SERMON TRANSCRIPT

03.08.2026 | Pain and Promises | 2 Samuel 12:13-25 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible this morning, I want to invite you to turn with me to 2 Samuel chapter 12. We're in 2 Samuel 12 as we're in the third week of a series that we've entitled "A Clean Heart." That's a phrase that David uses in Psalm 51 as he confesses his sin to God. He asked God to create a clean heart in him. That's what we're considering throughout this series as we're walking through this snapshot of David's life and then his writings. We're using what happened in David's life and then what he wrote in the Psalms to help us consider our sin and God's mercy. So this is our third week in the series. The first week we saw David walk that dangerous path of sin. We saw that he abused his power. He abused Bathsheba. He had Uriah killed. Other people were then affected. And he tried to cover it all up. And so last week we saw the ways that or the way that Nathan was used by God to confront David in his sin, to speak about the consequences of his sin, but also to speak of the cure of sin. God's grace moves in swiftly even as we'll see today.

And I know as we've walked through just these first couple of weeks, these are heavy topics, heavy texts for us. And this morning is no exception. These are heavy things for us to consider. But my prayer has been that while they're heavy, I hope that they're also hopeful, that as we look and we see our sin, that we would also see God's mercy. We'd be led to the hope that isn't him. And I think that is really fitting for the season of Lent. I think in some ways, Lent should be heavy when we stop and we reflect upon our sin. We should have the heaviness about us to consider the conviction of our sin. Because we approach Good Friday, there should be a weightiness on us as we consider our sin for which Jesus died. But also in the season of Lent, as we prepare for Easter, we should remember that Easter is hopeful. While Jesus died on the cross for our sins, he also rose from the dead. There is life forgiveness in him. We want to be encouraged in that. And so as we walk in the season of Lent, we want to allow the heaviness of our sin to bring us to our knees, to cause us to look to the cross, to trust in the sacrifice of Jesus. We also want the hope of God's grace and mercy to point us to that empty tomb, that Jesus has conquered sin and death. And even this morning as we consider the pain, the brokenness that sin brings into our lives and to our world, to have the hope that Jesus has conquered sin and his greatest consequences, that God is working all things together for good. Let us draw on that hope this morning.

So this morning we're continuing on in 2 Samuel chapter 12. We're going to back up and catch just a couple of verses that we looked at last week just to give us a little bit of context and then we're going to continue through later on in the chapter. So 2 Samuel chapter 12 starting in verse 13 and we'll go through verse 25. "David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David, the Lord has put away your sin. You shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child who is born to you shall die. Then Nathan went to his house and the Lord afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David and he became sick. David therefore sought God on behalf of the child and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. And the elders of his house stood beside him to raise him from the ground but he would not nor did he eat food with them. On the seventh day the child died. The servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead for they said, behold, while the child was yet alive we spoke to him and he did not listen to us. How then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm. But when David saw that his servants were whispering together David understood the child was dead. David said to his servants, is the child dead? They said he is dead. David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. He went to the house of the Lord and worshipped. He then went to his own house. When he had asked they set up a food before him and he ate. Then a servant said to him, what is this thing that you have done? He fasted and wept for the child while he was alive but when the child died you arose and ate food. He said while the child was still alive I fasted and wept for I said who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me that the child may live. But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him but he will not return to me. Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba and went into her and lay with her and she bore a son and he called his name Solomon and the Lord loved him and sent a message by Nathan the prophet so he called his name Jedidiah because of the Lord.

To be honest with you as I was preparing the Sunday's message I was thinking should I have structured this series differently where I just didn't have to preach on this passage? Like maybe we should have just gone straight to the Psalms and seen David's confession and the blessing of being forgiven. This is one of those passages that's really can be hard for us to wrestle with. It's one of those passages in the Bible that for probably many people you kind of wonder how does God's actions fit his character? I know some things about God from studying scripture from you know reading the Bible. I feel like I know who God is and yet what he does in stories like this doesn't always seem to match and it can cause

a lot of questions. A lot of people would come to this text and they would say wait a minute why is the innocent child the one being punished and not David? Why is the child the one who loses his life and not David? How is that fair? How is that consistent? How is that from our God? One of the things that I want to put before you this morning that I think is important to understand this whole story is that none of this is a punishment for sin. It's really important I think to understand the story well that we do not read what happens in the story as a punishment for sin. Rather I think what's appropriate is for us to see this as a real life depiction, an example of the consequences of sin as we talked about last week. Of the pain that sin brings into our world and into our lives.

And here's why I put that before you that this is not a punishment for sin. This is why I wanted us to back up and read a couple of verses that we saw last week. Because go back with me to verse 13 and just see what Nathan says. David says to Nathan in verse 13, "I have sinned against the Lord and Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin, you shall not die." David confesses that he has sinned and Nathan quickly assures him of the grace of God, that his sin has been put away. That phrase especially in the Old Testament means your sin has been separated from you. God does not hold your sin over you anymore. As Pastor Clark talked about last week, God's grace moves in quickly, swiftly. John says in 1 John, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Even just a short confession like David gives here, "I have sinned against the Lord." God's grace moves in. You don't have to have a long profound confession but an honest one for God to forgive you of your sin.

Now we'll say next week we're going to go to Psalm 51 and we're going to see that this statement made by David here is not the only confession that he makes. Psalm 51 I think gives us a fuller picture of what it looks like to confess and to repent. What we see here is Nathan assures David, "God has put away your sin. He does not hold your sin over you anymore." And so I think it would be wrong for us to say that God has taken away David's sin and yet he's going to punish David for his sin. In verse 14 he actually says, "Well nevertheless," meaning God has taken away your sin. God has been merciful and gracious but yet there are still consequences. There are still pains that are brought about by sin. It would be wrong for us I think to see this as a punishment for sin but this is a picture of the way that sin always brings pain. Sin always brings grief. It always brings brokenness.

In many ways I think that what we see here is kind of our response to last week. Last week we saw the honesty that sin has consequences for us in our own spiritual lives, for us communally, for generations. What do we do with that? What do we do with the consequences of sin? Even when sin has been forgiven. As we come to the table this morning we trust that Jesus has paid the price for our sin. Our sin has been forgiven if we've trusted in Jesus but yet there is still consequences in this life. There are still pains in this life as a result of sin. What do we do with that? I want to lead us to this morning. The first thing that I would say is when we are experiencing the pains of sin, the consequences of sin, it is good for us to lament the pain that sin causes. We're thinking about this story.

We have to try to draw out principles from what's happening here to David. This isn't so much just about David being punished. I think as much as about him walking in the consequences and the pain that his sin has brought about and seeing the way he responds, I think it is good for us to say that we should lament the pain that sin causes. One of the clear themes throughout the whole Bible is that sin always brings pain, sin always brings brokenness, sin always brings death. Think about the very beginning of the Bible when Adam and Eve sin in Genesis chapter 3. God is merciful to them in that they don't die in that moment, but what happens? An animal or animals are killed for them to be covered.

What is the picture from the very beginning? Sin brings about death. A whole sacrificial system is set up in the Old Testament. Why? To show us time and time again that sin brings about death. Sin brings pain, it brings brokenness, it brings death. That's clear throughout the Bible and it's clear here in this passage. Nathan talked to David last week, we saw that there's going to be consequences of David's sin. He said the sword was not going to depart from his house. You keep reading in 2 Samuel, you'll see all the ways that plays out. But here David is immediately and very intensely experiencing the pain that sin has brought into his life. By the way, if you read this passage and you think God's punishing the child and not David, then you obviously have never been around a parent who's lost a child. I can't imagine probably anything more painful for someone to go through. I mean, what David is going through here, he's not getting off easy. He's not avoiding the consequences of his sin. He is feeling them in this moment.

What we see here is a response of grief, of lament. To lament means to express grief or sorrow. One thing I think that we draw from this passage, it is good and is right for us to express grief and sorrow. It is good for us to lament the pain that sin causes in our lives and our world. I just want to point out, it's not just about lamenting the pain that sin causes. We also need to lament our sin itself. Not just the effects of our sin, we need to lament our sin itself. When we sin, we should not just feel bad that we've hurt ourselves or hurt someone else. There's an offense against God and against other people that we need to lament. That's going to be the focus of next week as we look at Psalm 51, confessing and repenting of our sin. But here what we see David doing, I think, is he is grieving over and he is lamenting the fact that pain has come into his life. Pain has come into his world and the world because of his sin. It is responding in grief and lament. That's what we see in this story. Verse 16 and 17, just to get a picture of it, says David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. The elders of his house stood beside him to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them.

David here is expressing grief and lament over what is happening because of his sin. Now there is a sense in which I think David says, I was seeking the Lord. Perhaps he would be gracious and save the child's life or spare the child. So there is part of this seeking, fasting, praying that was not just about grieving but about hoping that God would do something different. But when you just read what's happening to David, that he's laying on the ground and not getting up, that he's not eating for a week, scholars would tell you he is experiencing the grief process. He is lamenting the fact that in his mind this child who is sick is going to die because of the word of the Lord and he is mourning that fact. He is experiencing the grief and he is lamenting over the pain that his sin has caused. I think that is a good appropriate way for us to respond to sin.

Now here's what I would just say. When I'm thinking about this and trying to draw out principles for our lives, there are many times in which the pain that we're experiencing is a direct result of our sin, just like in David's case here. There are many times when we've sinned and therefore the pain that we experience will be a direct result or a consequence of that sin. You just think about like if you break a law, there will be consequences that you feel. They got cameras all around the city now. If you speed in certain parts, you're going to get a picture in the mail and they've caught you, right? Like you've got consequences to your actions. Some kind of pain you feel because of something you've done. A harsh word to somebody will tear them down and maybe ruin your relationship. A lie you tell will start to erode trust between you and another.

So many times there are pains that we feel in our world, in our lives because of a direct result of our sin. But also, there are many times we feel pains in our world and our lives, not because of a direct result of our sin, but because we live in a sinful world. I mean, here we get the perspective of David. We have to just think a little bit about the perspective of Bathsheba. Think about all the sin that has been brought against her. Herself being taken advantage of, losing her husband, now having a child and having lost this child. She has done nothing wrong. She's not sinned, but yet she is experiencing the pain of living in a sinful world and being sinned against. There will be times when we are sinned against and we experience pain. There will be other times when we live in just a sinful, broken world and we experience pain not because of a direct result of any one person's sin, but just because we live in a fallen world. We live in a world where there are natural disasters, where there is disease and there is death. I mean, most of the time when a child dies, like we see here in this story, it's not because of a direct result of a parent's sin, it's because we live in a fallen world. Because death and disease and tragedy just strike and it will bring pain into our lives. How do we respond?

Trying to draw out, I think, principles from this, it is good for us to respond in a similar way of David. That there should be lament and there should be grief over the pain that sin causes. And I say this because I do think that sometimes it can be easy for us to grow a bit numb. Sometimes in our own lives and our own sin, we can grow a bit numb to the pain that sin causes. We say a harsh word to somebody and we think, oh, they're just being sensitive. We don't think about the effect that it's having on them, right? Or we sin against someone, we think, well, they should just forgive me and move on. We don't think about the effect that our sin houses. We can sometimes grow numb to the pain that our sins bring. But sometimes I think we can grow numb to just the pain that sin brings into our world.

You'll likely leave out of our church building and you'll see the effects and the brokenness of sin in our world probably not too far away in people's lives. How easy is it for us to just grow numb to the effects of sin in our city, just kind of walk past it and ignore it rather than lamenting and grieving the pain that sin causes. We see so many headlines from around our

nation, around the world of injustice, of war, of violence. How easy is it for us to just grow numb to the pain that is in our world because we see it so constantly. It is good for us to take the time to lament, to express grief and sorrow over the pain that sin causes. This is part of, I think, what the Lent season is about. It's for us to really consider our sin but also just really consider the sin for which Jesus died. There should be within us a heaviness, as I mentioned earlier. There should be within us a lamenting that happens. We should not move on too quickly but we should grieve over our sin and the effects that it has in our world and in our lives. Even as we come to the table this morning, we often spend some time in our service. We didn't specifically this morning but hopefully as you approach the table there is a confession of sin that And you're approaching the table considering the fact that Jesus' body was broken and his blood was shed because of my sin and your sin. There was an actual grieving process, a mourning process that took place in Jesus losing his life because of our sin. That should cause us to not just move on too quickly but to lament over the pain that sin brings into our lives. Lamenting is good. Expressing grief and pain is good. It's what we see David doing here as he's experiencing this but you'll also notice that David doesn't remain in a place of lamentation. David shifts.

I think this is important for us as we think about the pains that we experience in this life. Sometimes as a direct result of our sin, someone sinning against us or just sin in our world, it's good for us to lament and to express grief. But it's also good for us to be able to move into a new posture as David does. And I think it happens when we turn to God and we see his mercy and his grace and we rely on it, we trust in it, we lean into it. And so I would say we need to lament the pain that sin causes but then we need to lean on the mercy that God provides. We lament, we express grief over our sin and the effects that it has in our lives and in our world. But yeah, we move out of this posture of grief by trusting in the promises of God, the mercy that God gives us.

You see, David in this passage, he is deep in grief. He can't get off the ground for a week. He's not eating. So much so that when his closest friends, his elders, those who counsel him are thinking about what's going to happen. He said, how could we ever tell him that his child has died? Surely he is going to hurt himself. If he's been in such type of grief and agony that he is in this state while the child is alive, how will he respond when he knows the child is dying? But actually, something happens in David. You read this part of the story again. We'll read just a few verses to remind ourselves what happened. In verse 19, it says, "But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David understood that the child was dead. And David said to his servants, is the child dead? And they said, he is dead. David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the Lord and worshipped. He then went to his own house. And when he asked, they set food before him and he ate. Then the servant said to him, what is this thing that you have done? He fasted and wept for the child while he was still alive. But when the child died, you arose and ate food. He said, while the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. For I said, who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me that the child may live. But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

This is an interesting thing that happens here. For a week, David has been grieving and mourning, but then as soon as he hears that his child has died, something changes. He gets up off the ground. He anoints and washes himself. Worships the Lord, signaling probably that his time of mourning has ended. You kind of read that and you think, well, what is going on here with David? Is he so callous that he is just able to lose a child and move on that quickly? Rather, I think what's happening here is that David has actually already been walking through the season of grief and mourning as his child is sick. And I think actually what is drawing him out of that is that he is leaning on, trusting in the mercy that God provides. I want you to notice that David is God focused in this part of the passage. Sometimes I think when we read this story, we see how just terrible David is. We can kind of become cynical to him, just thinking, oh, man, he's just moving on so quickly. But notice that even before David goes to his own house, David goes to the house of the Lord.

Even before David eats, he worships the Lord. David is leaning on here in these moments the Lord to sustain him. Why? He knows that God is the one who has brought pain into his life, but yet he knows that God is the one who is merciful and gracious. I think David even understood that this, what is happening here, is not just a punishment for his sin, as if God is just angry at him and wanting to take it out on him. Rather, what God is doing here is really some form of surgery. There's pain involved, but God has a purpose in the pain. He is working together something for good in David, not just David, but I think in the people of Israel through all of this. God is bringing pain, but for a purpose, not just to punish, but to bring greater healing and growth. And again, you read that, or you hear me say that, and you read the story and you think, but still, like, why does God have to kill an innocent child just so David can grow and get better?

You can read this, and again, you're kind of confused by God's actions, but notice that's not how David interprets the situation. David doesn't say, "Well, God has taken my child from me, and he's hurt me just so I can grow." Actually, David leans on the mercy of God to bring him out of his grief. He learns on the mercy of God to bring him hope in this situation. What does David say? He said, "I was in grief, and I fasted while the child was alive. Maybe God would be gracious. But now that the child is dead, why would I fast? I can't bring him back from the dead." But notice what gives him hope, what leads him to worship the Lord. He said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not come to me." In these moments, David has a hope in God's mercy. Scholars are a bit divided on what David might mean when he says, "I shall go to him." But I think it's pretty clear in my understanding that David is expressing a hope that one day, as he goes to be with the Lord in eternity, he will be with that child again. David is recognizing that there is a promise from God, there is a forgiveness from God that is greater than even his worst sins, and that provides him a hope in even his deepest pains.

And don't we have even more reason to lean on the hope that God is merciful? Don't we have even more reason to lean on the hope that there is one who has conquered our sin and death? I mean, David was leaning into this promise, just I think having some of the Spirit within him, prompting him to say, "There is going to be a resurrection, and you are going to see this child again." But don't we, as we come to the table, and we remember that Jesus died for our sin and that he rose from the dead, don't we have an even greater hope that God, his mercy, is greater than even the deepest pains of sin? That doesn't just bring forgiveness of sin, takes away punishment, but God's mercy and grace even can provide us hope beyond the greatest pains of sin.

Six years ago today, it was actually a Sunday, March 8th of 2020, we were living in Las Vegas at the time. I was preaching that Sunday morning at my church in Vegas, which wasn't the regular occurrence like it is here at our church, I was an associate pastor, and so I preach probably once every month or two. I was preaching this Sunday, my senior pastor was out of town, so I was up very early, heading to church very early to prepare, to preach that day. And on the way to church, probably about 5.30 or so in the morning, I got a text from my dad, it said my two month old niece was not waking up, she wasn't breathing, and I should pray. About 30 minutes later, I got a text from my dad saying my niece had passed away. A few days later, we were able to travel to see my sister and her family and be together as family, and I stood at a service for my niece, sharing from God's word. And I told the people, the family, the friends, my sister, my brother-in-law, in that day, and myself, the only hope we can have in that type of situation is in Jesus.

Really the only thing that you can have hope in the midst of that type of pain is that there is something greater than the deepest pains we'll feel in this life. And I even pointed to this text and to David's hope here, to say we can't bring my niece back, but one day we can see her again because of what Jesus has done. This is the opportunity that we have because of the cross and the empty tomb, to lean on the hope that God provides, His mercy provides, Jesus has given us. His mercy and His grace is greater than our sin, yes to forgive us of our sin, take away the punishment, but is even deeper than our greatest pains. Even when people sin against us, even when we experience just great pains in living in a sinful world, He provides us a hope that we can lean on.

I don't know what type of pain you're walking through right now. Maybe you're experiencing the consequence of your own sin. Maybe you're experiencing pain from someone else sinning against you. Maybe you're just walking through a season of pain because of the sins in our world, living in a broken world. Lean on the hope that God provides in His mercy, that He has given us in Jesus. There is a hope that is greater than even the deepest pains of our sin. So yes, we lament the pain that sin causes, but we lean on the hope that God's mercy provides. And then lastly, look for the redemption God promises. Yes, lean to the hope that God provides in His mercy, but also see that there's something even greater that God is always doing. God is always working all things together for good.

You have to understand, at this point in David's life, the purpose and mission of David's life has already begun to shift. The whole point of David's life, by this point in his life, is not about him and his reign as King of Israel. Back in 2 Samuel, chapter 7, so just a few chapters before David committed these grievous sins, God made a promise to David that after him would come an offspring. And that offspring would have a throne that would never be dethroned, that he would have a kingdom that would be established forever. David's mission in life is now not just for his own reign as the King of Israel, but to see this one come from him who is going to be the true King of Israel, the true King of the nations who brings about God's purposes and wills forever lasting. But at some point in all of this, when you hear about David's child

dying, and you hear about the sword is not going to depart from his house, you kind of have to wonder, is God going to keep that promise? You have to wonder, has David sinned too much? Did he mess up so bad that God was not going to continue to work to bring about an offspring who would have an everlasting kingdom? Perhaps that even is part of the surgery that God's doing in David's life right now, as he takes this child from him, wrestling with this whole purpose that he has to bring about an offspring who will be the King forever.

And notice how this passage ends, or at least where we stopped reading. "Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went into her, and lay with her, and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the Lord loved him, and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah because of the Lord." The name Solomon means peace, or peace with God. David and Bathsheba have Solomon. It's probably clear that in David's mind, God had forgiven him of his sin. He knew that God is going to keep his promises despite David's son. He feels a peace with God, and he names his son Solomon as a representation. God has created peace even in the midst of great sin. But then there comes this message from Nathan.

You remember earlier back in chapter 12, when Nathan shows up with a message, it exposed David's sin. But this time, the message from Nathan is not about exposing David's sin, but covering David, Bathsheba, this child, in the mercy and the love of God. He gives the child another name, Jedidiah, which means beloved, one loved by the Lord. Notice it says, "The Lord loved him." It doesn't mean that the Lord did not love the child who he brought home to himself after seven days. It means that the covenant love of God was still towards David and to the people of Israel. God had not forsaken his love, and he had not forsaken his promises. But God still loved him. God loves sinful people, and so often he will work, not just in spite of our sin, but even through our sin to accomplish his good purposes.

The Bible says that God is working all things together for good, and we see that really clearly here. God gives David and Bathsheba a son named Solomon. We read, and keep reading on in 2 Samuel, you'll find that Solomon was not the king who was going to last forever. He was sinful himself, and he was his throne. Eventually, his time of reign ended. But yet, from David and Solomon came this line in which God eventually brought a king who reigns forever. In fact, in Matthew chapter 1, as Matthew tells of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, he says this in chapter 1, verse 6, "And from Jesse, Jesse is the father of David the king, and David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah." Isn't that kind of interesting how Matthew phrases that? He doesn't say that David was just the father of Solomon. So often, the women are not named in the genealogy. He doesn't even say that David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba. He names her as the wife of Uriah. It's almost like Matthew wants you to see, "Hey, don't forget, David sinned greatly."

Don't ever get the picture that God was okay with what David did. Do you remember how chapter 11 ended? God was displeased. He was greatly angry at all the sin that David had done. But yet, God is merciful and gracious, not just to forgive us of our sin, not just to give us a hope beyond our sin and the pains of our sin, but actually to work in and through our sin to accomplish good things. God uses even David, the wife of Uriah, Bathsheba, to bring about the line that would bring the promised one, the great plan of redemption coming to unfold even through the sin of David.

Friends, you can't out sin God's grace. You also can't mess up God's plans. Does it mean that we should just have a license to sin or that we should feel unrepentant in our sin? But it means we should have a hope that even in our sin, God is working all things together for good. Even when people sin against us, God is working all things together for good, that we have that hope. When we find ourselves experiencing the pain of sin, let us lament and express grief over the pain of sin. Let us lean on the mercy that God provides. But let us look to the fact that God has promised to make all things new. God has promised to right every wrong. God has promised to make all the sad things come untrue. Let's put our hope there as we look to God's plan for redemption.