

Where Are You? – 2 Samuel 11:1-5

Read Vs. • Set Scene

1. It was King David who led Israel into her Golden Age. His son Solomon took it to its pinnacle.
2. As we come to our text this morning, Israel has now subdued the kingdoms on her borders who've kept her from emerging as a regional power.
3. In one campaign, Israel bested a confederation of Syrians & Ammonites who lived to the E.
 - a. The Ammonites managed to retreat to their capital at Rabbah before complete defeat.
 - b. Israel didn't have enough manpower to lay in a siege, so they returned home.
 - c. Knowing the Ammonites would regroup, David sent his chief commander Joab to finish it

¹It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out *to battle*, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

1. Joab's proven himself a more-than capable commander.
2. So David sends him out to lead this campaign, while he chills in Jerusalem.
3. And **that's** where his trouble begins.
 - a. There will come a time when David will be too old to lead the army **but this isn't it**.
 - b. He's still strong enough to battle. His **proper** place was at the head of his men.
 - c. God called David to lead Israel's liberation from foreign oppression & secure the borders He'd set for them.
4. Ammon was one of the kingdoms he was supposed to subdue.
5. But David had **wearied** of war.
 - a. He has a comfortable palace with lots of servants to cater to his every whim.
 - b. So he decides to take a break; stay home, kick back, relax. Get caught up on the latest Netflix series.
6. In Eph 6, the Apostle Paul says we're engaged in a spiritual war.
 - a. It's a conflict that rages 24/7, without let up.
 - b. Our opponents aren't physical; they're spiritual. An enemy who opposes God & all aligned with Him.
 - c. To prevail, God's provided us spiritual armor.
 - d. One of the pieces of that armor is the right footwear.
 - 1) Paul says it this way, I paraphrase ...
 - 2) "Make sure you **always** have your gospel combat boots on."
 - e. When Paul penned that, he was in prison, guarded by Roman soldiers.
 - f. Military historians say, one of the reasons for the success of the Roman army was their weapons & armor.
 - 1) Their footwear was unique; it had cleats that allowed them to stand firm on muddy & bloody ground.
 - 2) While his enemy was slipping & sliding, he stood sure because of his combat sandals.
 - g. But they weren't at all comfortable.
 - 1) As the decades passed & the *pride* of Rome's army grew,
 - 2) Discipline grew lax & soldiers replaced their combat sandals with more **comfy** footwear.
 - h. A shift took place in the **thinking** of the common soldier; he began seeing himself less a **warrior** and more as a **consumer**.
 - i. Rome began losing ground.
7. Paul tells us to keep our **spiritual** combat boots on; to never lose the awareness **we're at war**.
 - a. The battle is on and we're **all called to fight**.
 - b. There are no conscientious objectors in spiritual warfare.
 - c. No vacation, time out, leave; no break in the battle.
 - d. The enemy offers no mercy, no quarter. It's a **constant** life & death struggle.
8. The minute you opt out, you paint a fat, red target on your forehead for the enemy to take aim at.
9. That's what happened to David. He declined battle to take it **easy**, and **became** an easy mark.

²Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman *was* very beautiful to behold. ³So David sent and inquired about the woman. And *someone* said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the

Hittite?”

1. David didn't climb a ladder to walk on shingles of a sloped roof.
 - a. Roofs were flat, accessed by a stairway, with a balustrade around the edge to keep people from falling off.
 - b. Ancient houses had few windows.
 - 1) And it wasn't real pleasant inside.
 - 2) Buildings were often filled with smoke, stuffed with supplies.
 - 3) They didn't make for comfortable living spaces.
 - c. So people spent much of their time on the roof.
2. Even a palace like David's would have an open courtyard at ground level where royal activity took place.
3. Sleeping quarters were indoors, but apart from sleeping & cooking, most time was spent outdoors.
 4. One night, David can't sleep. Being restless, he gets up & heads to the roof.
5. As he strolls around, overlooking his neighbors' houses, he sees something he shouldn't; a woman bathing.
6. As the writer says, she was a beauty.
7. David's curiosity peaked, he tells his servants to find out who she is.
 - a. She's the daughter & wife of 2 of his mighty men; Eliam & Uriah.
 - b. That's why she lived next door to the palace.
 - c. David rewarded those guys who'd been with him from the beginning by giving them housing in prime real estate next to the palace.
 - d. Both Eliam, Bathsheba's father & Uriah, her husband, were men who'd laid down their lives many times for David. It makes what he's about to do all the more heinous.
1. There are 2 things for us to deal with here:
 - a. **The first** is David's **lust**.
 - 1) With his guard down, David wasn't prepared to handle temptation.
 - 2) If he'd been in the **right** place in his walk with God, he'd never have been on that roof in the first place. He'd have been at the head of the army laying siege to Rabbah.
 - 3) But: What if he's restlessly walking his roof because he **realized his error in not** going to battle?
 - 4) In that case, seeing Bathsheba, he'd have quickly turned away.
 - a) A **glance** isn't sin; **Gazing** is. // **Seeing** isn't wicked, **lingering** is.
 - b) We live in a fallen world where we're **destined to encounter** sin.
That doesn't mean we're **doomed to commit** it.
 - c) When we walk in the spirit, we can step **around** the mud-hole -
Rather than walk in the flesh and **wallow** in it.
 - 5) I'm not revealing any secrets when I say God designed men to be attracted by, drawn to, **excited** with a woman's beauty.
 - a) It's an incredibly powerful **bonding** mechanism God gave to forge intimacy between a husband and wife.
 - b) One of a woman's primary needs is **security**, so God gave her an incredibly powerful means to **bind** her husband's heart to hers thru his physical attraction to her.
 - 6) The problem is, the Fall messed up every aspect of creation, including male attraction to feminine beauty.
 - 7) Sin twists it into **lust**, something that doesn't produce intimacy within the bonds of marriage but seeks **selfish** pleasure from **any** source.
 - 8) The Man of God knows lust leads to ruin, so he **protects** himself.
 - a) Realizing he's always at war, he keeps his guard up.
 - b) He's careful about what he allows his eyes to access.
 - c) He's memorized & practices ...

Job 31:1 // I've made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?
Psa 119:37 // Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things and revive me in Your way.
Matt 5:28-29 // [Jesus said] "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be

cast into hell.

- Jesus isn't commanding mutilation.
 - Such obvious exaggeration was a common teaching device.
- A man doesn't lust with just one eye, for goodness sake; he lusts with both.
- Jesus is saying we need to be **radical** in resisting temptation.
- Holiness needs to be more important to us than being hip; sophisticated.
- Let me be brutally honest:
 - If you want to be a man or woman of God today, it's going to mean being **different** from the world.
 - We live in a sex-saturated culture where any and everything goes.
 - Holding a Biblical morality of sex is regarded as odd, weird, repressive; Downright unhealthy.
 - A resolution is right now making its way thru the CA Congress that calls for pastors to **affirm** rather than **forbid** the LGBTQ+ agenda.

- Christian: A commitment to holiness is likely to get you labeled as radical; a prude.
- I say, "Bring it on!"

d) The Man of God doesn't pursue images that will fix like fiery darts in his mind and start a roaring blaze of lust.

e) He knows even with all his precautions, because he lives in a fallen world, there's a chance he could see something that would trip him **if he wasn't prepared** –

f) So he decides ahead of time what he'll do **WHEN**, not *if*, he sees something he shouldn't; **He'll quickly turn away rather than linger.**

9) I know this isn't typical Sunday fare.

10) In light of David's failure, a dose of **frankness** is needed.

a) Many men fantasize about a beautiful woman seducing them. Some **hope** for it.

b) A **godly** man does **the opposite**. He prepares how to respond if it **were** to happen.

c) He decides ahead of time if a woman wants to hook-up, he'll tell her he could never do that because it would grieve God.

11) You know the story of Joseph. He was a good-looking teenager working in the home of a powerful Egyptian official.

a) The official's wife made it clear she thought Joe a hunk.

b) He steered clear of her but saw the writing on the wall; one day, she'd make a play for him.

c) When it finally came, he knew exactly what to do because instead of **fantasizing** sin, **he'd planned faithfulness ahead of time.**

12) My brothers in Christ, our culture is profane & sensual; **bold** in its enticement to sin.

a) Lust is no longer a vice to shun, it's celebrated and promoted.

b) Don't give up or in. Keep on in the battle.

c) Don't pursue images that will ensnare your soul.

d) Decide ahead of time what you will do in those "surprise attacks."

13) Before moving on, we have to address the elephant in the room: Online pornography.

a) If David lived today, he won't need to walk his roof to see something to incite his lust.

b) He could just go online.

c) Research says 68% of men view porn monthly. 7 out of 10 guys has a harem of *virtual* Bethshebas.

d) My brothers: let's by the other 3 who do whatever it takes to guard our eyes and hearts.

b. **Second** – What of Bathsheba? What role did she play in this?

1) Ancient custom placed immense shame on public nudity. We have an example of that in ch10.

2) In that culture, women were ultra careful guarding their modesty.

3) They wore garments that hid both flesh & form.

- 4) Baths were only taken every few days & always indoors, out of sight of others.
- 5) Bathsheba's outdoor bath was highly unusual.
- 6) Now: The text nowhere suggests she's at fault.
- 7) David is clearly the guilty one. But Bathsheba's behavior is **unusual**.
- 8) The point is this: Even if what she did was *innocent*, it was incredibly *unwise*.
 - a) She knew where she bathed was within sight of the David's roof.
 - b) That palace was a busy place, with guards who kept watch at all times.
 - c) *Anyone* strolling along the roof would be able to see her.
- 9) Very simply, Bathsheba was being immodest.
- 10) That **in no way** justifies, excuses, or lessens David's sin.
- 11) But at the same time we have to acknowledge if Bathsheba had not been doing what she was, David would have had nothing to see and this whole sad story wouldn't have happened.
- 12) Just as God designed the man to be **stimulated by what he sees**, woman is given **the beauty that entices him**.
 - a) And there's something deep within her that **longs** to give her beauty **to** the man, meaning her husband.
 - b) In the same way The Fall twisted this into lust in men, it twisted the woman as well, so that she seeks power over man and **uses her beauty to get it**.
 - c) Let me **prove my point**: Fashion, clothing styles. Go to the store & see what's hot. What's selling.
 - d) Go to any high school or college campus & see what young women are wearing. Watch TV. Pick up a magazine.

2. At the same time Christian **men** need to take their **eyes & minds** captive to Christ, Christian **women** need to take their **wardrobe** captive to Christ.

- a. As the godly man commits himself to holiness in what he **sees**,
- b. The godly woman must commit herself to holiness in what she **wears**.

3. But let me be clear; modesty does not mean dowdy, ugly, plain, unkempt, or ragged.

1 Peter 3:3-4 // [To women, Peter writes] Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel—rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

4. Beauty & modesty are not mutually exclusive.

5. On the contrary, there's a **beauty in genuine modesty** unrivalled by those who aim at mere sensual enticement.

⁴Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. ⁵And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, "I *am* with child."

1. When David learned who the bathing beauty was, he realized both her husband & father were away, out with the army laying siege to Rabbah.

2. Thinking it safe, he summoned her. She went to the palace & David's bed.

3. Having completed her cycle not long before, there could be no doubt her pregnancy was the result of this tryst.

CONCLUSION // The Progression of Sin

1. Chart the progress of David's sin –

- 1) He withdraws from battle in an attempt to take it easy. He drops his guard.
- 2) Next, he sees a woman bathing. Instead of looking away, he lingers, and the resulting lust starts a fire of desire.
- 3) He follows up on desire by discovering her availability. "Can I do this? Can I get away with it?" Did you notice the **answer** to his inquiry in v3 – "**Someone** said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" Whoever answered knew where David was going and tried to head him off. "David, this isn't just some **object** to be used for your selfish gratification. She's a **person**, with a name. She someone's **daughter**, someone's **wife**. Even more, the father & husband are men so loyal to you they've place their lives on the line many

times & are EVEN NOW doing it again, fighting YOUR battle!”

The problem with lust is that it **turns** people created in God’s image, for His pleasure, **into objects** to be used for our selfish pleasure.

- 4) With David’s desire running hot, he was past being talked out of sinning, so he **sent** for Bathsheba.
2. This is the way it is with sin; it builds inertia so that pretty soon, it seems we can’t stop.
3. This isn’t the end of David’s downward slide, it gets even worse as we saw Wed when he conspired to kill Bathsheba’s husband so he could marry her.
4. As we end: **Where Are You?** If this were your story, **Where would you be?**

- On the battlefield with your armor on and the sword of the Spirit in your hand, laying claim to territory for the Kingdom of God?
- Or have you dropped your guard and are taking it easy, out of commission?
- Are you pacing the roof; restless because of a lack of spiritual contentment in Christ, searching for satisfaction in the things of the world?
- If you are, **careful**; because the enemy has you in his sights and has a lovely little Bathsheba all set somewhere near for you to fix your desire on.
- Are you Bathsheba, stumbling others because of moral carelessness?
- Don’t justify immodesty by saying the problem is men; “They just need to get over it.”
- True—they do. But **love** demands you **help** your brothers in Christ stay pure.
- In Rom 14, Paul said because of love, he would **never use his liberty** if it meant a weaker believer would stumble seeing him do so.
- Maybe you’ve gone farther and are in bed with Bathsheba or David.
 - Go Home! Return to your Heavenly Father who’s waiting for His prodigal to return.

Not Perfect

1. The Bible is unique in that it doesn’t ignore the faults & failures of its heroes.
2. Those men & women who stand as the greatest examples of faith are shown with all their warts.
3. God does not require **perfection**. What He requires is **honesty** & a willingness to admit we’ve messed up.
4. When we ask Him to forgive, the pardon is instantaneous and complete.
5. So, no matter where you are today, if you’re not on the battlefield, right now, you can come back to God.