

DAVID: A MAN IN NEED OF MERCY

2 SAMUEL 11



David's Valiant Men by James Tissot

DAVID & BATHSHEBA PART 1:THE SIN

- At the very root of David's problems, we find a king who wasn't where he belonged. If David had been out in the battlefield, where the king was supposed to be, instead of hanging around the palace looking at naked women, this whole incident would have never happened.

- Some have suggested that David may have been battling depression, or having a “mid-life crisis.” In either event, he wasn’t where he belonged — which, at least in my life, is often the first step of a downhill slide.



- DAVID LOOKS DOWN OFF HIS BALCONY AND SEES BATHSHEBA BATHING IN HER OWN COURTYARD AND HE BEGINS TO THINK ABOUT HER.
- THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF HIS DOWNFALL AND HE IS ALREADY BEING SUCKED DOWN THE DRAIN OF SIN.

- DAVID DIDN'T SET OUT TO COMMIT AN INSIDIOUS SIN. PEOPLE SELDOM DO. AT FIRST INQUIRY, HE DIDN'T KNOW THIS WOMAN'S IDENTITY OR HER MARITAL STATUS. HAD SHE BEEN UNMARRIED, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE PROPER IN PURSUING HER AS A WIFE, AND HIS INQUIRY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN IMPROPER.

- BY THE TIME HE LEARNED THAT SHE WAS MARRIED, DAVID HAD ALREADY LET LUST GET ITS NASTY LITTLE HOOKS INTO HIS HEART, AND HIS LUSTFUL DESIRE OUTWEIGHED HIS GOOD SENSE AND INTEGRITY. UNBRIDLED LUST CAN DO THAT TO A PERSON — YES, EVEN YOU, IF YOU ALLOW IT TO SMOLDER LONG ENOUGH.

- BY THIS POINT, IT'S APPARENT THAT DAVID'S INTENTIONS HAVE SHIFTED FROM AN INTEREST IN TAKING BATHSHEBA AS A WIFE, TO JUST PLAIN TAKING BATHSHEBA. DAVID HAD NO PLANS ON A LONG-TERM AFFAIR — JUST A ONE-NIGHT SEXUAL ROMP WITH A GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN. AS USUAL, SIN HAD ITS CONSEQUENCES:
- BATHSHEBA WAS PREGNANT!! OOPS. DAVID HADN'T PLANNED ON THAT POSSIBILITY.

PART 2: THE COVER-UP

- DAVID, DEMONSTRATING THAT HE WAS JUST LIKE THE REST OF US, WENT WITH HIS FIRST INSTINCT; *HE TRIED TO COVER UP HIS SIN AND SHIFT THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SOMEONE ELSE:*
- URIAH, BATHSHEBA'S HUSBAND, WAS A FAITHFUL WARRIOR WHO WAS OUT ON THE BATTLEFIELD — THE SAME BATTLEFIELD WHERE DAVID *SHOULD* HAVE BEEN. DAVID CALLED URIAH IN FROM THE BATTLE, PROBABLY UNDER THE GUISE OF A SPECIAL PROJECT OR TASK (NOT REALLY A "LIE" IN LEGALESE THINKING — IT WAS A SPECIAL PROJECT FOR THE KING, IN A WARPED SORT OF WAY).

- AFTER A FEW PLEASANTRIES AND WAR STORIES, HE TOLD URIAH TO GO DOWN TO HIS HOUSE, ASSUMING OF COURSE THAT URIAH WOULD HAVE MARITAL RELATIONS WITH BATHSHEBA WHILE HE WAS HOME, WHICH WOULD ALLOW HIM TO THINK THAT THE BABY WAS HIS, EFFECTIVELY COVERING UP THE INCIDENT.
- THE ONE THING THAT THEY DIDN'T CONSIDER IN THE PLAN WAS URIAH'S SENSE OF HONOR AND LOYALTY. HE WOULD NOT GO AND ENJOY THE PLEASURES OF HOME WHEN HIS FELLOW-SOLDIERS WERE CAMPING IN THE BATTLEFIELD. DAVID EVEN TRIED GETTING HIM DRUNK, BUT URIAH'S SENSE OF DUTY AND HONOR WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO OVERCOME ALL OF DAVID'S TACTICS.

- FINALLY, DAVID GETS DESPERATE, AND LIKE MOST DESPERATE MEN, DID SOMETHING STUPID!
- DAVID SENT WORD BACK TO JOAB, THE LEADER OF THE KING'S ARMY, TO PUT URIAH IN A PLACE WHERE HE WOULD BE KILLED. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT KNOW WHY THE KING HAD ORDERED URIAH'S DEATH, JOAB OBEYED HIS KING'S COMMAND, PROBABLY UNDER THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE KING HAD GOOD REASON, AND THAT PERHAPS URIAH HAD SOMEHOW BEEN DISLOYAL TO THE KINGDOM!

- IT APPEARS THAT THE ONLY WAY THAT JOAB COULD ARRANGE FOR THE DEATH OF A SEASONED WARRIOR SUCH AS URIAH WAS TO USE SOME UNWISE BATTLE TACTICS, WHICH CAUSED SEVERAL GOOD MEN TO DIE WITH HIM. **COVER-UPS ARE OFTEN LIKE THAT — A LOT OF INNOCENT PEOPLE GET HURT WHILE WE ARE TRYING TO HIDE THE TRUTH.** JOAB WAS SO SURE THAT DAVID WOULD REACT POORLY TO THE BATTLE STRATEGY THAT LED TO URIAH'S DEATH THAT, WHEN THE MESSENGER WENT TO UPDATE DAVID ON THE WAR, JOAB GAVE HIM SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS THAT WOULD TELL DAVID THAT THE DEED HAD BEEN DONE.

- IT'S INTERESTING THAT JOAB KNEW DAVID WELL ENOUGH TO ANTICIPATE HIS REACTION TO THE STRATEGIC ERROR, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT DAVID EVEN FLINCHED AT THE NEWS. DAVID'S FOCUS WAS ON ONE THING, AND ONLY ONE THING — HIDING HIS SIN, AT ANY COST. MATTERS OF STATE AND ETHICAL ISSUES HAD BEEN PUSHED DOWN ON DAVID'S PRIORITY LIST. NOW, WITH URIAH OUT OF THE WAY, DAVID COULD MAKE THE COVER-UP COMPLETE.

- BATHSHEBA MOURNED FOR HER HUSBAND, AS WAS PROPER. THEN, AS A GESTURE OF SUPPOSED NOBILITY, THE KING TOOK THE POOR WIDOW IN AND MADE HER ONE OF HIS WIVES. MY, WHAT A NOBLE GESTURE — IN TODAY’S WORLD, THE KING’S PRESS AGENT WOULD HAVE MADE IT A PHOTO-OP, AND GOTTEN IT ON THE FRONT PAGE OF EVERY NEWSPAPER IN THE LAND.

- DAVID *THOUGHT* THE WHOLE INCIDENT WAS COVERED. THE ONLY LIVING PERSON WHO KNEW THE ENTIRE TRUTH AND COULD TESTIFY AGAINST HIM WAS BATHSHEBA, AND HER SILENCE WAS PROBABLY MOTIVATED BY FEAR FOR HER OWN LIFE. THERE ALSO WERE SOME MEN WHO SERVED THE KING, WHO HAD PARTIAL KNOWLEDGE, BUT THEY REMAINED LOYAL TO THE KING — EVEN WHEN HE WAS WRONG — AND WERE PROBABLY COMPENSATED FOR THEIR SILENCE. ALL OF HIS BASES WERE COVERED — OR SO HE THOUGHT. HE ONLY OVERLOOKED ONE SMALL DETAIL: **YOU CAN'T HIDE YOUR HEART FROM GOD.**

PART 3: THE CONDEMNATION

- NATHAN'S PARABLE WAS A CLOSE PARALLEL TO WHAT DAVID HAD DONE, AND HAD COVERED UP SO SKILLFULLY. THIS SHOULD REMIND US THAT, NO MATTER HOW HARD WE TRY, **WE CAN'T HIDE FROM GOD**. WE'RE MUCH BETTER OFF IF WE'RE JUST HONEST WITH HIM UP FRONT — *IT'S NOT LIKE HE DOESN'T ALREADY KNOW*

- NATHAN SET DAVID UP, AND DAVID TOOK THE BAIT. DAVID STILL HAD A MORAL COMPASS — EVEN THOUGH HE HAD IGNORED IT IN HIS OWN SITUATION — AND THAT MORAL COMPASS SCREAMED FOR JUSTICE. DAVID, AS KING, HAD AUTHORITY TO PRONOUNCE JUDGMENT ON SUCH CRIMINALS, AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HE DID — NOT REALIZING THAT HE WAS PRONOUNCING HIS OWN JUDGMENT: *THE DEATH PENALTY.*

- THEN NATHAN DROPPED THE BOMB
- DAVID WAS REMINDED, AS I OFTEN NEED TO BE, THAT **GOD IS BIGGER AND SMARTER THAN WE ARE**. NATHAN, WHO HADN'T BEEN A PARTY TO ANY OF THIS INCIDENT, RECITED BACK TO DAVID EXACTLY WHAT HE HAD DONE, IN PAINFUL DETAIL, AND PRONOUNCED GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE KING. ON TOP OF THAT, **DAVID HAD ALREADY PRONOUNCED HIS OWN DEATH SENTENCE** — HE WAS BACKED INTO AN UNCOMFORTABLE CORNER.

- IT IS WHEN WE ARE TRULY HONEST WITH GOD THAT WE FIND HIS MERCY AND GRACE .
- THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT DEFINING MOMENT IN DAVID'S LIFE. HE CONFESSED HIS SIN, AND WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT HIS PUNISHMENT OF DEATH. INSTEAD, GOD SHOWED HIS GRACE BY FORGIVING DAVID, AND ALLOWING HIM TO LIVE.

- FOR THE REST OF HIS DAYS, WHEN DAVID OPENED HIS EYES IN THE MORNING, HE KNEW THAT HE WAS ALIVE FOR ONE REASON AND ONE REASON ONLY: **THE SHEER GRACE OF GOD.** THAT TURNING POINT CHANGED THE DIRECTION OF DAVID'S LIFE, AND DEEPENED HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD TO A LEVEL HE HAD NEVER KNOWN BEFORE. UNDERSTANDING GOD'S GRACE WILL HAVE THE SAME EFFECT ON YOU AND ME.

- GENUINE REPENTANCE BRINGS FORGIVENESS, RESTORATION AND HEALING, AND THE END RESULT OF THAT CYCLE IS ACTION. DAVID COMMITTED HIMSELF TO SERVING GOD WITH HIS RESTORED LIFE, AND LEADING OTHER NEEDY PEOPLE TO HIM. IT IS NOT THE “SACRIFICE” OF LABOR THAT PRODUCES FAVOR WITH GOD; IT IS FAVOR WITH GOD, THROUGH HONEST REPENTANCE, THAT PRODUCES A WILLING SERVANT.



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PART 4: HEALING AND RESTORATION

- SO FAR, DAVID HAS COMMITTED ADULTERY, THEN ORDERED THE MURDER OF SEVERAL INNOCENT MEN, TRYING TO COVER UP HIS SIN. GOD HAS SENT NATHAN THE PROPHET TO CONFRONT DAVID, AND DAVID HAS SOUGHT GOD'S FORGIVENESS AND EXPRESSED AN ATTITUDE OF GENUINE REPENTANCE.

- **GOD NEVER BRINGS US CONDEMNATION WITHOUT OFFERING US GRACE AND HEALING. THIS IS A RECURRING THEME THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE — *GOD WANTS TO HAVE AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OF US, AND GOES OUT OF HIS WAY TO INVITE US INTO THAT RELATIONSHIP.* THE WHOLE POINT OF NATHAN'S CHARGE AGAINST DAVID WAS NOT TO PUNISH HIM, BUT TO RESTORE HIM.**

- **LIKE DAVID, YOU WILL HAVE TO BE HONEST WITH GOD, AND WITH YOURSELF.**
 - **STOP TRYING TO HIDE YOUR SIN BEHIND CHEAP EXCUSES AND LIES**
 - **BE WILLING TO DEAL WITH AND ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR SIN**
 - **TOTALLY SURRENDER YOURSELF TO GOD**
 - **ALLOW JESUS TO COME INTO YOUR HEART AND FORGIVE YOUR SIN**
 - **HAVING ACCEPTED HIS FREE GIFT OF SALVATION, LET HIM START THE PROCESS OF REBUILDING YOUR LIFE ON HIS FIRM, ETERNAL FOUNDATION.**