

## 2 Samuel 12:1-23

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 30 November 2025

Preacher: Joe Sutton

[ 0 : 00 ] Session 29 in our studies in Samuel, for those who are counting.! Today we'll cover through verse 23 of chapter 12 in 2 Samuel.

! I definitely need to give this some prayer.

As I said, it was a tough passage. It is a tough study with some very, very difficult themes. And I'm not sure I have the right words, if I'm honest.

So, Lord, I commit to you this study. I praise you, Lord, that your Holy Spirit is here in this very room. And I just wait on you, Lord, to take over.

Lord, I thank you for your word. I thank you, Lord, for the time you've given me this week to prepare. I thank you, Lord God, for the things that you've shown me, Lord. But I know what I need, Lord.

[ 1 : 08 ] And what we need is you to teach and you to speak. So, Lord, I just want to surrender now to you. I want to hand over the reins to you. I pray that you would take over, that you would speak.

And, Lord, that we all, including me, would have ears to hear today. Lord, I pray that you would take these tough things and help us to understand them, help us to apply them, and bless them to us.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. So, arguably, David is at the peak of his success. Or he has been.

We've seen him have victory all through chapter 10. He's been subduing the nations around them or forming alliances with them. And it seems that he just can't go wrong, militarily speaking.

There's success on every side. He's having sons. Jerusalem is the capital. Everything is going so well. And in that time, he fell into this most egregious sin, the sin with Bathsheba.

[ 2 : 10 ] And last time we saw that described. And the context for it, as you remember, was the war with Ammon. And the people of Ammon, who'd hired the Arameans to help them. And the Ammonites had retreated into their heavily fortified city of Rabah.

And that is where they remain, as we pick up the story today. And the Arameans tried to counterattack, but they were heavily defeated at the end of chapter 10.

And that's kind of where we left it off. David sent off Joab, the general, to keep the pressure on the Ammonites. And David stayed at home in Jerusalem. And there, at that time, that one sleepless evening, he went out for a walk and he saw Bathsheba.

And we went through the account. He lusted. He was tempted. He gave way to that temptation. He took her and he raped her.

There's no indication that there was anything consensual about it. So I think we can safely call it that. And then when it transpired that she was pregnant from that, he then attempted to deceitfully manipulate her husband's Uriah to spend the night with her so that everyone would think the child was his.

[ 3 : 25 ] That failed. And so he finally sent him to his death and married Bathsheba. And they all lived happily ever after. Oh, I'm sorry.

No, it says the thing was evil in the sight of the Lord. And we picked on a couple of application points as we went through that, that it came at a time of prosperity.

And, you know, let he who thinks he stand take heed lest he fall. We saw how sin leads to more sin as one tries to cover it up. And we ended last time with the gospel hope.

Because even this heinous sin as it is, is forgiven. And it's forgivable. And that's what we'll see today as we see repentance, repentance of David.

And I think it would be difficult for us to fully appreciate the level of indignation that God has over sin.

[ 4 : 20 ] In fact, David himself, in Psalm 7, wrote these two verses. Verses 11 and 12 of Psalm 7. He said that God is a righteous judge and a God who shows indignation every day.

Every day God is indignant at sin. And if one does not repent, he will sharpen his sword. He has bent his bow and taken aim. So David knows how seriously God takes sin.

And if we remember the narrative, God removed Saul because of sin. You know, we saw him, what did he do?

He offered a sacrifice that he wasn't eligible to offer. And he's like, well, the people were getting all impatient with me. And then he failed to carry out the command and he didn't kill the king Agag when he should have done.

And he kept the cattle. And you could argue, that's not quite as bad as rape and murder. And I think that would be something to that.

[ 5 : 22 ] But he was disobedient to God and he did not repent. He didn't repent when he was faced with the prophet Samuel. In fact, he just tried to defend himself.

Oh, the people made me do it. Oh, I kept them for the Lord. You can't disobey the Lord for the Lord. I'm sorry. And from there, he descended into greater and greater sin. And we've seen him consult a witch.

We've seen him murder priests. It's been pretty bad. But the first two sins he did were enough for God to say, Saul, you're out. You're out.

And I'm going to find someone else. And he finds David. And then David does this. What's going to happen? Well, what's going to happen is he's going to send a prophet by the name of Nathan.

And this is where we'll pick it up in a moment. Nathan, the word means gift or given. And surely he is a gift to David. A great gift. As I studied this and as I studied Nathan, I was reminded of this from Proverbs 27 verses 5 through 6.

[ 6 : 25 ] It says, Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. And so often what we need is a friend who's willing to come alongside and say, Bro, you're wrong.

And that is what we see in Nathan. Now, Nathan is someone whom we have seen previously. Chapter 7. We saw him bring the word of the Lord to David for that great covenant.

So David has met Nathan. It would seem that Nathan has the ability to go right in and talk to the king. But let us not think that there's anything other than a great power imbalance here.

If David said off with his head, his head would come off. So Nathan is stealing himself to do what the Lord is calling him to do. Let's read.

We're reading from verses 1 through 6, 2 Samuel 12. Then the Lord sent Nathan to David, and he came to him and said, There were two men in the city, the one wealthy and the other poor.

[ 7 : 35 ] The wealthy man had a great many flocks and herds, But the poor man had nothing at all except one little ewe lamb, which he bought and nurtured, and it grew up together with him and his children.

It would eat scraps from him, literally his morsel. And the implication there is that he didn't have a lot of food, and what he did have he shared with the lamb. So there's a level of intimacy and sharing in poverty that is there, that I think the New American fails to put across.

So he would eat scraps from him, and drink from his cup, and lie in his lap, and was like a daughter to him. And if you remember that the word daughter is bat, or bath, then you may see a little hint there, bath, Sheba.

She was like a daughter to him. Now a visitor came to the wealthy man, and he could not bring himself to take any animal from his own flock, or his own herd, to prepare for the traveller who had come to him.

So he took the poor man's ewe lamb, and prepared it for the man who had come to him. Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, As the Lord lives, the man who has done this certainly deserves to die.

[ 8 : 51 ] Literally, he is a son of death. So he must make restitution for the lamb four times over, since he did this thing, and has no compassion.

So what's happened here is that Nathan has told a parable. Of course, something we're very familiar with. We're reading through Matthew, and we see Jesus teaching in parables. It is something that you see less frequently in the prophets, but they are there, and here is an example. And it's a great story. It's so rich in detail. It really does draw you in, and you can see how David gets emotionally invested in this thing.

It almost reads like he interrupts. Nathan doesn't have time to start going on to the moral of the story is. David's like, This is awful. He's a son of death. David really got invested. Great parable. His anger burns greatly against the man, we read. There is no man. He's entirely fictitious. But it leads David to see sin and denounce it.

[10:00] Isn't it always easier to see the sin in somebody else than in somebody else, than in ourselves? And so David says that the man is a son of death, which means he's worthy of death, and he must make fourfold restitution.

If you check Exodus 22, verse 1, which we will not do, you will see that this is the correct Torah pronunciation for one who steals a lamb.

Correct penalty. See? So, and what I don't know is whether the parable was from the Lord, or whether this is Nathan using the gifts that God has given him to do the ministry of the Lord.

I don't know. Interesting, isn't it? But as we read on, we now see this is what the Lord says. So verse 7, Nathan then said to David, You yourself are the man.

This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says. It is I who anointed you as king over Israel, and it is I who rescued you from the hand of Saul. I also gave you your master's house, and put your master's wives into your care.

[11:12] And I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these. Why then have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in his sight?

You have struck and killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword. You have taken his wife as your wife, and you have slaughtered him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. Now then, the sword shall never leave your house, because you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.

Whew! So, God's word. This is the word of the Lord. This is God's word through Nathan. And he begins by recounting how the Lord has blessed David.

He's anointed him as king, 1 Samuel 16. He's rescued him from the hand of Saul, 1 Samuel 19, all the way through to the end. He's given him his master's house. And we've read in 2 Samuel how David indeed ascended to the throne, actually.

And he did take more. He certainly had more territory. He took Jerusalem. So he took what Saul had and much more besides. And then that slightly remarkable comment, and his master's wives.

[12:32] Did David take Saul's wives? How many wives does Saul even have? It's a little bit mysterious. Only one of Saul's wives is named. But according to the word of the Lord here, he had more than one.

And the Lord gave them into David's care. It could be a simple rhetorical device for the Lord saying, I gave you the power.

I gave you everything Saul had. His power, his influence. It could be that. But bearing in mind verse 11, the judgment is, I'm going to raise up evil, and I'm going to take your wives and give them to your companion.

It seems to me that there's a parallel in the blessing and the judgment. So I think we should take verse 8 as literal too. God did give Saul's wives to David. Which reminds us then to, we remember that David was polygamous.

This is not God's ideal. This is not what God wants. It is something that God seems to tolerate, permit for David and for some of the kings.

[13:38] But God's intention, one man, one woman for life. But we've talked about that before, so we don't need to dwell on it further. But I want you to observe this. And this is an important thing.

And this is where we start to get quite heavy. Verse 9 says, doing evil is to despise the word of the Lord. Or shown contempt for the word of the Lord.

And then in verse 10 it says, you have despised me. You have despised me, David. To consciously choose to disobey God's word is to despise it, and it is to despise the author.

God. The Hebrew word baza for despise means to hold in contempt, to count it as of little significance. It's a light thing.

So you'll often see baza opposite to words like kavod, which means heavy or glory. So it's treating God and what he says as trivial.

[14:49] It doesn't matter what God says. It doesn't matter. I'm going to do what I want to do. So examples. Esau. He baza his birthright. He considered his birthright to be a trivial thing compared to

his growling belly.

Example. Goliath despised David. He's just a kid. What's he going to do? Right? It is in your heart counting something as trivial. So again, the opposite would be to honour.

The opposite would be to fear. The opposite is to consider of the greatest significance, the highest value, even above fine gold. So I want to call that word out now, and we'll come back to that in a little bit.

And then we start to see the judgment then. The sword shall never leave your house. Or until olam. And we've talked about that word before. Until forever.

Because we were, you know, we were meditating on how the blessings on David's house are forever. Well, now the sword will never leave his house until olam.

[15:53] Ish. In fact, actually, let's just look at that. Verse 2 Samuel 7, 16. God said, Your house and your kingdom shall endure before me to eternity, to olam.

Forever. Your throne shall be established forever. And now, the sword will not leave your house forever. It's terrifying, isn't it? To realize that what David has done, and it will be forgiven, we will see, it will be forgiven, the consequence will not pass away.

And it will be there forever. Forever. Next, verse 11 and 12, let's read on. This is what the Lord says. Behold, I am going to raise up evil against you from your own household.

I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. Indeed, you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and in open daylight.

Well, God will raise up evil. evil, the English word evil always has a definite moral component, doesn't it?

[17:07] Evil. It's morally bad. But the Hebrew word ra'ah does not have that. It can mean morally evil, but more literally, more accurately, ra'ah means calamity, it means harm, it means distress, it means bad.

Bad. And God is going to raise up this for David. I'm going to raise up evil, I'm going to raise up calamity, harm, distress. And God says, I will even take your wives and give them to your companion, and we'll see that fulfilled in just a few chapters, chapter 16, when David's son Absalom will stage this coup, and we'll see that there is a political meaning behind that that we'll save until we get there.

But very provocative and very public does he do this thing. Now, what we read in our text today is God saying, I'm going to do that.

I will take even your wives. And now we must, we must clarify in our minds of utmost importance this principle here from James 1.13.

God says, or rather James says about God, no one is to say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself does not tempt anyone.

[18:29] What Absalom does is sinful, it is evil, it is bad. And when God says, I am going to take and give, it does not mean that God is authoring sin.

It cannot, because that is against this verse. So the way we must understand this is that God is allowing it to take place. God has perfect foreknowledge.

God knows the end from the beginning. He knows all actions that will ever be taken. So it would be incorrect even to say that God tempted Absalom to do this thing.

What we say is, God allowed Absalom to have the dispositions and the inclinations that he did at that time to do that thing, and God used that as a judgment on David.

And we see it all the time with other things. Well, we talked about the Babylonian captivity already. Did God do the evil, the harm, the sin, as it were, of all the murdering that took place?

[19:28] No, but he used it as a judgment by raising up them and allowing them to do it. He strengthened and enabled Absalom to do what he did. So we need to get that.

We need to make sure we get that clear in our theological brains. So that's the second aspect of the judgment. In addition to there's going to be a forever sword in his house, that's the long-term peace. And then there is going to be, short-term, this raising up of harm, calamity, and enabling and empowering of Absalom to be a significant political threat, even taking his wives.

Verse 13 then. Then David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David, The Lord also has allowed your sin to pass.

You shall not die. However, since by this deed you have shown utter disrespect for the Lord, the child himself who is born to you shall certainly die.

[ 20 : 33 ] Then Nathan went to his house. And we'll stop there. This little section is tough. For different reasons, actually.

One is that there is an exegetical difficulty with verse 14. Your Bible will probably have a footnote about it. I'm going to skip the details in the interest of time, but suffice it to say, it sent me down a huge rabbit hole.

And when I emerged from said rabbit hole, I was just blown away by the crushing weight of David's sin. I've already mentioned the word bazaar, the word that we earlier saw to describe the heart disposition of treating God lightly.

And as I dug here, I came across a key verse which is in Numbers 15, Numbers chapter 15, verse 30 to 31, which you might note down because it says there, Numbers 15, verse 30 to 31, it speaks of the sins of a high hand.

If you know what they are. The sins of a high hand. What that means is that the sins that are done deliberately, the sins that are not accidental, the sins where the sinner knows full well what they are doing, and they don't care because the word of the Lord is trivial to them.

[ 22 : 06 ] It is bazaar. The Bible doesn't matter. I don't need to obey it. And that passage in Numbers 15 just says, that one needs to be cut off. I'm sorry, utterly cut off.

Put to death. And I was like, that's what David did. And that is why it's so important that Nathan says, the Lord has allowed your sins to pass.

You shall not die because that is what is due. When you read the Torah, you'll see these offerings and sacrifices for sin. If this happens, then you do that offering.

That's for the accidental sins. The sins that one does deliberately, the high hands where you know what you're doing, it just says, cut off. And it's followed by the account of someone who broke the Sabbath.

I don't care what the Bible says. I'm going to go out and I'm going to go and see what I can do. I'm going to get me that manna. Cut off. Bazaar. So, referring to one's heart, one's internal view.

[ 23 : 03 ] And then you have here, in our verse 14, was it? Yes. Utter disrespect, in New American, is another word that is na'atz. And this verb is the outworking of disrespect and disbelief.

It is the actions that flow from unbelief. And they are actions that are seen by others and they cause others to sin.

So there is an overlap. They both stem from a heart. But the former, Bazaar, is more about the heart disposition. The latter, na'atz, is more about how that then translates into actions.

Some have argued that na'atz is stronger and worse. They're both bad. Okay? They're both bad, for sure. And this has happened. Nathan says, the Lord has allowed your sin to pass. You will not die. But there is still this judgment, the third aspect of judgment. The child who is born shall certainly die. If you know your Hebrew, dying, he shall die.

[ 24 : 06 ] Doubly sure he is going to die. Well, let's read on. Where are we?

Verse 15. Later the Lord struck the child that arrives widow bore to David so that he was very sick. David therefore pleaded with God for the child and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground.

The elders of his household stood beside him in order to help him up from the ground but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them. Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died and David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead for they said, behold, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to us.

How then can we tell him that the child is dead since he might do himself harm? Again. But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead.

So David said to his servants, is the child dead? And they said, he is dead. So David got up from the ground, washed, anointed himself and changed his clothes and he went into the house of the Lord and worshipped.

[ 25 : 18 ] Then he went to his own house and when he asked, they served him food and he ate. Then his servants said to him, what is this thing that you have done?

You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive but when the child died, you got up and ate food. And he said, while the child was still alive, I fasted and wept for I said, who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me and the child may live but now he has died, why should I fast?

Can I bring him back again? I am going to him but he will not return to me. Well, we go from one difficult section to another and this one isn't difficult to interpret, this one isn't difficult even to understand but it's difficult.

It's a heavy, heavy text because we cannot escape the clear wording of scripture, the Lord struck the child and he became very sick.

Very sick. The Hebrew word there means desperately sick, even incurably sick. You may know Jeremiah 17.9 describing the human heart. Same thing.

[ 26 : 33 ] Incurably sick. And the Lord did it. The Lord did it. So how do we wrap our heads around this? Well, let's do some background reading.

Deuteronomy 24 verse 16 says, Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers. Everyone shall be put to death for his own sin alone.

So that's the principle that God put into the law. And then we have this. Exodus 34 verses 6 and 7.

If you're familiar with this episode, this is the Lord passing by in front of Moses in all his glory.

And the Lord wants to disclose himself to Moses what is unique about him. And he has a few words and he says this. So the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in faithfulness and truth, who keeps faithfulness for thousands, who forgives wrongdoing, violation of his law and sin, yet he will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, inflicting the punishment of the fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.

And that's not a one-off. You will find a number of places in scripture where the same thing is stressed. Well, that's the end of our study.

[ 28 : 11 ] No, I'm kidding. So how do we wrap our heads around this? This is tense. This is tough. And so we are in the position where we have to say God says human justice must never allow this to happen.

Human justice, justice that is meted out by the judges whom I appoint, this does not happen. One dies for one's own sin and yet God reserves the right to do it.

If he sees that that needs to happen, he reserves the right to do it. Now, if you take this away and study it for yourself, which I encourage you to do, a key verse to study is Ezekiel chapter 18.

And in that chapter, the whole chapter that is, in that chapter, it clearly states that the normal, preferred, standard justice is for the sinner to die, not the sinner's father and not the sinner's son.

And when you read the chapter, at the very end it says, God takes no pleasure in the death of anybody. Certainly not children. But, we have this verse tucked within there, Ezekiel 18, verse 4.

[ 29 : 25 ] Behold, God says, all souls are mine. The soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine. The soul who sins will die.

And I've highlighted it in green. That is the key principle that we need to get our heads down because that impacts so much. Why is murder wrong?

Because of that. Why is abortion wrong? Because of that. Why is euthanasia wrong? Because of that. All souls are God's.

Your life is not yours. My life is not mine. All souls are God's. And God can choose without violating his justice to end a life early if he sees that as best and required because they are his.

He gives life he takes life away. Blessed be the Lord. So yes the Lord struck the son of David and Bathsheba because of David's sins. And it's hard.

[ 30 : 28 ] It's a hard thing. But this I hope will show you how that does not violate God's justice because all souls are his. And I would also say this and I'm going to say more about this as well.

We should never think that God doesn't know what this feels like because God also lost a son. The son of God came and died.

So God knows firsthand what it feels like to lose a son. And that is a great comfort for those who mourn. A word on David's actions then that we saw.

So the child was ill for seven days and David fasted and he prayed fervently all night. I think the text means for us to understand that he lay there in sackcloth weeping and praying for seven days and nights.

And the servant's like you need to move, you need to eat king. And he's like no, no, maybe the Lord will have compassion. But the Lord said dying he will die.

[ 31 : 35 ] The Lord it is a certain thing and David's please met with an answer no. I think it was right, God is a God of grace and David was right to seek the Lord.

Maybe the Lord will show grace because only grace can turn away the punishment and the consequences. But God does not in this case. He has made it certain. But then we have that hope filled and yet somewhat enigmatic verse 23.

Can I bring him back again? I am going to him but he will not return to me. And I think that we can only understand that verse in the light of the resurrection.

David has an understanding of the resurrection. He isn't going to be resurrected here in this plane. He won't come back to me but I am going to him.

There is a place where he has gone. I will go there too and I will see him. Job said a similar thing didn't he? I know my redeemer lives and in the end he will stand on the earth.

[ 32 : 42 ] So there is a hope, there is a knowledge. He is not lost forever. I think that's as far as we're going to get in the text. I want now for you to turn to Psalm 51 please.

Psalm 51 is important for us to see with that background. Psalm 51 being the prayer song of David's repentance. And as we read that it will colour for us a lot of how David felt.

It will colour for us how he repented, how repentance worked out for him. All we really saw in our text in 2 Samuel was I have sinned against the Lord.

Here we see a much more full response. So Psalm 51, I am just going to go ahead and read it. We won't have time to study it verse by verse. You will probably be pleased to hear.

But we will read the whole thing and then I have got some observations to make at the end. So Psalm 51 for the music director, i.e. for public worship, a Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet came to him after he had gone into Bathsheba.

[ 33 : 49 ] So we can be certain of the context. He says, be gracious to me God according to your faithfulness, according to the greatness of your compassion, wipe out my wrongdoings, wash me thoroughly from my guilt, cleanse me from my sin, for I know my wrongdoings and my sin is constantly before me.

Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified when you speak and blameless when you judge. Behold, I was brought forth in guilt, and in sin my mother conceived me.

Behold, you desire truth in the innermost being, and in secret you will make wisdom known to me. Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean.

Cleanse me and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and wipe out all my guilty deeds.

Create in me a clean heart, God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

[ 35 : 14 ] Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach wrongdoers your ways and sinners will be converted to you. Save me from the guilt of bloodshed, God, the God of my salvation.

Then my tongue will joyfully sing of your righteousness. Lord, open my lips so that my mouth may declare your praise. For you do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it.

You do not take pleasure in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, God, you will not despise.

By your favor, do good to Zion, build the walls of Jerusalem, then you will delight in righteous sacrifices, in burnt offerings, and whole burnt offerings, then bulls will be offered on your altar.

So David wrote this psalm, we saw the context, directly after this, directly after he was faced with absolute clarity and conviction over what he has done.

[ 36 : 21 ] The man is a son of death. You are the man. Oh, conviction. There is a moment when one is convicted of sin and they have to make a choice.

Am I going to repent? Or am I going to harden my heart? Am I going to sear my conscience? Am I going to excuse it? Am I going to deny it?

Am I going to try and cover it? David chose to repent. And that is how he differs from Saul. What we have just read is a public confession of guilt.

David is a leader. David is the leader. And even though he tried his very best to keep this whole thing under wraps, keep it a secret, there are people who knew.

There are people who knew. Joab certainly knew. Why does he want me to kill this guy? Maybe there were some other captains or leaders in the army to whom Joab had given the instruction.

[ 37 : 27 ] He had to make sure that Uriah doesn't come back from this one. What about the messenger who came back from Joab, knowing that if he said the code word, Uriah is dead, David would be pleased?

He probably knew. What about all those servants that Uriah slept with, refusing to go back to his house? They knew Uriah hadn't been home, and yet here's his wife pregnant.

Where was she last seen? In the palace. He did it in secret, but people knew. And as a leader, he needed to lead by example. A secret sin, yes, but his confession and repentance was appropriately public.

He stood up and he said, this is what happened. This is what I did. I confess my sins. I do not hide them. And he even put it to music for public use, to use as a template or a model.

Now, as I said, time would fail us to study the whole psalm. So here are some highlights. David's, he says, it's according to grace and compassion.

[ 38 : 34 ] His appeal is based on grace and compassion. It's not, I'll do better next time. It's not, I'll make up for it. It's not an excuse. It is, Lord, I need grace and I need compassion.

That is the only basis upon which anyone can appeal for forgiveness, grace. Similarly, it is not sacrifice. David is very clear in this psalm.

This isn't a matter of burnt offerings. It's not going to do it. And as I've said, that's because the sin of a high hand, there is no offering for that.

There isn't one. Note that there is a request to be washed, cleansed, and purified. There is a need for the guilty deeds to be wiped out.

This shows us that when we do wrong, when we sin, it isn't just a deed that is done, and well, I guess that happened in the past now. It stains, and it corrupts.

[ 39 : 36 ] One doesn't need to forget. One needs to be cleansed. One needs to be washed. And that is what David prays for. And then there is this request for a clean heart, or a pure heart.

Let it be created. Barah, and anyone who's read Genesis 1-1 in the Hebrew knows barah is the word in the beginning God created. I thought that meant create from nothing, but it doesn't necessarily mean that, as I studied it.

But it is a verb that is only ever used of God. You will never read anyone in the Bible, any human barahing anything. You will read a whole bunch of other different words, never create.

Only God can do this. Only God can create a new heart. What's a heart? We have talked about this before. It isn't only the seat of emotion. It is the place where one thinks, where one plans, where one desires, where one hopes.

It is the inner person. You could think of it as the soul. The inner person. And so David is saying, I need new thinking.

[ 40 : 45 ] I need new planning. I need new desires. Because these old ones are rubbish. They are corrupt. And I need them to be cleansed, removed, recreated. God, only you can do it.

New heart. Pure heart. Notably, David says, against you, you only, have I sinned. which does raise your eyebrows when you realize that he surely sinned against Bathsheba and he surely sinned against Uriah and he surely caused Joab to sin as well.

He sinned against people. But ultimately, the ultimate problem is the sin against God. And that is what's being touched on there.

Because sin against God is infinite. Because sin against an infinite God will never be forgotten. It will remain unless it is dealt with. That's why he says, against you only have I sinned.

Because that is the sin that is of the most significance. The highest importance. We see in the psalm that there is a desire for joy again. We should note and remember that to turn from sin to repentance is to turn to joy.

[ 41 : 55 ] It is to turn to joyful singing. One of the great deceptions of sin is that it will give you what you want and you'll be happy. David thought, she's pretty, that's what I need.

Did not bring him joy. Joy was in returning and repenting. That's something that we need to remember. Yes, it doesn't feel good to be disciplined, it doesn't feel good to have to swallow my pride and say, I was wrong, Lord.

But in that, then there is joy. Then there is joy. The greatest joy that we can have is to be at peace with our creator.

And then verse 13, I will teach wrongdoers your ways. And this is quite key. For David it was important. As I said, this was a public thing. He wanted it to be an example and we see it here.

Then once in your grace and in my restoration, then there is teaching, there is testimony for wrongdoers and sinners will be converted.

[ 43 : 04 ] The one who is saved by grace has a story of coming from death to life. We can say I once was lost, but now I'm found.

Saved a wretch like me. That's David. It's a powerful, powerful testimony to be saved by grace. But I also wanted to note that David does not go into all of the details.

If you think back to what we saw in chapter 12 of 2 Samuel, he said only this, I have sinned before the Lord. Nathan didn't then say, let's walk through it step by step and point out every point at which you could have done better.

He doesn't do that. There is no fixation on the sin. There is no fixation on the individual aspects. There is conviction and that's enough.

The Lord has put away your sin. And even in this psalm, the focus is not the things I did wrong. Learn from my mistakes.

[ 44 : 09 ] No, it is learn from God's grace. Learn from God's grace. He does say, the closest he comes is to say, save me from the guilt of bloodshed.

God. That's it. Right, let's conclude. Let us conclude with some remarks as we close. I've got a few points here.

And the first one is the faithfulness of Nathan. Nathan, as I said, was willing to come before David, the king, and declare the word of the Lord.

and I can't overstate how terrifying, how much he needed to be brave. I can only imagine him saying, Lord, you're sending me, I'll go.

If I die, I die. Isn't that what Esther says? I can imagine him saying a similar thing. The power imbalance is such that it is hard for a man like Nathan to come before a king.

[ 45 : 10 ] And a worthless leader would say, who do you think you are to speak to me like that? Which is unfortunately how many church leaders would be. Who do you think you are to talk to me like that?

Leaders need brave people who are prepared to stand up and tell them when they're wrong. Ray and I need people who will stand up and tell us when we're wrong. I need my wife to stand up and tell me when I'm wrong.

And she does. And I need God to keep me from a puffed up spirit who would say, I'm not wrong. I'm not wrong.

It's so easy for us to fail to put away our pride when we're confronted. So may the Lord give us all a sense. And may we all pray for people like Nathan that a friend who is prepared to be that friend and say, you're wrong.

Nathan is a precious, precious man. And I should say that I think he was so precious to David that David named a son after him. The son born before Solomon is called Nathan.

[ 46 : 22 ] It's hard to get the order and the timing of where these things are. So I don't know if that Nathan was born after this event or before. But certainly, Nathan was a close friend to David and David named a son after him.

And that Nathan, the son of David, also finds his way into the genealogy of Christ in Luke's Gospel. But that's another story. Next. Again, let us consider the contrast of how David and Saul respond to their sin when they are confronted with their disobedience.

And again, you could argue that Saul's sin was lesser. He didn't murder anyone, at least not yet. He didn't steal another man's wife. But he didn't repent. He made excuses. And David did.

David accepted the rebuke. He received it and he said, I have sinned against the Lord. And he repented of a great sin but he found a great grace. So we should consider that and that is the reason why Saul was removed and David was not.

Now next, I want to comment on this. And this is something that I couldn't find any other commentaries, any other, I couldn't find any commentaries who really picked up on this.

[ 47 : 36 ] Bathsheba lost her son as well. And for her, this isn't due to sin. For her, this is just one more horrible thing that she has to endure.

And the narrative doesn't really provide much insight into how she feels. And the reason for that is because the focus of the narrative is the covenant promises and David's accountability as the covenant leader.

But her grief and pain are there. I have no doubt. And I have equally no doubt that God loved her and had great grace towards her. Next time, we are going to read of David comforting her and God will give her another wonderful son, a son of peace named Solomon.

And indeed, she will be raised up as a queen mother and she will be exalted and she will be a powerful woman in the kingdom. But she serves as an example for those who suffer through no fault of their own.

Actually, she suffers because of the sins of others. How many wives suffer because of their husbands? And she's an example of those who feel their suffering is invisible.

[ 48 : 49 ] And there is comfort for her from her husband David when he is restored. But there's a greater comfort always from Jesus, the son of David. And I think she stands as an example for those who are called to just hold on and have patient trust.

Hold on and trust God. Because there are scriptures that say that our suffering produces perseverance and perseverance character and character hope. Next, I want you to see that although the sin is forgiven the consequences remain.

We saw the promise that God had allowed the sin to pass and yet David and his family must still endure these terrible consequences which are both short and long term.

And we'll see those unfold in the coming weeks. forgiven sin still can come with very deep and very long lasting consequences. And it's hard sometimes to discern the balance of punishment and consequence.

But I want you to consider this, that David by these actions David sowed seeds into his family about what is acceptable for a man or a king to do.

[ 50 : 07 ] he taught his sons how it was okay to treat women. He taught his sons something about how to get what you want. Doesn't matter who is hurt in the process.

They saw it. They saw it. And so we're going to see a brother murder a brother. We're going to see a brother take a half sister, Tamar.

We're going to see David's sons walk in the examples that he set. And that's hard. The sins are forgiven. David repented. But he was unable to repair the damage that he had done from the testimony that he gave through those actions.

It's hard to ponder that. And then finally this. We close with a reminder that we need a perfect king because even the best of kings, David failed spectacularly.

David caused suffering. David hurt people. And only Jesus is the perfect one, the perfect leader. Only Jesus is the one whom we can seek to perfectly emulate.

[ 51 : 17 ] He did not cause any suffering or harm. On the contrary, he suffered for us and he suffered with us. In Jesus, we have a God who came down and suffered along with us.

We don't have a God who stands aloof in heaven and says, there, there, your suffering will end soon. He doesn't offer platitudes to the ones who suffer.

No, he came down, he endured suffering, and he sympathizes with our weakness. 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 5 says that, for just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

2 Corinthians 1 verse 5 The comfort in Christ is based upon the knowledge that he knows it all firsthand. He experienced the full spectrum of human suffering, loss.

He experienced it. Shame, he experienced it. Bullying, he experienced it. Grief, he experienced it. Pain, obviously, he experienced it.

[ 52 : 32 ] He experienced everything, and I thought, the only thing he didn't experience was guilt, and I thought, wait, he bore my guilt. He bore it all, and he stands by to comfort.

So let's close with a gospel reminder. If anyone here today feels the weight of sin or failure, then may the cross of Christ attract you to come and fall on your knees and say, Lord, I have sinned before you.

Wash me clean. David teaches us how to pray when he says, wash me from my guilt, cleanse me from my sin, create in me a clean heart. When he says, I know it's not a matter of sin, sacrifices and offerings, it's not a matter of coming to church and saying the right things and hoping that I can forget and move on.

No, it is turning to the Lord and repenting and saying, forgive me. And in that, there is forgiveness. Thank you, Lord, for these things.

Thank you, Lord, for the grace that is ours. Lord, I guess we can say thank you for the example of David, because he encourages me that even men who are after your heart can fail.

[ 53 : 50 ] But Lord, none of us want to fall like that. And I thank you, Lord God, that your grace stands to cover all sins. I thank you that your grace is sufficient, and you are the God of every grace, as we've sung today.

Lord, I ask and pray that you would walk with us, that you would teach us to walk the way of repentance, repentance, that coming to you regularly would be good practice, Lord. Because if we say we are without sin, we're deceiving ourselves. And so we come, Lord, and we confess, Lord, that often our desires are not aligned to yours, our words are not aligned to yours, our thoughts are not aligned to yours, our deeds are not aligned to what you would have us to do. Lord, I pray that your spirit would encourage us in your grace, to encourage us to turn to you afresh and to allow your grace to cover our sins, to remove our sins as we struggle and we desire to walk with you every day.

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.