and did what you wanted to do. You had no concern for what God directed you to do. Further, the condemnation rests on how David handled his sin. Notice that verse 9 does not mention the sexual immorality with Bathsheba. Rather, the condemnation rests on the coverup. Everything that is mentioned are the events after the adultery. David had Uriah killed and took Bathsheba to be his wife to cover up his sin. He compounded more sins upon his sin making matters so dire. David is condemned because he did not seek repentance. Instead, David was seeking to do his will even further.

Finally, the judgment is that what has been done in secret by David will come back upon him publicly (12:10-12). The sword will never leave his house. His wives will be given to his neighbor and he will sleep with them before Israel. Everything that David did will come back upon him.

Confession (12:13)

What David does next is pivotal. Look at verse 13. "I have sinned against the Lord." David receives the rebuke and he confesses. He does not argue with Nathan. He does not make excuses. He does not give his reasons. He does not try to cover up his error before the people of Israel. He does not ask Nathan to honor him before the people. He does not act like Saul and say that he did not do it or that he did obey the voice of the Lord. He does not act like Saul and seek honor. David makes one simple sentence: I have sinned against the Lord.

He owns what he had done without excuse or explanation. He sinned and it does not matter why. Sometimes the truest confessions are short and simple because there really is nothing else to say. Nathan says to David what his sins are. David says that those are his sins. Later kings of Israel and Judah will

respond very poorly to the condemnations. You might remember that King Jehoiakim burns Jeremiah's condemnations and prophetic writings to him. He just shreds the word of the Lord and casts it in the fire. But David simply says that he is sinned against the Lord.

Grace (12:14)

Now we must consider what should happen to David. The penalty for premeditated murder was death according to the Law of Moses. But listen to what Nathan says in verse 13. "The Lord has also put away your sin; you shall not die." These are words of hope. The Lord has put away your sin. It is so important to see that forgiveness can always be found. Grace can be found when we have a truly repentant heart before the Lord. But we cannot miss verse 14.

Just because we are forgiven does not mean that there are not consequences in life for what we have done. Not only has the Lord said that the sword will not leave his house and his wives will be given to another, but in verse 14 Nathan said that the child that will be born to Bathsheba is going to die. The discipline of sin continues even though the stain of sin is forgiven. The child is going to die. Arguably worse than death, David is not only going to watch this baby die, but he will also watch a number of his sons be killed for his sinning. Can you imagine watching your children die because of your own sin? So what are the intended take away messages from this event?

First, you can have it all and it will still not be enough. David had it all and it was not enough. He had to have Bathsheba. The Lord says that David had it all. God had given him everything. But it still will never be enough. Think about David's son, Solomon. He will also have everything given to him from the Lord and it also will not be enough. Look at how much God has given to us! Is it not enough? Are we going to tell God that it is not enough? By the way, like David, can we not ask God for what we need? We have so much from God and we count it as nothing. We act like God has deprived us but please think about all that God has done for you in your life up to this point. Our problem is that we continue to think that one more thing will make us happiness. Happiness is just one more action away. Happiness is just one more possession away. Happiness is just one more job. This is never true. God can give us the whole world and we would not be satisfied. Our sinful hearts always want more. We must not listen to the lie of sin which tells us to just have a little more. We must be satisfied with what God has given to us because it is enough.

Second, sin requires death. The New Testament clearly states what these scriptures reveal. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Our sinning requires death and those who we have hurt should receive fourfold for what we have done to them. Our sins deserve death. Is sin really worth it? Think about what David is experiencing. Was it really worth it? Was Bathsheba really worth all that is going to happen? Was the murder of Uriah to cover up his sin really worth watching his children die? Sin is the foolish exchange of temporary, fleeting pleasure now to receive suffering and pain in the future as well as eternal destruction at the final judgment. Is it really worth it? Is sexual immorality really worth this trade? Is the coverup worth our eternal souls? We need to evaluate the trade we are making. Every sin is us receiving a raw deal. We are getting the worse of the trade. God is trying to give us the best and we keep taking the lesser alternative. Sin requires death. Sin requires restitution for what we have done.

Third, we only live by God's mercy and grace. This is the important theme of the scriptures. We only live by the grace of God. This is the message from the very beginning. Adam and Eve should die for their sins but they live by the grace of God. Cain should die for his sin but he lives by the grace of God. David should die for his sin but he lives by the grace of God. We should die for our sins but we live by the grace of God. We are only here by God's mercy and grace. Ultimately, this event shows us that we need the son of David who will save the people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). Our sins are not to make us hopeless but to look for the savior who will give us the mercy and grace that we need. We deserve death. But Jesus commutes our sentence and gives us life instead