

## 2 Samuel 11:26-12:10, 13-14

What do you give a man who has everything? With Father's Day only a week away, that question may be worth considering. And Wal-Mart will be only too happy to help you figure out an answer. What do you get a king who has everything? Fathers like to think of themselves as being kings of their castles, but what about a real king--a king such as David who, literally, had everything? And even though he had everything, God said, "I would have given you even more if all this were too little for you." But this king who had everything did not want what God could give him. He wanted the wife of Uriah. You know her better as Bathsheba, and you know the story. David observed her from his palace as she was taking a bath. He had his servants bring her up to him. He was drawn to her, had her husband Uriah killed, and then took her to be his wife. And they were going to live happily ever after...or so he thought.

But Samuel writes in our text, "The thing that David had done displeased the Lord." And we might ask, "What thing?" Not turning his eyes away from Bathsheba when he first saw her? Acting on his lust by committing adultery with her? Having her husband killed? Taking her as a wife even though he was already married? Exactly what thing, that David did, displeased the Lord? Was there anything at all that David did that pleased the Lord? Wasn't it all displeasing to Him? David was selfish, lustful, murderous. He was self-centered. He showed no regret, no remorse. He was, through it all, unrepentant. "I'm king," he thought, "so I can do what I want; I can have whatever I want; after all, I'm the king."

Let's bring this thinking home to ourselves. It's not just Dad's who think they are kings of their castles...we all do. All of us are kings in our own minds. And our kingdom may be big or small, but at the very least it includes our own life. We do not pay much attention to what Paul writes in our Epistle, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." We may say, "Christ is King" when we are here in church, but we live as though we are. We rule over our own life. "It's my money," we say, "my body, my time, my Sunday morning, my job, my business, my house, my life." We're kings, you and I. Like David we live how we want, we take what we like, we do what we want to do.

Now David was a man of God, a great man of God, and yet he fell about as far away from God as someone can fall. What caused him to fall? Was it that woman? No, it was his own heart and mind. Back in the Garden of Eden the problem was not with the forbidden fruit; the problem was within Eve, that she desired the fruit. Just so, the problem was not with Bathsheba; the problem was with David--his selfish, arrogant, lustful attitude: "I can do whatever I want...I'm the king."

That's why millions of babies are killed each year through abortion, because many women think they are kings of their bodies. That's why churches struggle to pay their bills, because many church members think they are king of their money. That's why many church pews across our land are mostly empty, because many people think they are king of their time. But if we're kings, what does that make God? Second in command? Lower than that?

The truth is that God is king no matter what we think, say, or do. And because He is king, He can do whatever He wants. What could He have done with David when he sinned? He could have ignored him. He could have looked the other way and done nothing. That's what David should have done with Bathsheba. He should have ignored her. He should have looked the other way. But he didn't. He drew her to himself. He desired her. He chose to love her...to become one with her.

And that is exactly what God does with David. Since David chose to sin, the worst thing of all that God could have done would be to have ignored David's sin. If God had looked the other way; if He had not sent His prophet Nathan to David to confront him, that would have been an action of no mercy whatsoever. David was living in unrepentant sin. Had God not intervened to bring him to repent of his sin, of his arrogance, his selfishness, his unbelief, David would have eventually perished forever.

It's still that way today. Anyone who is living with the arrogant attitude, "I'm king of my life; I'll live how I want," is perishing. Anyone who has set themselves apart from God's Word, apart from His ways and commandments, will be judged. This is not my verdict; this is the clear teaching of the Scriptures. It's a blessing, therefore, when God confronts us, when He deals with us through His called servants, when He refuses to ignore our sin and look the other way. When He shows us that we are wrong, it is God acting in mercy.

God is king, and so He can truly do whatever He wants. What did He do with David? He drew David to Himself. He desired David. He chose to love David. He forgave him. That's not fair, is it? Yes, David told the prophet Nathan that he was sorry for his sin, but David had committed murder, and he was an adulterer. And so that's it? No punishment? Just, "The Lord has taken away your sin"? Just pure and free forgiveness after all the wicked things he had done? Yes, because God is king and He can do what He wants. And God wants to forgive wicked sinners. Even a sinner like David. Even sinners like you and me.

Now when the prophet Nathan came in to confront David, the first words out of his mouth were not, "The Lord forgives you." First he showed him his wickedness. First David repented. Then, through His prophet, God forgave him. Do not leave here today planning on continuing a life of sin. If you are living in sexual sin, repent of it and turn away from it. If you are committing murder by hating someone, repent of it and turn away from it. If you have been king of your money, your time, your body, your life, repent and turn away from your sins. Had David refused to repent of his sin, God's prophet would have refused to give him the word of forgiveness.

But if you, today, have heard the prophet Nathan speaking to you; if you, like David, have remorse, regret, sorrow over your sinful life, then friend, you will depart in peace. God can do whatever He wants. He is king, your king. And He wants to love you. He wants to draw you to Himself in mercy. He wants to forgive you...and he does. Whatever your sin, the Lord's words to David are also for you: "The Lord has taken away your sin; you shall not die." Friend, you shall live forever.

Now it is contended by some that God did punish David for his sin because He told him, "the child who is born to you shall die." Isn't that punishment, to have your child put to death? For David, no. It was sorrowful, terrible sorrow that the son born to him would die. But more than punishment, it was a blessing of God, an act of mercy, because David's grief, his sorrow, would be with him for the rest of his life and would be a constant reminder both of his sins and weaknesses, and of God's mercy and forgiveness. God never wanted David to forget what happened; to never forget how far from grace he fell because he thought, "I'm king...I can live however I want to live." And He never wanted David to forget that even though he had been wicked, God forgave him out of pure grace.

You and I have the same reminder--the death of David's son. Not the son born to him that year...the Son born centuries later through a young virgin by the name of Mary. When God told David, "The child who is born to you shall die," He was also speaking of Jesus, the Son of David, who was born to die for David and also for you, so that you could see His cross before your eyes week after week here

in church, and day after day at home, and you can live in peace believing that because David's Son died on a cross, God forgives you; He is at peace with you.

Friends, what this story should teach us is that if David, a great man of God, could fall, then you and I can fall. Let us fear God's wrath and not live contrary to His commandments. Let us pray that God would root out the arrogance, and selfishness, and lust within us; that we not live as kings over our own lives, but that we daily live in repentance. And this story should also teach us that if God can have mercy on David, He also has mercy on you. God forgave David's lust, and adultery, and murder. He also forgives you for the sake of Jesus. David's greater Son was punished in David's place. He, your living Savior, was also punished for your sins. Believe on Him and you will not die; you will live in heaven for all eternity. Amen.