

The Lord Puts Away Sin

Text: 2 Samuel 12

Introduction: We have been making our way through the story of David as recounted in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. There has been so much to love about David since we were first introduced to him all the way back in 1 Samuel 16. His humble beginning. His amazing defeat of the Philistine giant Goliath. His principled refusal to take Saul's life even when Saul was seeking to kill him. His extraordinary patience in ascending to Israel's throne. His lavish kindness to Mephibosheth. And we could go on and on. There has been so much to love about David.

But all of that came crashing down last time as we turned our attention to 2 Samuel 11 and David's tragic fall into ruinous sin. He took Uriah's wife Bathsheba for himself and lay with her. And then when he found out that she was pregnant, he sought to cover up his sin, which ultimately led to David murdering Uriah.

The king who had refused to take, **TOOK**. The king who had refused to kill, **MURDERED**. The king who had been committed to administering justice and equity committed grave **INJUSTICE**.

So, we have to ask the question: Where does that leave us?

David was supposed to be a king who was unlike Saul and all the other kings of all the other nations. But now he has proven himself to be just like them. David was the one with whom God made His covenant. God told David, "And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever" (7:16).

Where does all that stand now?

That's the tension of the narrative as we come to 2 Samuel 12 this morning. What will become of David? Will God forsake His covenant with him? When Saul sinned by offering unlawful sacrifice back in 1 Samuel 13, Samuel told Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD

has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you" (1 Sam. 13:13-14).

That man the Lord sought. That man after the Lord's own heart. That man was David. And now David has committed grievous sin. In fact, if we were weighing them, we might judge David's sin to be even greater than Saul's sin. Saul offered unlawful sacrifice. David took a man's wife, got her pregnant, and then killed her husband. There's no sugarcoating David's sin.

So, if the Lord rejected Saul, does that mean that he is going to reject David as well?

Let's open our Bibles to 2 Samuel 12. It's on page 245 in the black pew Bible in front of you. If you don't own a Bible, we invite you to take the pew Bible with you when you leave.

(Read 2 Samuel 12...Pray)

I want you to see this morning in 2 Samuel 12 that **God extends His mercy and grace to undeserving sinners like you and me.**

Our text shows us very clearly that...

I. God sees all sin.

A. In some sense, by the end of chapter 11, things had settled down for David.

1. **Uriah was dead. Bathsheba was pregnant with David's baby. So, David took her as his wife.**
2. **Then the baby is born, and everything seems to be going okay at first.**
3. **I can imagine David breathing a sigh of relief. He had been wrapped up in the stress of trying to cover his sin, and for a moment, he appears to have succeeded. Now he can move on with his life with his new wife and their baby boy. There's a brief moment of calm before the storm.**

4. But you'll remember that there was an indicator at the end of chapter 11 that the story isn't over. The last sentence of chapter 11 says, "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord."
 5. Have you ever done something you shouldn't have and thought you got away with it only to find out later that just because the consequences are delayed doesn't mean the consequences are denied?
 6. When my sister and I were growing up, we got the bright idea that we were going to play like we were camping. And as you know, when you go camping, you have to roast marshmallows. Well, we were smart enough not to try to build a fire in the middle of our bedroom, but we still needed a way to roast our marshmallows. So, we got a lamp. And this wouldn't work so well today with LED bulbs, but incandescent light bulbs get really hot. And I'm here to tell you that you CAN roast a marshmallow over an incandescent light bulb. The problem is that if you're trying to hide it from your parents, the smell of roasted marshmallow is a pretty distinct smell. AND if you touch the light bulb with the marshmallow, it's going to melt all over the light bulb and burn. Don't ask me how I know. We didn't get away with it for long, but for a very brief moment, it was fun. Our plan seemed ingenious. Unfortunately, mom wasn't impressed with her resourceful little improvisors. My sister and I ended up in the field picking up rocks for no apparent purpose except to ensure that we never tried something like that again. And it must have worked because I haven't tried to roast marshmallows over a light bulb since that day.
 7. My point is that sin seems like a good idea for a moment. And that's especially true when we think we've gotten away with it. But the reality is that God sees all sin. We know from our text that was true regarding David's sin.
- B. Where chapter 11 ended with the statement that David's sin displeased the Lord, chapter 12 begins with God sending the prophet Nathan to confront David in his sin.**
1. And I want you to know that even this was an act of God's mercy and grace. God didn't owe David anything. He could have left David to his own devices. Allowed him to continue in sin without confrontation.
 2. That is somewhat what God had done with Saul. But God had made a covenant with David. In speaking of David's offspring, God said, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you" (7:14-15).
 3. God was committed to David. So, He sent Nathan to confront David in his sin.
 4. And Nathan confronted David by telling him a story. We find it there in verses 1-4. (Read vs. 1-4)
 5. The story is intended to elicit a response from David. Despite being blinded by his own sin, David does have a strong sense of right and wrong. He was committed to administering justice and equity.
 6. So, look at his response to Nathan's story in verses 5-6. (Read vs. 5-6)
 - a. It's interesting that David invokes the name of the Lord. He says, "As the LORD lives." This seems to be the first time David has thought of the Lord for a while.
 - b. It's also interesting that David says the man deserves to die. Because that's NOT what the law of Moses prescribed for such a situation. Stealing was not a capital offense. The law required fourfold restitution, which we see in verse 6, but not death.
 - c. But what sin did require death according to the law of Moses? Adultery AND Murder. Both of which David himself was guilty.
 - d. The hypocrisy here is stunning. David wants to remove the speck from the eye of the man in Nathan's story. But he can't see clearly because of the log in his own eye.

- e. Jesus says, “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you” (Matt. 7:1-2). Jesus goes on to say, “You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Matt. 7:5).
7. With his story, Nathan has elicited exactly the response from David that he intended.
 8. Now look at what Nathan says to David in verse 7: “You are the man!”
 - a. I like what Woodhouse writes: “The story was not a report about someone else’s crime; it was a mirror revealing David’s own wickedness” (Woodhouse, 321).
 - b. And we know that the Bible is a mirror for us, isn’t it? James uses the illustration of a mirror in James 1 where he writes, “If anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like” (James 1:23-24). When you look in a mirror and you see that your hair is a mess and there’s crust in your eyes and boogers hanging from your nose, you do something about it. When we open the Bible and we’re confronted with our sin, we’re supposed to do something about it.
 - c. Goshen, the Bible is a mirror for us. Including this account of David’s sin. This account of David’s sin is not in the Bible so that we can beat up on David. It’s primarily recorded because of the important role these events play in the history of redemption. But this record of David’s sin is also intended to cause us to consider our own sin.
 - d. Your response here shouldn’t be, “Yeah, David is the man! You tell him, Nathan!” Your response should be, “I am the man...”
 9. Nathan continues his confrontation of David. He says... (Read vs. 7b-8)
 10. What does that sound like to you? It sounds a lot like chapter 7 where God recounted His faithfulness to David prior to establishing His covenant with him. Now God is not establishing His covenant. He’s confronting David in his sin. (Read vs. 9)
 11. Notice a couple of things here about God’s confrontation of David through Nathan.
 1. First, God knows exactly what David did. He knows because God sees all sin. It’s hard to know who knew what in the narrative of chapter 11. But we can be certain that God knew all. Because He saw all. God sees all sin.
 2. Notice also that God doesn’t sugarcoat David’s sin. He calls it just like it is. David “despised the word of the LORD.” He did what was “evil in [the LORD’s] sight.” He “killed” Uriah. He “took” Uriah’s wife.
 3. When God says that David “despised the word of the Lord,” He could be referring to the Law of Moses. Certainly, David had despised the word of the Lord by committing adultery and murder, both of which are prohibited in the Law of Moses. But in this context, “the word of the Lord” probably refers to God’s covenant with David in chapter 7. God had promised David that his throne would be established forever. But here, just a few chapters later, David dives headlong into grievous sin against God.
 4. I wonder if you can see the parallel here with our own decision to sin. God has established His covenant with us through the blood of His Son. And when we choose to do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, we “despise the word of the LORD.” We’re new creations in Christ. God’s covenant with us ought to make a difference in our lives.
 5. Goshen, God doesn’t play around with sin. He didn’t play around with David’s sin. And He won’t play around with your sin either.

God sees all sin. Notice also that...

II. God punishes all sin.

A. Sin brings consequences. Look beginning in verse 10. (Read vs. 10-12)

1. Notice that the punishment corresponds to the sin that David committed. Namely, murder. David had Uriah killed by “the sword.” And “the sword will never depart” from David’s house (vs. 10a).
2. Notice also that it’s not just David who is impacted by his sin, but David’s “house.” David sinned against Uriah’s “house,” and God would bring His punishment on David’s “house.”
3. There’s also a connection between David’s adultery and God taking David’s wives and giving them to his neighbor. Essentially, David would reap what he had sowed.
4. David had sought to cover His sin, but God’s punishment of David’s sin would be done out in the open for everyone to see.

B. Now, this is where David has a choice to make.

1. How will David respond to God now that he has been confronted by God in his sin?
2. When Saul was confronted in 1 Samuel 13 of his sin of offering unlawful sacrifice, he justified his sin and tried to explain it away. He even blamed Samuel for not coming soon enough to offer the sacrifice himself.
3. What about David? We’ve seen that ultimately he wasn’t any different from Saul in that he too committed grievous sin against God. But what about when he was confronted with his sin?
4. Look at verse 13. (Read vs. 13a)
5. That’s the first step to dealing rightly with sin. Recognize it as sin. And acknowledge that it is ultimately sin against God.

6. In Psalm 51, David would write, “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight” (Ps. 51:4a).
7. It took a lot for David to finally see his sin with the necessary moral clarity, but when he did, he did the right thing. He confessed his sin to the Lord.
8. There’s not a lot said about it here in 2 Samuel 12, but we know from Psalm 51 that David’s response was genuine repentance.

C. It’s important for us also to note that David’s repentance does not eliminate the consequences of his sin. Look at verse 14. (Read vs. 14)

1. The text goes on in verse 15: “And the Lord afflicted the child that Uriah’s wife bore to David” (vs. 15b)
2. David’s response to this is one of the ways that we know David’s repentance was genuine. What did he do? He turned to the Lord. (Read vs. 16-17)
3. But despite David’s prayers, his infant son died just as God said that he would.
4. Look at David’s response when he found out that the child was dead. (Read vs. 20-23)
 - a. This is more evidence of David’s repentance.
 - b. I’m not saying that everyone’s grief has to look like David’s grief here, but it is clear that David trusted the Lord amidst his grief, and that’s the key.
 - c. Cling to the Lord. Know that He is good. Know that He always does what is right. Trust that He will be near to you and sustain you in the midst of your grief.
 - d. Some of you have experienced the unimaginable grief of losing a child. You know the kind of pain that David must have been experiencing. And far be it from me to tell you how to grieve. But what I do know is that the Lord is near to the brokenhearted. The pain may never go away in this life. But God is the God of all comfort. He comforts us in any affliction. His peace passes all understanding. His

strength is made perfect in our weakness. Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, He is with us. His rod and His staff, they comfort us. That's the kind of comfort from God that David experienced in his grief. And it's the same comfort that is available to us as we turn to the Lord in the midst of enormous loss and grief.

D. I do want to say a word here theologically about the difference between punishment and discipline.

- 1. I said that God punishes all sin. And that is true. There has never been a sin committed that God has simply overlooked or ignored, and there will never be a sin committed that God will overlook or ignore. He is holy. He is righteous. His character requires that He punish sin.**
- 2. God punishes all sin. However, on this side of the cross, there are two ways that God punishes sin.**
 - a. If you are not in Christ this morning. If you have never turned from your sin and placed your trust in Jesus. You need to understand that God will punish you for your sin. There is coming a day of judgment. And unless you repent, you will experience the full weight of the wrath of God poured out on you.**
 - b. But if you are in Christ. If you have turned from your sin and placed your trust in Jesus, God will not punish you for your sin because He already punished Jesus for your sin. That's what Jesus was doing on the cross. He died in your place. As your substitute. The wages of sin is death. What you deserve because of your sin is God's wrath toward your sin. But Jesus took your sin on Himself and died in your place. Jesus experienced the punishment for your sin that you deserve so that you can receive the gift of eternal life with God that His righteousness deserves.**

3. So, God doesn't PUNISH Christians, but we need to understand that He does DISCIPLINE us.

- a. And His discipline is good for us. As it was for David. The worst thing that God could do regarding our sin would be to ignore it and leave us in it. We need God's discipline so that we will return to the Lord and honor Him with our lives.**
- b. Think about what might happen if my mom never taught my sister and me that you can't roast marshmallows on the lamp. We could have caught our house on fire. We knew we weren't supposed to be roasting marshmallows on the lamp. We might not have been able to see all of the ways it could possibly go wrong. But we knew we weren't supposed to do it. And we did it anyway. But after picking up only-God-knows-how-many-rocks, we never roasted marshmallows on a lamp again.**
- c. Proverbs 3 says, "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights" (Prov. 3:11-12).**
- d. Listen to what the author of Hebrews says about discipline: "It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb. 12:7-11).**

- e. The point is that we should expect to experience God's discipline when we sin. It's a sign that we are His children. We belong to Him. And He loves us too much to leave us in our sin.

Which leads to our final point. We've seen that God sees all sin, and He punishes all sin. Let's now consider the truth that...

III. God forgives all sin.

A. I want to be clear here about what I mean when I say that God forgives ALL sin.

1. You've heard me say many times before that "all" means "all" and that's all "all" means.
2. But I don't mean here that God forgives all people's sin. The Bible is very clear that the only people who will have their sin forgiven are those who turn from their sin and place their trust in the Lord Jesus. The only way for you to be forgiven of your sin is by the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross on your behalf.
3. What I mean when I say that God forgives ALL sin is that God forgives all KINDS of sin. And that is good news for you this morning. There is not anything you have done that God cannot forgive if you will repent of your sin and place your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. David was an adulterer. David was a murderer. David's sin displeased the Lord. David's sin was evil in the sight of the Lord.

B. But look at the second half of verse 13: "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die."

1. David repented of his sin, and the Lord forgave him his sin.
2. I want you to know this morning that if you are in Christ, that statement is true of you as well. The Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die. You deserve death. The wages of sin is death.

3. That's what David deserved for his sin. The Law of Moses was clear. But in His mercy and grace, God forgave David. He put away his sin.
4. And if you are in Christ, God has put away your sin too. And if you are not yet in Christ, I want you to know that God can and will put away your sin if you will repent of your sin and put your trust in Jesus.

C. We see God's grace in David's life very clearly in the rest of the chapter.

1. First, we see God's grace in the gift of another son (vs. 24-25). (Read vs. 24-25)
 - a. This son, Solomon, would be the initial fulfillment of God's promise to David back in chapter 7. And Solomon's descendant, Jesus, would be the final and complete fulfillment of God's promise to David in chapter 7.
 - b. This is hard for us to wrap our minds around. How could a son who came from the union of David and Bathsheba, which started out in terrible sin, be the son of the promise?
 - c. Only by the mercy and grace of God! His thoughts are not our thoughts. His ways are not our ways. He is the sovereign God of the universe, and He always accomplishes His purposes just as He intends.
 - d. "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Rom. 11:33).
2. We also see God's grace at the end of chapter 12 in the fact that the Lord continued to give David success against his enemies.
 - a. Verses 26-31 read a lot like something we might find in the story of David prior to chapter 11 and his sin.

- b. **It's not all wonderful from here. God is going to do as he said. The sword will never depart from David's house.**
- c. **But as Rabbah is defeated and captured, we're reminded that God uses sinful people to accomplish His purposes.**
- d. **The truth is that it's the only kind of people He has to work with. Like David, we're all sinners in need of His mercy and grace.**

Conclusion: 2 Samuel 12 teaches us that **God extends His mercy and grace to undeserving sinners like you and me.**

Just like David's story wasn't over at the end of chapter 11, your story isn't over yet either. Wherever you are in life. However far you have wandered from the Lord. He stands ready to extend His mercy and grace to you.

If you will repent. Turn from your sin. Cling to Jesus in faith.

David's story is our story. We were far from God because of our sin. But thanks be to God that through Jesus, He **extends mercy and grace to undeserving sinners like you and me.**