

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

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Today we will take a look at David and Bathsheba. According to God this is David's greatest sin. It is the ultimate result of a slow slippage, a fall from grace, if you will. It is not a loss of salvation. It is a loss of contact with God, experiential contact with God.

Back in Chapter 7, when God announced the Davidic covenant which promised David a throne forever, an heir on that throne forever and a king forever, David prayed a remarkable prayer which beautifully expressed his rejoicing in the Lord and all that the Lord meant to him, one of the finest prayers in the whole Bible. Then in chapters 8, 9 and 10, we saw his gradual slide. He couldn't seem to handle prosperity. The more he conquered, the more he gained, the more he seemed to rely upon his own resources, and he slowly but surely slipped away from reliance upon God. His ferocity, his butchery, his vindictiveness increased until he became a very cruel, harsh conqueror, particularly with regard to those related to him, nations God had forbidden the Jews to pursue, the Ammonites, the Moabites and the Edomites. It is more or less the end result of his gradual tendency to disregard the knowledge of God.

So let's begin Chapter 11 of II Samuel

II Samuel, 11:1:

Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon [They ravished the land in other words according to I Chronicles] **and besieged Rabbah.** [the capital, a very heavily fortified city] **But David stayed at Jerusalem.**

As we saw last time, David had conquered territory all the way from the border of Egypt south to the Euphrates River north with one exception, Ammon. Now they have ravaged Ammon and are about to take Rabbah, it's the capital city, which was all they had left to take. So David, instead of being at the head of his armies, saw no need to show up and stayed back in Jerusalem doing nothing, idle. In the modern parlance, he had become fat and sassy. There is a statement in I Corinthians 10:12 that says, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." I think this is what happened to David here. He had conquered everything in sight. He had the whole Abrahamic covenant wherein God promised Abraham and his descendants a city "which has foundations whose architect and builder was God" and a land which stretched from Egypt all the way to the Euphrates River. David now had that. So he felt he had made the kingdom which God had promised, and he apparently was quite relaxed about it.

Unfortunately as you begin to relax, that is when you get into trouble. We Christians are a peculiar people. We hate tribulation, [as does everyone actually], but when we tribulate we know we can't handle life and, therefore, are

very conscious of our need of God, our need of the Lord in our lives at all times. Yet when God eases off on the tribulation and gives us times of relaxation, we have a tendency to slough God off. Things are going smoothly, "I don't need God that much," and little-by-little we slip away. So, God has to bring tribulation back into our lives to get us to refocus on him. This is why Scripture says tribulation produces a perseverance, a hanging in there, because apart from tribulation we do not hang in there. We just slide. And David slides.

There is a beautiful picture here of God's attitude toward sexuality. There is an excellent article by a philosophy professor from South Western University on God's idea of sexuality. He points out that sexuality according to God has three distinct orders. One is the creative order, what God made it to be, what God designed it to be. It is an expression of the love of the Trinity for itself. God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them." The husband-wife relationship, the sexual relationship including all that goes into that, the whole marriage relationship, is a picture in the physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual realm down here of what goes on in the Trinity; the love of the Father, for the Son, for the Spirit, for the Father. This, of course, is why God is so adamant about sexual immorality. It violates the picture of the Trinity; that beautiful intimacy which goes on within the Trinity itself. That is why he calls idolatry "a whoring," "going a whoring after other gods." because that is what it is, spiritual fornication. God created sex to be enjoyed thoroughly and completely but within the realm he defined. That is the realm of total commitment because that is the realm in which God enjoys it. The Trinity is committed totally to one another, the Father to the Son to the Spirit, a situation of total commitment. Only in a situation of total commitment can that kind of love be expressed, that kind of abandonment to one another. So God insists that in order to enjoy down here the same kind of abandonment to one another that the Trinity enjoys there has to be, as far as humanly possible, that same kind of total commitment to one another. True love is always a trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is true love. The Lord, the husband and the wife is true love. It always includes a trinity, and it always includes at the center Jesus Christ as Lord. So God insists upon marriage as the only situation in which sex can be enjoyed or practiced in any form. It's not because he is a prude but because he knows that kind of commitment is all that can produce the kind of abandonment the Trinity enjoys. He wants you to experience, as far as you can humanly speaking, what the love of God is really like. That is what God created sex for. He thinks it is great, and His created order is that kind of sex. It is a system of worship. It is the closest thing we will ever experience in this life of two lives becoming one flesh. It is the deepest, the most intimate, the most ecstatic relationship possible between two human beings. But it must be done in the context of a trinitarian relationship; the Lord has to be central. That is the created order.

As part of this order, man was deliberately made to desire woman. Woman was deliberately made to be sensual and desirable to man. You know it inherently. You women know deep in your soul that one of your main desires in life is to produce beauty. One of the things you need most is the desire of your husband, the need of your husband, the love of your husband. God made you that way. God made men to respond to beautiful women or better yet lovely women. It doesn't have to be physical beauty. That is Venus. But God deliberately made you sensual to make a man respond physically, emotionally and spiritually to your sensuality. Sensuality was designed by God not by Playboy. So you two are designed to attract each other, and the woman is designed to draw the male the initiator in the relationship. She is to respond to him. That is holy, righteous, just and good, because that is how God made it when he said in Genesis 1, "It is very good." In the beginning David has this picture of a created order.

Then there is the fallen order. Because we are flawed and fallen creatures, we pervert what God has made for us. We take sexuality and use it to gratify our own needs without too much thought to the other person. It becomes a self-centered rather than an outpouring thing. That is the flawed and fallen order of creation.

Then God has a redemptive order. As he changes lives in Jesus Christ, he begins to change us back to the outpouring, the self-giving. Only as you give of yourself can you ever get that responsive love that is a necessity in any fulfilling relationship.

We are going to see that pictured here. II Samuel 11 & 12 are a beautiful picture of the creative order of God for

sexuality, the flawed and fallen order of God's order for sexuality and then the redemptiveness of God in sexuality.

In verse 1 of II Samuel 11, David was in Jerusalem. He was fat and sassy. He had become hardened by killing so life meant very little to him. He had become very brutal in his attitude toward human life. He was polygamous. At this time, he had probably 6 or 7 wives, maybe up to 10 eventually, plus a number of concubines, nineteen sons and umpteen daughters [They don't list the daughters]. So he was given over to licentiousness. In those days, as a mideastern monarch he could take what he wanted as long as it was available. He could not violate the word of God, but, in the culture of the day, a mideastern monarch could have concubines and also wives. This was not God's choice, but it was the culture of the day. God tries to lead a person out of the culture, but God does not smash the culture. So David was living in a culture that promoted licentiousness. David had become hardened to life itself, especially regarding anyone who opposed him, and he had become hardened to love itself. It had become license. He gratified his needs at the expense of people's lives, their bodies. So with this background let us see, now, what is happening to David.

II Samuel 11:2:

Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. [The Hebrew is far stronger than that. The Hebrew says "the woman was beautiful in appearance, very!" That is a "whistle" in Hebrew. She was something. She was not the brightest girl in all the world, as we see in I Kings, but she was beautiful.] **So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" And David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.**

First the created order. David is a male. God made him with certain drives, certain hormones, and they are God given. He is walking around on the roof of his palace, which is the highest point in the city, and he is looking down and sees Bathsheba taking a bath. She is pretty enough with clothes on; without them she is devastating. Now, nothing is wrong yet. As a male he is made sensuous by God. What he does with the sensuality is what counts. You men, I am a male. What do you do when you see a pretty woman? You can either glorify God or you can gratify the lust of the flesh, and just like that [a snap of the fingers]! I discovered a very interesting principle in my life. I see a beautiful woman, and I automatically look if she is pretty. There is nothing wrong with that. But what do I do when I look? Do I thank God for beautiful women and turn my eyes away, or do I take an inventory? One is God's created order and the other is the fallenness and flawedness of God's order. Each of us has to make that decision [especially if you work where I used to work] a dozen times a day. Each Tuesday, in order to eat with some "unbelieving" friends, I had to go into a part of town that was given over to license and vice. I discovered I had to walk up those streets looking up at the sky, down at the ground or at the Mercedes Benzs going by. I couldn't look at the billboards which were life-sized and nude or the women who were life-sized and nude or even at the hawkers on the street who were life-sized and not quite nude. It had to be eyes front, eyes up or eyes down. It is a wonder I didn't get killed crossing the street. I discovered I could get through there if I just kept looking up or down or at the cars and thanking the Lord for beautiful women, and thanking the Lord for beautiful women, and thanking the Lord for beautiful women and not doing what I wanted to do which was look. I was making choices not to violate God's created order. I couldn't stop the hormones. They were there. He put them there, but I could stop what I did with them.

Comment from class: I was listening to Billy Graham on a talk show the other day, and he was trying to explain this very concept to the host. The host was having a very hard time with it. What he seemed to be saying was he didn't want anyone to take away his privilege to do what he wanted according to how he felt. At least that is how it came across to me. He really couldn't accept anything that was telling him he should have some check or some control on himself.

Bob's response: Sure. We are talking "Lordship" here. When Jesus is Lord, I do not have rights. We have to face up to that. When I say "Jesus is Lord," I have given up my rights. Lord is "kurios," slave-owner. Not only monarch and sovereign, but slave-owner. I become "doulos," the lowest slave in the Roman Empire. I am a

two-legged animal with no rights, no protection under law, nothing. I can be killed, maimed, tortured, body and soul, whatever my master chooses to do. There was no SPCA for Roman slaves in the first century. The moment I say I am "doulos" and he is "kurios," I have made an irrevocable contract, and He is going to make sure that both of us live up to it. It can be either easy or hard. In this case it is the hard way. He doesn't violate my will. As "kurios" He still loves me, and lovers always get options. True love always gives the beloved options. Once I am his I can call him Lord, but at the same time I can choose not to let him be Lord. He allows that choice. Now the results can be very painful. He does not take away my choice, but he does not take away the consequences either. He really loves me even after I am a slave.

Comment from class: The only question I have is why didn't Bathsheba put up some kind of fight?

Bob's response: Now that is a good question, and I think Bathsheba was probably part of the problem. There are commentators that believe she deliberately enticed David. I don't know whether I can go that far. We don't know. We do know she didn't yell. The law of God said that if a woman was taken in adultery in the field, even if she was betrothed or married while the man was claiming she was not, she could cry out but no one would hear her. However, if she was taken in the city and she didn't yell, she could maybe still get taken, but she had better yell. If she didn't, they were both slain. By her silence she tacitly agreed to the situation whether she was betrothed or married, and she had to be slain along with the man. God has rough rules for chastity. He is really committed to it. Bathsheba didn't yell, so you can interpret it any way you want. I don't think she really meant to entice him, but I also don't think she fought very much. He was king. She was the wife of Uriah the Hittite who was one of the 30. Yes, he was a great warrior, but David was king. That is a lot better than a Lieutenant-Colonial. So I don't think she planned the whole thing, but I don't think she resisted too much either. She didn't cry out so she was guilty. This, of course, explains her plaintive plea, "I am pregnant.' You had better do something about us, or we are going to be a pile of rocks outside of Jerusalem." So I don't know what went on in her mind. She didn't cry out.

He looked down and saw her bathing. She was very beautiful in appearance, "she was beautiful, very!", so he looked, and there was nothing wrong with that. You might even argue that in the culture of that day [even though the kings of Israel didn't have the right to unlimited concubines and wives] that sending to inquire about her may not yet have been sin. That is getting pretty close though. But once he sent and inquired and found out, "Is that not Bathsheba the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite," and, by the way, the granddaughter of Ahithophel his counselor, of all the women in all of Israel he should not have touched, she was the one.

Have you ever noticed that when you want to do your own thing, God goes first class either to bless you or to curse you? He never goes half way. If you want to step out of line, he is going to let you go first class all the way down the tube into the gutter, and it will be the dirtiest, guckiest, nastiest gutter you can find. Or if you want to obey him, he will bless you, cleanse you and make you holy and gorgeous, but God never stops halfway in the pendulum. He either takes you way over here to glory, or he takes you way over here to filth. You can't ever balance it out. Nowhere can you hit a nice neutral place with a little bit of glory and a little bit of dirt. God won't do it. Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam, one of the 37 formidable warriors in Israel; David's most trusted men; his closest friends. She was the wife of Uriah the Hittite another member of the 30, another of his best friends. And she was the granddaughter of Ahithophel, David's counselor, the wisest man in Israel. [Incidentally, we are going to see Ahithophel come back and get his revenge later on.] David could not have picked a worse person to play footsies with than this girl. David had to make a choice. He had to either thank God and walk away or to follow through. He made the wrong choice, and God went first class and let him go down the tube.

II Samuel 11:4:

And David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.

Isn't it amazing how religious we get in our sin? Under the Levitical law any issue out of a human body, such as pus, or menstrual fluid or seminal fluid made you unclean. You had to go through the ceremony of purification. David disobeyed both the tenth commandment which was "...You shall not covet your neighbor's wife..." and the seventh commandment which was "You shall not commit adultery," but they were very careful to go through the

purification ceremony.

How we strain out the gnat while we swallow the camel. I love the Lord's imagery here. He has an ironic and beautiful sense of humor. He talks about removing the speck from your brother's eye while you have a beam in your own eye. The word for "speck" is the word "sliver." It is the same material as the beam. So here you are trying to get the sliver out of your brother's eye while you have this great big telephone pole protruding from your own eye, and you're beating his head against the wall while you are trying to reach him. You are knocking the fellow out trying to get that sliver out of his eye while the same material, only of magnificent size, is coming out of your own eye.

So they go through the ceremony of purification; everything is hunky-dory, and they go back to their houses as if nothing had happened.

There is only one problem. In the beginning David sent messengers to find out who Bathsheba was. He wasn't too quiet about it, and this was the palace. One of the things they love to do in palaces is gossip, and there were factions all over this place. Then he sent messengers and took her. He might as well have put up a neon sign, "I am committing adultery with Bathsheba." It is all over chapter 12 that one of the reasons God denounced David was because, "...by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme..." So it became well known everywhere. What David thought he was doing in secret, God was putting in a neon sign with a big arrow flashing on and off.

Now here is the tragedy. Once you yield to the depravity of the flesh, once you start your trip into sin, you are pulled deeper and deeper into sin. God goes first class either direction.

I Samuel 11:5:

And the woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, "I am pregnant." Then David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked concerning the welfare of Joab and the people and the state of the war. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house, and wash your feet." [This is a Hebrew expression for "Relax and enjoy yourself." It is R&R, "Rest and Recreation." Go down to your house and have some rest and recreation. You know exactly what he wants Uriah to do.] And Uriah went out of the king's house, and a present from the king was sent out after him. [A little bit of guilt coming into Israel] But [Uriah is no dummy either. He has heard the word] Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.

David started out with deceit. That was his first trip. He sent and asked Joab to send Uriah back with a report of the battle; Uriah, one of the commanders, one of his chief warriors. He needed that report like he needed another hole in the head. Then secondly, he made a choice not to confess his sin before God but to cover it, to rationalize it, to try and hide it. This began his downfall. When Uriah arrived David talked to him as two old warriors might talk; warriors who have been through a lot of bloodshed together, who have fought together and are "good ole buddies." He gives him the treatment, "How's the war going? How are the men doing? O.K., you are back, go on home and have a little R&R." Well, Uriah is no dummy. He gets the message. You don't send for one of your chief commanders to bring back a message. You have messengers to do that. He can smell a phony a mile off. Even with the present which David sends with him, he doesn't go down to his house but sleeps with the servants of the lord which gives him all kinds of witnesses that he never went near his wife. Things are not quite so simple now, but you can see David's rationalization. He just figures, "Well, it really isn't that bad. After all I am getting Uriah a child, and it might even be a son [In fact it was a son, as we know.] So he will have the joy of another child. No one will know. No one will get hurt. Besides Uriah will have another child." Offspring were welcome in those days, particularly sons. Of course, David didn't know at the time that it was going to be a son. He could rationalize, though, "We really aren't hurting anybody. Uriah's going to have the joy of another offspring, and he'll never know. So, it's not that bad."

Then since that didn't work, he went from deceit into degeneracy. Things were getting a little tougher now, and

David was looking out for number one. Now here comes the callousness, the hardness that has been building into his life, both toward women as objects of sex and towards friends who get in the way.

II Samuel 11:10:

Now when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," [Apparently David inquired first thing in the morning] **David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"** [Well, he is really tipping his hand now. He is getting a little panicky] **And Uriah said to David,** [What a stinging rebuke] **"The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelters,** [They are out in tents on the battlefield apparently taking the ark of God with them] **and my lord Joab** [the chief general] **and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field.** [They are fighting a war out there, David, for you!] **Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife?** [He knows what David is after.] **By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing.**" [That should have hit David right between the eyes. Here was a trusted friend really socking it to him. So what does he do?] **Then David said to Uriah, "Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will let you go." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. Now David called him, and he ate and drank before him, and he made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his bed with his lord's servants, but he did not go down to his house.**

You can see his reaction now, "Well, I really didn't want to do this to Bathsheba, but for both our sakes I have to do something, so I'll get this turkey drunk; I'll get his inhibitions removed and he'll go down there and simply rape his wife in a drunken orgy." How much love does he have for Bathsheba now? Probably about as much love as he ever had for her. He doesn't mind allowing a drunken man to go down there and use her as long as he keeps himself out of hot water.

It is helpful to be able to read the Bible alongside mideastern literature of the time. In those days, they never ever chronicled anything bad about a king. The chronicler would lose his head or be fried over a slow fire. Maybe they could write disparagingly about kings of other countries but their kings were splendid creatures. They made no mistakes. They had no sin. They never lost a battle, as a matter of fact. The only way you can tell who won a battle in those ancient histories is to figure out where the boundaries shifted. Archaeology tells you who moved into where because the culture changed. But when Egypt and Syria banged heads, they both had fabulous victories. They created huge steles, granite slabs, denoting all that happened and all they each conquered. The only problem is you discover the Syrian stele is way down in Egypt. So Egypt probably didn't win. Now, here we have God's best king, his highest king, a "man after God's own heart," and God is laying out, just as plain as can be, all of his weaknesses. God doesn't cover up anything. So, we see David with no attitude toward Bathsheba except what is obviously rationalization, "Really, it is for both our sakes." She would be stoned too, and so again he can rationalize away making use of her as a vehicle to hide their sin.

Comment from class: If he had not killed Uriah, and it had become obvious to everybody what he had done, would they have stoned a king?

Bob's response: God forgave him. That is the tragedy of it. We are going to discover that they didn't. Under law they should have, yes, but God makes the laws. David confesses, and he doesn't get stoned. But now he doesn't have any experience with his Lord any more. He has hardened himself and cut himself off from God, and God is way off there somewhere. All he can see is the harshness of the law, and it is pretty harsh. Take them both out and stone them and raise up a pile of stones over them as a memorial. He doesn't really grasp the forgiveness of God until chapter 12. All he can see, being away from God, is the severity of the law, and it is pretty plain. It makes no exceptions for kings. Only God, who makes the law, can make exceptions to it, and David has no insurance that he is going to be an exception.

Well, when getting Uriah drunk doesn't work, poor Uriah signs his own death warrant. He doesn't realize that David has become so hardened he will kill anybody.

II Samuel 11: 14:

Now it came about in the morning that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he had written in the letter, saying, "Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him, so that he may be struck down and die." [Now this was one of his best friends. One of his greatest warriors. He has fought shoulder to shoulder with him for 20 long years] So it was as Joab kept watch on the city, that he put Uriah at the place where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city went out and fought against Joab, and some of the people among David's servants fell; and Uriah the Hittite also died.

David figured, "All I want is to get Uriah killed, and he is forcing me to do it. I really don't want to do that, but he is forcing my hand. What kind of a scandal will rock the government when they find out what has happened. Isn't it expedient that the life of one man should be sacrificed lest the whole nation perish?" as Caiaphas said a thousand years later. So he writes this letter and then has the unmitigated gall to send that death warrant by the very man who is going to be killed. He says, "Throw him out in front and when he's out there, withdraw from him." Well, Joab is no dummy either. David is no dummy. Uriah is no dummy and Joab is sure no dummy. If he pulls back like that, he is obviously implicated in the plot. Though Joab cares little for human life, he does care about Joab and his power. You can imagine the thoughts going through his mind. Joab is a vicious killer. He is unscrupulous and unprincipled. He killed Abner in a city of refuge just to get even with him and also to remove him as a possible contender for the key generalship. But David is a very religious man, a very godly man, he is the writer of the Psalms. You can imagine what Joab is thinking, "David writes beautiful psalms on Sunday, but on Monday when he wants his dirty work done, while he may not like me, he always comes to Joab." David, as we know, is frightened of Joab and his hold over the army. So now what has David done? He has put himself completely in the power of this man he knows to be evil, unscrupulous and power hungry.

Comment from class: Isn't it interesting that Uriah was so trustworthy that David could trust him with his own death warrant knowing Uriah would not open that message even though he was a general and might have the privilege. It was addressed to Joab, and he could be trusted to carry that message.

Bob's response: Sure! Uriah was an honorable man. David was one of his best friends. He had tried to make David face up to what he was doing but David hadn't. After all the father of his wife was one of David's best friends. The grandfather of his wife was David's chief counselor. What would you think? "If there is anybody I can trust it is David. He is not very bright, and he did something odious but at least he is trustworthy."

So Joab is not going to withdraw. That would put him on the spot, "So, we lose a few more Israelites." He sends a band to assault the gate of the city. That is the strongest point and where the most valiant men always sit because it is the key point in taking the city. He doesn't send a very large force out, so the people come out of the city gates and chase the Israelites. The Israelites in turn chase the people back into the gates and that gets Uriah right up alongside the wall, up under the archers. Unfortunately getting Uriah up there meant not only Uriah but also the leader of the band and a whole group of Jews get killed, but it protects Joab. He doesn't care how many Jews get killed as long as he doesn't get hurt. David is now a multiple murderer.

See! we never sin as an island. A little thing like nobody getting hurt never works out that way. So now there are a whole group of new widows and fatherless children in Israel because David looked over a wall and didn't turn away and thank the Lord for beautiful women. He never dreamed that would happen when he took that first look, looked again, took an inventory, sent and inquired and finally took her. He didn't dream he would end up a multiple murderer, but he did. And look at how hard he is.

II Samuel 11:18

Then Joab sent and reported to David all the events of the war. And he charged the messenger, saying, "When you have finished telling all the events of the war to the king, and if it happens that the king's wrath rises [Any fool knows you don't go near the archers. Any fool knows a skilled general never sends his troops against the wall where they can shoot down on you and you are helpless. So David ought to be real angry because that is a dumb move, but at least it isn't an obvious move] and he says to you, "Why did you go so near to the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot

from the wall? Who struck down Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall so that he died at Thebez? [This is back in the book of Judges. Abimelech attacked the city. God had a judgment on him. He is slain. He got too close to the city and a woman up on the wall threw a millstone and crushed his skull, and when he was dying he had a young man kill him because it could not be said that he was killed by a woman, but he was. "Don't you remember your history, Joab, you dummy. You don't go near the wall. Even a woman can kill you from the wall." And Joab knows this, and he figures David is going to talk like this. So he says, "When David says this, when his wrath rises from my stupidity...] **Why did you go so near the wall?" - then you shall say, "Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also."** [Joab knows his David. "That will buy his off. I did his dirty work for him, and he sure had better not say anything about my generalship. And that appraisal sheet had better not have any marks on it when it comes out next year. I've got him there and I am going keep him there." He does, by the way] **So the messenger departed and came and reported to David all that Joab had sent him to tell. And the messenger said to David, "The men prevailed against us and came out against us in the field, but we pressed them as far as the entrance of the gate. Moreover, the archers shot at your servants from the wall; so some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead."** [The messenger doesn't follow orders. He is so afraid of David and the stupidity of this move that he wants it blurted out right away, "Hey, some got killed, but Uriah got killed also." He figures David is going to be madder than heck, and David is a very violent man. But look at old David. My how he has mellowed.] **Then David said to the messenger, "Thus you shall say to Joab, 'Do not let this thing displease you, ["This dumb mistake of yours Joab, don't have guilt over it. Don't feel sorry that you did this stupid thing."] for the sword devours one as well as another; [c'est la guerre] make your battle against the city stronger and overthrow it;' and so encourage him."** [Where is the sweet Psalmist of Israel? The flesh sure stinks, doesn't it? The spirit writes the psalms and the flesh just murders, callously murders. Then the result is hardening his heart against God. David is very religious even when he is evil.] **Now when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband** [Mourning period was seven days. David has a nine-month period to deal with. He has to get in a hurry here. People can count.] **When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife;** [At least in their eyes] **then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord.**

He not only sinned against man, he sinned against God. And that last verse says God can deal with it. See, David had actually done nothing more than any ordinary mideastern monarch would do. They had absolute power. If they wanted some woman, they took her, and if anyone got in the way they killed them. This was the right of kings. So he has done nothing more than any other normal, ordinary orient monarch would do. It was not that bad in the culture. What was the difference between David and any other ordinary normal oriental monarch? David was God's anointed. David was God's king. God had plans to reign through a physical king, and he made no bones about it back in Deuteronomy, "I choose the king, and I reign through the king, and this is what you do, king. Here are the rules you follow, king. And let us have an understanding about who is king in Israel." And God said he chose a "man after his own heart." This doesn't sound very godly does it? So god is going to make David a man after God's own heart. It is called the woodshed treatment.

Comment from class: I am just curious about Solomon who was a product of this union. Why, when this was an evil union in the first place, would God pick Solomon to reign after David?

Bob's response: I won't tell you until Chapter 12. Next week you will find out.

God lets the pagans, who are not anointed of him, not chosen of him, go their own way and just gives them up to what they have chosen; but when God chooses somebody he never gives them up. He never lets them go. Now, God has chosen every believer in this room who names Jesus as Lord, and no matter what our culture is, we cannot do what the ordinary fellow does and get away with it. God is committed to making us a man or a woman after his own heart, and he will do anything necessary to make us exactly like he says "after his own heart." I cannot justify my actions by the culture about me. I must judge my actions by the word of God because that is how he judges them. That is his basis. Next week we'll see how he does it.

Father, we just thank you for the fact that you are a faithful God and that you are committed to us