

## SERMON TRANSCRIPT

02.22.2026 | The Dangerous Path of Sin | 2 Samuel 11 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible, I wanna invite you to turn with me to 2 Samuel chapter 11. If you wanna use the Bible that's in the pew or the chair in front of you, I believe 2 Samuel 11 is on page 262, if you wanna turn there with us. We're gonna be in 2 Samuel and the book of Psalms over the next five weeks as we walk through a sermon series called A Clean Heart. This will be a sermon series that takes us through the season of Lent and I wanted to say a few words this morning as we begin the series and begin the sermon. Just a little bit about the season of Lent and then about the series before we read our text. I grew up in South Louisiana, which is a very Catholic culture. And so Lent was very common in the culture I grew up in. Very common for me to see people with ashes on their forehead on Ash Wednesday, common for me to hear about people fasting in certain ways during Lent. Always loved the seafood specials that came out during the season because a lot of people weren't eating meat, especially on Fridays.

But as a Baptist growing up in that culture, Lent was another season that I observed, that our church observed. In fact, I'll be honest with you, sometimes we were kind of skeptical of this season of Lent. Sometimes we thought that it was probably just like an empty religious ritual time because we had seen people really enjoy themselves during Mardi Gras and the time leading up to Lent. And then as soon as Easter came, the kind of focus of Lent seemed to be left behind. And so we just kind of often figured, well, that was probably just something that they just go through the motions of. But I think the more that I learned about the church, about the church calendar, about how good it can be for us to have intentional seasons in our lives, the more I really came to love the heart behind Lent. Maybe for some people it is just something that they go through the motions through, but I don't think that's a good enough reason for any of us to not do something. When I really began to consider what this season of Lent leading up to Easter is about, it really seemed to be about reflection and repentance and recommitment to God. And so in our church, we're not going to necessarily observe all the components that will come sometimes with the Lent season. But we will have some times of focused prayer and worship over these next weeks.

We will have this sermon series that tries to help us reflect and repent and be recommitted to God in this time leading up to Easter. And this just kind of leads me to introduce you to the sermon series. I've entitled this sermon series "A Clean Heart." And that's a phrase that comes from Psalm 51. It's a Psalm of confession from David. After David has fallen into his sin, after he has been confronted in his sin, after he's kind of begun to experience some of the major consequences of his sin, David has a prayer of confession in Psalm 51. And as he appeals to God for his mercy and grace, he asks God to create a clean heart within him. And that's what I want us to consider as we walk through this series. We're gonna be looking at just a small portion of David's life. We're gonna be looking at a couple of David's writings. But I want us to consider David's sin, the way that he has confronted in his sin, the way that leads him to finally confess his sin, and the way that God works in all of this by his mercy and grace to create a clean heart in David. And I want it to not just be a study of David's life and writings, but I hope it'll be a time of reflection for each one of us. That during this season, we would consider our own sin, that we would consider places where we need to confess.

I pray that God would use this time to draw us to his mercy and grace. I hope that throughout this series and throughout this Lent season, you never get the feeling that my goal up here is to make anybody just feel guilty or feel bad for all the sins that you've committed, as if that's really the goal of just feeling worse about ourselves so that we try harder, give more money, do whatever we're supposed to do to kind of make up for it. But rather, I hope that as we really consider the depth of our sin, the greatness of our sin, that we would be better able to understand the greatness of God's mercy and grace, that we would see that even for a sinner like David, even for a sinner like you and I, there is an opportunity because of what Jesus Christ has done, because of what we celebrate specifically at Easter, for us, even as sinners, to have a clean heart.

So that's kind of our plan for this series, and we begin today with this look into David's sin, this dangerous path of sin that he goes down in 2 Samuel chapter 11. I'm gonna read the whole chapter. It's kind of a longer text for us this morning, but I think it's important for us to hear the story in its whole. So follow along as I read 2 Samuel chapter 11 verses one through 27. It says, "In the spring of the year, "the time when kings go out to battle, "David sent Joab and his servants with him, "and all Israel, and they ravaged the Ammonites "and besieged Raba. "But David remained at Jerusalem. "It happened late one afternoon, "David rose from his couch and was walking "on the roof of the king's

house, "that he saw from the roof a woman bathing. "The woman was very beautiful. "David sent and inquired about the woman, "and once said, is not this Bathsheba, "the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? "So David sent messengers and took her, "and she came to him, and he lay with her. "But she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness. "Then she returned to her house. "The woman conceived and sent and told David, "'I am pregnant.'" "So David sent word to Joab, "'send me Uriah the Hittite.'" "Joab sent Uriah to David. "When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing, "and how the people were doing, and how the war was going. "David said, "Yurah, go down to your house "and wash your feet." Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him, a present from the king. But 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. When they told David Uriah did not go down to his house, David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? "Why'd you not go down to your house?" Uriah said to David, "The ark in Israel and Judah "dwell in booths, and my Lord Joab "and the servants of my Lord are camping in an open field. "Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink "and to lie with my wife? "As you live, and as your soul lives, "I will not do this thing." And David said to Uriah, "Remain here today, also, "and tomorrow, and I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. In the evening, he went down to lie on his couch with the servants of his Lord, but he did not go down to his house. In the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter, he wrote, "Send Uriah in the forefront "of the hardest fighting, then draw back from him, "that he may be struck down and die." When as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew where there were valiant men. The men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite also died. Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting. It instructed the messenger, "When you have finished telling all the news "about the fighting to the king, "then the king's anger rises, and he says to you, "why did you go so near the city to fight? "Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? "Who killed Abimelech, the son of Jerubashath? "Did not a woman cast an upper millstone on him "from the wall so that he died at the bez? "Why did you go so near the wall? "Then you shall say, your servant Uriah the Hittite "is dead also." So the messenger went and came and told David all that Joab had sent him to tell. Messenger said to David, "The men gained an advantage "over us and came out against us in the field, "but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. "Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall. "Some of the king's servants are dead, "and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also." David said to the messenger, "Thus shall you say to Joab, "do not let this matter displease you, "for the sword devours now one and now another. "Strengthen your attack against the city "and overthrow it and encourage him." When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. And then when the morning was over, David sent and brought her to his house. She became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

And if you've ever watched one of those movies where like the opening scene is the main character in some kind of crazy situation, maybe like people are shooting at him or something interesting's happening, and then there's like this freeze frame, and the character kind of narrates and says, yep, that's me. You're probably wondering how I got here. You know, and the movie kind of rewinds a couple of days, maybe a little bit of time, and just shows you how maybe they went from living this kind of normal life, some small choices, some mistakes, some bad coincidences, all of a sudden landed them in a place they never thought that they would be.

In some ways, that's kind of what happens to David here in 2 Samuel chapter 11. Not necessarily the bad coincidences, but the bad choices. I mean, you go to the beginning of the chapter, leading up to this point in 2 Samuel. David has now become king of Israel. Israel's at a really good place. God is giving them victory over their enemies. David is in a good place as king. And then, all of this happens in 2 Samuel chapter 11. David is on the roof of his palace, of his house. He sees a beautiful woman bathing. He goes to inquire about her. Someone says, isn't that Bathsheba, Uriah the Hittite's wife? By the way, whenever David was on the run from his life, from Saul, he had a group of mighty men that protected him that really laid down their life to try to protect him. Uriah the Hittite is one of those mighty men. So David hears this, that one of the guys that laid down his life sacrificed almost himself to protect David in his time of need. This is his wife that he sees, but yet he sends people to go get the wife of Uriah.

I won't go into a lot of detail, just because we've got different ages in here, but when David brings Uriah's wife Bathsheba to him, it's obviously adultery and affair to sleep with someone that is not your wife and another man's wife, but even on top of that, it is abuse. David is the king and you don't say no to the king. David's using his power to take advantage of another. Then when he finds out that she's pregnant, he tries to get Uriah to come in so that he can cover up his own sin.

But Uriah, even when he is drunk, is more of a man of integrity than David is. So he won't do that while everybody else is fighting and nobody else is with their wives. David has to move forward with a terrible battle plan. David, who is a warrior, who has slain his 10,000s, who knows how to lead an army, sets up a battle in such a way to make sure that Uriah dies, but also if you notice, other people die as well. As a result of this, David's not only responsible for taking advantage of this woman, but now making sure that her husband is dead and other people are dying along with him. You get to the end of 2 Samuel 11 and David's in a very different place than he was when he started the chapter.

In some ways, you could just look at David and you could do a lot of judging of him. You could say, you know what? I thought this was a man after God's own heart. I mean, I thought he was supposed to be this great king. Look at how terrible he is. I mean, these are like some of the worst sins you could imagine, all in one chapter. You could also look at this and you could really just point to the way people abuse their positions of power. We could talk about that. I think it's worthy of us considering. I think actually, when I just look at this story, I just think about what we see in scripture and we see in our own lives. It's really just a very dramatic, as much as it is, a very common story of the way that sin works. Sin has this ability to bring more destruction than you ever would have thought. Sin has this unique ability to draw you down this dangerous path. Sin has this ability to snowball, to bring you to a place where you never thought that you would be.

It starts with just small choices, little compromises, and before you know that, you wake up in a place that you don't know how you got there. Probably all of us could think of a story like this outside of David's, maybe a story we've heard of, someone we know. Often think of as a pastor. People often reach out to me in a really low point. You find out what's going on in their life and you hear that now they're in a place that they never thought that they would be, but you can kind of trace back and see how sin has led them there. But to be honest with you, I don't have to look at people I've talked to as a pastor. I could just look at my own life. Maybe you could as well. Maybe you could just see the times whenever you've allowed small sins, one step here, a compromise there, to begin a pattern of drifting, changing. One day you wake up and you don't know how you got where you are, but you know it's not where you wanted to be. Maybe you feel trapped, you don't know how to get out. This is the way that sin so often works.

Sin has a way of drawing us down this dangerous path that we just see exemplified in 2 Samuel chapter 11. In fact, there's this kind of cheesy pastor saying, I guess if you want to put it like that, that I've often heard growing up, and it's just always stuck with me, and it's there in your notes. It's just something I want us to consider as we think about David's sin here in 2 Samuel chapter 11, and we allow it to point us to our own sin. And that is that sin will always take you farther than you plan to go. It will always keep you longer than you plan to stay. It will always cost you more than you plan to pay. Sin has this way of always taking you a little bit farther than you ever thought that you would go. We think that we could just sin a little bit, and then go back to the right ways of living. We think we can just indulge for a moment.

You know, in Hebrews chapter 11, it talks about the fleeting pleasures of sin. I think the Bible never tries to hide the fact that so often sin is pleasurable for a moment. So often sin is finding the desires we have within us and being met them in an immediate way. Sin has these fleeting pleasures, but they are fleeting. So often once we fall into a sin, we maybe feel worse about ourselves. We feel like we can't share with anybody. We start to bear the shame, and it leads us to try to cover it up, or to begin to lie, or to begin to seek more pleasure in the wrong places. Sin has this hook about it that will bring you in through the fleeting pleasures, but will keep drawing you farther. So like David, you're at a place you never thought that you would be.

I think David was just walking on the roof of his palace one day expecting to do all these terrible things, but all of a sudden it just happened. This is the way that sin so often works, and there's a couple of important truths that we just need to know as we think about sin, as we think about our lives, as we think about what happens here in the story. The first one is, these aren't the things that are in your notes, we'll get there in just a second, but the first thing that I think is important to know is that the seeds for this type of sin, what we see in David's life, the ability to walk down this dangerous path that David does are within each one of us. The seeds for the terrible harmful things that David does and other people do are really found in each one of our hearts. Not to ever excuse anybody else or to say, well, you know, it could happen to any of us, but to just be honest with ourselves and say what we see happen in other people's lives in a story like David's, we each have the ability to walk down the same dangerous path of sin.

In James chapter one, James kind of describes the way that sin happens in our lives. And he says that we are tempted when we are lured and enticed by our own desires, meaning there's something within us as people that has a desire to go against the way God designed things to be. God designed our needs to be met in a certain way for our pleasures to be filled in a certain way, but each one of us have these desires that go against God's design. And James says that we are tempted when we are lured and enticed by our own desires, and then when temptation is, as those desires have conceived, it gives birth to sin, and then when sin is fully grown, it brings forth death. James is describing in kind of a way what happens here in David's life, what happens in each one of our lives. There is something within each one of us. No matter where you come from, no matter what your background is, even no matter how spiritually immature or mature you are. I mean, unbelievers and believers, I think we all still have this within us. These seeds that can possibly grow into the most harmful sins you can imagine, these places where we can walk down the dangerous path that David also did. We have to recognize that there is within us the ability to do the same things that David did, but we also need to recognize that along with something within us, there is an enemy at work in our world.

Peter says that the enemy is prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking for someone to devour, that we have an enemy who is good at tempting, who knows what our desires are, who knows how to put things in front of us, who knows how to lure us and entice us. So maybe you're here today and you would kind of push back on the idea that you've got that within you to do what David does, or you don't think that maybe you have the seed kind of within your heart for you to walk down that dangerous path of sin. Maybe you would at least admit that there is an enemy at work. The devil is out there seeking to steal and to kill and to destroy. That he loves to take the things that tempt us and lure us and entice us and draw us down this path of sin because he delights in destruction. He delights in seeing joy taken from our lives and from those around us.

Because what I'm saying is as we look at this story of David, we consider his sin and we consider our own sin, we think about the fact that it's there within us and there's an enemy around us, that I just want us to hear Paul's words to the church in Corinth in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. He says in 1 Corinthians 10, 12, "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands 'take heed lest he fall.'" We read David's story before we just judge him or think about other people. What about our own lives? What does it look like for us to take heed, to not walk down this dangerous path of sin? Well, I wanna draw out a couple of places of just guidance that we see in the story. We're not gonna walk through every detail of the story, but rather just kind of learn from a couple of big pictures. But before I get there, just one other thing I would say is, what David's story, this whole section of scripture, I think shows us, is that even if you walk down this terrible, dangerous path of sin, even if one day you wake up and you're at a place you never thought that you would be, you're addicted to something you never thought that you would be, you've gotten yourself into a situation and you don't know how to get out of it.

What the Bible says is that God's mercy and grace is ready to meet you right there. That you, even in that state, can still have a clean heart, that forgiveness is still available. We'll talk throughout this series about what it looks like even when we find ourselves in these really terrible places to confront the sin, to confess the sin, to experience God's mercy and grace. This morning, as we just consider this dangerous path of sin that David walks down and how we are all drawn to it and the enemy is pulling us towards it, I'll just give you two places of guidance of how we could maybe take heed, lest we too fall. The first one I would give you is that we should avoid areas of temptation. When we think about our sin, we think about the potential within us to walk down this dangerous path of sin, the enemy being at work to lure us and entice us, one thing that we should do is we should seek at all costs to avoid areas of temptation.

One of the best ways to not walk down the dangerous path of sin is to not even go near the entrance of it. Whereas Jesus taught us to pray in the Lord's prayer, lead us not into temptation. Keep me from places where my desires will be lured and enticed to give birth to sin. Now think about this just as we read the very beginning of the story. In verse one, it says that in the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab and his servants with him in all Israel, and they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Raba, but David remained a Jerusalem. Now if you study what scholars have to say about this in commentaries, people are kind of divided as to how to like read and interpret this verse. Because it could be really easy just to say, well you know what, David should have been off at battle, but because he's there in Jerusalem, that's why he falls into the sin. And some scholars will do their work and they'll say, you know, it was very customary for kings to not always go out to battle. I mean especially in the position that Israel was in, the position that David was in, the position that David was in, where he was in in his life, there wasn't necessarily a biblical

command from God for him to go out to battle, so maybe it'd be too much to say David was being disobedient and that's what led him to this sin. But I think that's probably true.

But it's kind of interesting, even if you just go back one chapter in 2 Samuel chapter 10, it talks about how David is there fighting with the army. In verse 17, it talks about David's there with the army in the battle fighting with them. And it says that he sends his trusted leaders in all of Israel. I mean you hear what Uriah talks about later on. He's like the ark is there, everybody's out there fighting. It seems like David has remained in Jerusalem, maybe because he's gotten to a place of being very comfortable, maybe very lax. I'm not saying David was being disobedient and not going out to battle, but perhaps it is the author signaling us as something that was going on in his life and in his heart. That as David is no longer in the actual battle that Israel's facing, maybe he has often also become somewhat complacent to the battle that is going on in each one of our hearts. That he begins to be more comfortable and lax.

You know, C.S. Lewis wrote a book called *The Screwtape Letters*. It's a fictional book about a senior demon writing to a, like a minty demon about how to tempt people, how to draw them into sin. One of the things he talks about is the middle-aged prosperity that people experience and how that's a great season to bring temptation because people get comfortable, they let their guard down. Now I'm not here to tell you what middle-aged is. I don't necessarily know. When I was in my early 30s as the pastor here, somebody called me middle-aged and I didn't know how to take that. But I can tell you that no matter what age you are, we can get to these places in our life where we feel like we can relax, where we let our guard down. Maybe it's not just about avoiding areas of temptation. That's one way to put it, but maybe it's just about recognizing the danger of temptation, being on guard against temptation, seeing the battle that is going on around us with the enemy and in our own hearts.

Recognizing that the best way to avoid the dangerous path of sin is to not even go near its entrance. Some years later, David's son Solomon writes Proverbs, words of wisdom about how to live. And he says this in Proverbs chapter six, "Can a man carry fire next to his chest "and his clothes not be burned? "Can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched?" He's saying, "Can you really expect to flirt with temptation, "to start down the path of sin "and not to cause damage and harm to you and to others? "Can you really expect just to be able "to kind of dabble in sin or with temptation "and for there not to be serious ramifications "or consequences?" We need to be aware of this in our lives. We need to avoid areas of temptation. One thing I so appreciate about people who are willing to admit that they have a serious problem with a certain temptation is the links they'll go to to avoid that temptation.

I can think about friends that I have that have gone through Alcoholics Anonymous. People who have been sober now for decades and yet they know their next drink is still out there. They know that they do not even wanna go near that sin or that temptation anymore because of where it can lead. So often, those of us maybe who aren't ready to admit the problems that we have, so often we aren't willing to go to such links to avoid such areas of temptation. But maybe even today, God would begin to point out an area of temptation that you need to be aware of, to avoid. Is it on your phone or your computer? Is it in your relationship? Is it in your workplace with friends that aren't believers? Is it in your home with your family?

I mean, it's easy to be thinking probably just about sexual sins as we think about David's life. That's certainly prevalent in our lives and our culture. But even the sins of greed, of pride, of lying, of gossip, laziness, workaholicism, self-righteousness, where do we find ourselves being drawn to these? What kind of boundaries do we need to set up in our lives? What kind of accountability do we need to allow in so that we can avoid these areas of temptation? One of the best ways to never go down the dangerous path of sin is to avoid it altogether. But that won't always happen. If we can't avoid every area of temptation, even when we do our best, we will fall into sin. How do we not allow ourselves to keep walking down this dangerous path of sin? I think the second point of guidance that I just draw from David's story here is to confess sin quickly.

One, we need to avoid areas of temptation to not allow ourselves to go down this path. Then secondly, it is good for us to confess sin quickly. Sin always thrives in the dark. Sin continues to grow and to snowball and to bring us to places we never thought we would be when we conceal it and cover it up rather than confess it. May I just think about David throughout this story? In verse three, it says David inquires about the woman. Someone says to him, "Is this not Bathsheba, "the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite?" Imagine if there that David just had a trusted brother

and he could have said, "Man, I was just lusting after another man's wife. "Would you help me in this sin?" To confess it quickly. But he doesn't, he continues on in his sin. David sent messengers and took her and she came to him and he lay with her. She returns to her house, verse five, and the woman conceived and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant." Imagine even here, with all the terrible things David has already done in the story, if at this point he chooses to confess, to bring Uriah in, to own his sin and his shame. Yes, it would have been hurtful and hard, but Uriah and others would not have died in battle.

I mean, at some point if David would have confessed, it would have kept him from continuing to walk down this path. Now, just to be honest with you, this is something that we all need to hear. We need to confess our sins to God. We need to confess our sins to a faithful brother or sister. This is why we've created discipleship groups in our church. We wanna try to create these spaces where you can have people that you can trust, that can listen to you, that you can open up with. Because our hope is that even as you sin, that you'd be able to exit off this dangerous path because you're able to confess that sin to other people.

But I'll just tell you, throughout this sermon, especially even at this point, I'm preaching to myself as much as I am to any one of you. I mean, if you're anything like me, just growing up in the church, often kind of being the example people look to, I'm much more comfortable concealing my sin than confessing it. So often, I don't want people to think bad of me. So often, I don't wanna let people down. So easy for me to want to just cover up rather than confess. And maybe you're like me. Maybe it's just not natural for you to be transparent with people and let people in as to what's going on in your life. I would just say we've gotta see from David's example here the ways that we've gotta change our view about sin and our sin being exposed.

I was just thinking about this as I was reading this story and come to the end of the story. You know, the story ends with David kind of just continuing to cover up his sin, conceal it, virtually nobody has to know about it, it seems. It says that he brings Bathsheba in as his wife and she bears him a son. It says at the end of verse 27, the thing that David had done displeased the Lord. Doesn't that sound like a bit of an understatement? I guess you just have to imagine like God is extremely upset with all that David has done, all the pain that he's caused, all the harm that he's committed as the king of Israel.

What I find is that so many of us, myself included, when we think about our sin, all we can think about is how displeased God must be and how disappointed other people will be. And as long as that's the main thing in our mind, I think we're gonna be very slow to confess our sin and quick to probably try to conceal it. We have to believe that as much as God hates sin, and he does, because it does cause harm, God's hatred of sin should become our hatred of sin. We should not even wanna walk near areas of temptation, but as much as God hates sin, God loves sinners. Bible says that God is full of love. He is rich in mercy. And who is mercy towards but sinners to people that do not deserve as love? He is rich in mercy, ready to give it out to those who will come to him and confess their sin. This needs to be our controlling thought when we think about our sin being confessed and exposed. This needs to be the way we conduct ourselves to other people when they come to us and confess sin.

Do we exemplify God's grace and mercy to them? Do we show them the heart of God and the way that we hear their confession and pray for them as James tells us to do? Solomon in the book of Proverbs also writes this in Proverbs chapter 28. He says, "Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy." We'll talk more about confession as we go throughout this series, but it's so good for us to be able to exit out of the path of the dangerous way that sin wants to bring us by confessing our sin quickly. This is part of why we come to the table regularly. As we come to the table, we are challenged to confess our sins, first to God, but I hope then to others as well. That we would come face to face with our sin that brought Jesus down to earth, that put him on the cross for our sin.

But I pray again that we would never just consider our sin, God's displeasure and our guilt and that would be where we stop. I pray as the spirit brings conviction, he would also bring comfort, to know that Jesus' body has been broken, his blood has been shed, and the Bible says that it is enough to cover all of our sin. But while we seek to cover up and conceal, God will not forgive. But when we confess our sin, forsake our sin, repent from our sin, he will give us mercy and grace. This has to be our controlling thought as we think about our sin and it being exposed. This has to lead us to

confess our sin quickly to exit off this dangerous path of sin. This is what we must believe as we come to the table this morning. As we just sang earlier, there is a grace that is greater than all of our sin. There is a God who is displeased with our sin, but he is full of love and rich in mercy. He wants to pour out his mercy and grace upon us. For those who conceal our sin, it will mean our ruin, but for those who will confess our sin, we will receive the mercy of grace. Will we together as a community be a place where people can confess their sins, both to God and to each other, that we might exit off quicker this dangerous path of sin?