

II Samuel – Part 4

Fourfold Restoration – II Samuel 11-14

The great thing about God is that, although we are all guilty, we can be declared righteous. Even better, the sin will be totally forgiven, as well as forgotten. If we confess our sins to God, He promises to forgive us. “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:10-12).

When Saul, Israel’s first king, was confronted by the prophet Samuel about his sin of disobedience with the Amalekites, he refused to admit guilt. (I Sam. 15:13, 15, 20). Finally, after he continued to be reprovved, Saul confessed he had sinned...but he tempered his confession with an excuse. His confession was only empty words, not true repentance. His response to God’s correction was improper, and God took his kingdom from him.

But now it is David’s time to be rebuked. God has shown us the backstory in II Samuel 10 when David sent an envoy to comfort Hanun of Ammon on the death of his father Nahash, how it was misinterpreted, and the humiliation of the envoy. This insult led to a battle that David, in II Samuel 11, sent Joab to deal with instead of going himself. While the battle raged, David took the wife of Uriah, one of his mighty men, lay with her, and she became pregnant. He compounded his sin by ultimately murdering Uriah. David married Bathsheba, but “the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.”

How David responds to the Lord’s rebuke is critical. Will he try to justify his actions and lose the kingdom, or will he repent and be restored? David must repent for God to show His mercy and restore his kingship and blessing. There would still be consequences. Before restoration is complete, David’s life will be transformed with a complex series of judgments and God’s interventions.

I. *Guilt Exposed*

For nearly a year, David was permitted to live in anguish over his own guilt. In Psalm 51, David shares his agony, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness...Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness ...Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me...”

God would not let David rest until he had confessed and repented of his sin. David prays, “When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer” (Ps. 32:3-4). David was miserable in his guilt. He was affected physically, with no energy, and emotionally, his soul was groaning. Sleep escaped him; his life became dry and lifeless. God’s hand was heavy on him.

God’s first act of discipline was confrontation through the prophet Nathan (II Sam. 12). However, instead of direct condemnation, a folksy parable was used to disarm David

from any attempt at self-justification. When confronting someone, we need to remember that the goal is reconciliation, not argument. Many times, how we confront someone determines the outcome. Nathan puts a case before the king of two men in the city, one rich and the other poor:

“The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing more than one little ewe lamb, a pet really, that he had bought and nourished. It grew up with his children, eating his own food and drinking from his own cup. The lamb slept and was like his own daughter. When a traveler came to the rich man’s house, instead of taking a lamb from his own flocks, he took the poor man’s lamb and fed it to the visitor.”

It is doubtful that anyone wants to be confronted with their sin, so using a parable to give David a picture of the sin allowed him to see his own sin from another perspective. Confrontation was a form of divine mercy. God exposed the sin so David could repent rather than continue in darkness. Proverbs later affirms this principle: “He who covers his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy” (Prov. 28:13).

David was so enraged at this act of violence by the rich man that he immediately pronounced the sentence: “As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: and he shall restore the lam fourfold,” just as the Law commanded. (Ex. 22:1). He was quick to judge someone else when he hadn’t repented of the same sin in himself. It is always easier to see faults in others when we are doing the same thing. Jesus said, “Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.” (Mt. 7:5). He was willing to cast out the rich man’s mote, but the beam was obstructing his own eyes.

Nathan replied, “Thou art the man!” The parable had broken through David’s hardened conscience and brought him face to face with divine judgment. “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, **I** anointed thee king, **I** delivered you from the hand of Saul, **I** gave you everything, thy master’s house, his wives, the house of Israel and Judah, and if that wasn’t enough, **I** would have given you more. And now, look at what you’ve done!” He listed David’s sins clearly: he despised God’s commandments, committed adultery, and orchestrated murder.

Did you see the irony of this in II Samuel 11? The faithful foreigner, Uriah the Hittite, honors an unfaithful Israelite king; the foreigner retains his sexual purity during the war while the Israelite king messes with his wife; the king, who didn’t go into battle himself, sends a faithful soldier to his death in the battle. Pretty sobering, isn’t it? David’s sin helps us realize that even a man “after God’s own heart” (I Sam. 13:14) can fall deeply into sin. Which means, so can we! But it also demonstrates God’s justice, mercy, discipline for restoration, and the availability of true repentance.

The Law demands the death penalty for this sin—but God, in His grace and mercy, forgives David, and fellowship is restored. However, his deeds still carried consequences that would fall upon David and his household, because God “chastens those He loves” (Heb. 12:6-11). These were not arbitrary punishments but corrective judgments that revealed the seriousness of David’s actions.

II. Corrective Discipline

Because of his sin, “Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house because thou hast despised Me.” In a fitting judgment that reflected the sin itself, God said, “**I** will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house.” Tragically, this prophecy was seen in David’s sons’ acts of violence, rebellion, and murder as Amnon assaults his half-sister Tamar (II Sam. 13:10-19), then is murdered by Absalom (II Sam. 13:28-33). Absalom rebels against David, and the kingdom is again plunged into civil war. David must have experienced great heartache in God’s chastening as he watched the family he loved divide the nation he had united.

“*Behold,*” God says, this is serious! Not only is what He is telling David going to be put into play immediately, but it will have prophetic consequences. God is issuing a warning and actively directing the events that He is foretelling. “**I** will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them to thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but **I** will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.” God will use this to show His absolute loathing of sin.

David had secretly taken Uriah’s wife, but God says that David’s “neighbor” will take his wives and lie with them for all to see. The “neighbor” was even closer than that; it was his own son Absalom who publicly violated David’s concubines on the palace rooftop during his rebellion (II Sam. 16:21-22). He did it to humiliate and expose David’s secret sin with Bathsheba. Sin does not remain in the shadows for long. God’s discipline often brings hidden matters into the light so healing can begin.

“I have sinned against the Lord!” David responded immediately when Nathan confronted him. Unlike Saul, his confession was genuine, not defensive, and opened the way to forgiveness. God forgave David’s heartfelt repentance and kept David from being killed. Unlike many who refuse to forgive an offense, God “put away [David’s] sin; thou shalt not die.” According to the Law, both adultery and murder required death (Lev. 20:10; Numb. 35:16). But the consequences would remain. Though the judgment was severe, it could have been far worse and lasted much longer if David had not truly repented. This begins the rest of the story found in II Samuel 13-20 as Nathan’s prediction of troubles is fulfilled in his sons and as a nation.

As David issued the judgment of the Law that the rich man of the parable “restore the lamb fourfold,” so must David. But how does the punishment for stealing a man’s wife equate with stealing an ox or a sheep? It’s not like you can go out to the sheepfold or harem and get four new wives for a man that you’ve just had killed! Although God would not normally allow a son to die because of a father’s sins (Dt. 24:16), but David had already named the fourfold penalty to Nathan. God chose to take David’s sons. They were the judgment for the poor man’s “sheep that were, unto him, as a daughter.” Not only did the punishment satisfy the repayment of what was stolen, it also emphasized his accountability and the effect sin has on others.

Conclusion:

Confrontation is always uncomfortable, but necessary. God chooses to expose sin to restore us to fellowship with Him rather than to destroy us. But even forgiven sin has consequences. It can produce broken relationships, loss of trust, and painful outcomes. These consequences teach us the seriousness of disobedience. We have two choices when we are confronted with our sin: turn away from God and continue in our sin, or confess our sins, turn from them, and regain our fellowship with God. Repentance opens the door to restoration—and God grants us His grace.

God takes sin seriously, but He delights in restoring those who repent. His discipline is never meant to crush us, but to redeem, purify, and draw His children back into fellowship with Him. David's discipline strengthened him spiritually. Many of the psalms written after this period of his life reflect a new humbleness, dependence on God, and a deeper understanding of His grace. Leadership requires integrity, but when we fail to show true repentance, we will find that God's mercy is greater than our human failure.

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

Judgment Begins (II Samuel Part 5)

1) Read II Samuel 12-15. Highlight any word “Behold” and define its reason. What was the first effect of the fourfold judgment on David? How did he try to deal with it?

2) How does the battle with the Ammonites that began in II Samuel 10 come to an end?

3) How does Jonadab’s encouragement of Amnon remind you of Satan? What does he use to encourage Amnon to sin?

4) What brings the second judgment of David’s sin? How does this bring about the next judgment?

5) How did Absalom portray himself to the people? What was his ulterior motive?

6) What was David’s reaction to Absalom’s rebellion? How did he respond? What actions did he set in place to prevent Absalom’s takeover?

7) Why didn’t David remain in Jerusalem and fight Absalom?

8) What parts of God’s judgment on David’s sin (II Sam. 12:10-14) do you see being fulfilled in this passage?

Conclusion:

King David's later life is marked by a series of corrective judgments. God wants us to realize the seriousness of sin and the importance of repentance. While confrontation and humbling ourselves in repentance is never easy, it is necessary to restore fellowship with God. At first, when we are corrected, our human reaction doesn't follow David's immediate response, "I have sinned." We are more apt to justify ourselves as King Saul did.

God puts people in our lives to help us correct the problem before we dig ourselves into an even bigger hole than our sin has already dropped us into. As we look at David's response to each of the judgments we have seen so far, notice how he responds. He never rails at God, never blames God or anyone else for his failure to obey. If only we could look at our sin through God's eyes, we might get a clearer perspective of what our attitude must be.

Have you ever noticed how the Holy Spirit prods and pokes us, making us uncomfortable around the people we've wronged? We may think we've hidden our sins, and no one will ever know what we've done. We may try to justify our actions or believe that the person who confronted us doesn't like us...or maybe God doesn't like us because they confronted us. Really, though, God loves us so much that He wants to have our relationship with Him back on a strong footing, and that can't happen until we've repented and changed from our sin.

Are you trying to ignore God's call to you, His confrontation, because you don't want to quit committing the sin that is appealing to you at the moment? Is any sin worth the consequences? Confess and repent and draw near Him. God will give you His grace.

"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (James 4:8-10).