

2 Samuel 11:1-17;26,27

Like David, We Need a Savior

Maybe you're familiar with the life of King David. He was the second king of Israel, but his path to the throne was unique. David was not born a prince. He did not take the throne from his predecessor by force or by treachery. David was born the youngest son of a shepherd. David gave his support to his predecessor Saul, and refused to harm him, even when Saul was trying to kill David. David was the king, and perhaps the most famous king of Israel, but not because of his birth or his own effort.

God was with that shepherd boy when he faced lions and bears and the giant, Goliath. God gave that shepherd victory over his enemies. God made David king and protected him against Saul's threats of violence. God made David the great king that we remember from those Bible history lessons.

We can rightly call David great when we recognize what God did through and for David, but this morning, we see what David made of himself. David's sinful heart set him on a path of sin. His sin began with an impure glance, and before long David was an adulterer, a deceiver, and a murderer. David was great because of what God did for him, but even the great King David was still a sinner.

A sinner like you and I. Think about the great things that God has done for us: he has made us more than conquerors through Christ. We might not have the earthly wealth and the grandeur of King David, but we are children of God and heirs of eternal life. We have spiritual riches that will not spoil or fade: comfort, peace, and joy for this life and eternity. Yet, despite the great things God has done for us, we are just like David in what we make of ourselves, too. We need a Savior to cover our sins and to remove our guilt.

David's sin began with a wandering eye. While he was out on the roof of his palace, he looked out across the city of Jerusalem and all of the sights that great city had to offer. One sight caught David's eye. Out of the corner of his eye, someone caught his attention: Bathsheba. David could have—should have—looked away and ended his sin at that moment, but he did not. A glimpse from the corner of his eye turned into a lustful gaze and soon David was calling for his servants to find out about the beautiful woman he saw. His innocent evening walk had become sin in David's heart; he had already begun his descent into the sins that were coming.

David descended so easily, too. We don't read about any hesitation or crisis of conscience. David sent for Bathsheba and he slept with her. David was all too willing to allow temptation to lead him down the path of adultery, and there would soon be evidence of David's sin: Bathsheba was pregnant.

David was determined that no one should know about his evening of indiscretion. It would not do to have the public know his sin. He wanted to hide his adultery, so he started scheming. He brought Bathsheba's husband Uriah back from the warfront so that no one would be suspicious when Bathsheba's pregnancy could no longer be hidden. When that plan failed, David got Uriah drunk, hoping that would solve the problem. You can see how David was scrambling to hide his sin before word got out about what he had done.

I have to wonder whether David's frantic scrambling was also an attempt to keep God from noticing his sin. But David's attempts were in vain. God saw David's sin. There is no hiding sin from God: he knows everything. God saw David's actions, God saw David's wandering gaze, and God saw the sin that had overtaken David's heart.

How often I find myself in the same situation as David. My heart has been overtaken by sin; my eyes searched for what they ought not see, my hands have done what they should not, my mouth has spoken words that God forbids, and I feel ashamed. I don't want anyone to know my sin, and I think that I can hide it. I try to cover my tracks with lies and deception. I try to erase the evidence or outwit those around me so they never discover what I did. But God knows. God sees the sin I've committed and he is displeased, as he was with David. I am worthy of God's eternal wrath and condemnation.

David deserved wrath and condemnation. Yet, God did not strike him down for his sin. In the chapter after our lesson, the prophet Nathan came to David and called him to repentance. David then wrote Psalm 51, which might sound familiar: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions." When Nathan came to him, David recognized his sin and saw that only the Savior-God could cover the sins David had committed.

We see ourselves in David. We've all tried and failed to hide our sins. Just like David, we need Jesus to cover our sin. When we try to cover the shame of what we've done, it just leads to more sin. But when Jesus' blood covers you, your transgressions are entirely blotted out. They are completely covered; God cannot see them. If God, who sees everything, cannot see your sin, then it must be gone. Jesus has blotted it out entirely. Your sin is no more.

Look at the amazing things your Savior did for you. He eliminated your sin by taking the punishment you deserve. He works miracles for you every day through the means of grace. Through the power of your baptism your sinful nature is drowned daily. Through God's Word and the Lord's Supper your faith is strengthened and you have the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. See how you are just like David: You have a Savior who miraculously covers your sin.

We need Jesus to cover our sin because hiding sin will never work. God knows the sins we commit, even those we've put behind us and forgotten. David wanted to put his sin with Bathsheba behind him. He wanted to forget his adultery and get rid of the guilt it caused him to feel. David felt the weight of his guilt, but he couldn't find any relief from it. Sinful David needed a Savior to remove his guilt, just like you and I do.

David just wanted to leave his sin in the past and move on. But Uriah wouldn't cooperate with his schemes. Even when David got him drunk, Uriah refused to go home to his wife. Whatever David did, his guilt remained with him, pressing him down. Uriah was a constant reminder of the evil David committed. Every time he saw Uriah, David felt the guilt of his sin. It was only a matter of time until David's sin became known. He had to do something to put his sin behind him and remove the burden of guilt.

David just kept digging himself deeper into his sin. This path started when David stole a glance at a beautiful woman, and David chased it down to adultery and deception. Then, David took the next step down. If Uriah wasn't going to cooperate with David's schemes, then Uriah would have to go. David had to put this sin behind him, and in order to do that, he was willing to kill Uriah. He told Joab, the commander of his army, that Uriah be put on the front lines, only to have the rest of the army retreat at Joab's signal. Joab obeyed his king, and Uriah died. The Ammonites struck Uriah down, but David was responsible for Uriah's death.

But the end of Uriah was not the end of David's guilt. David wrote in Psalm 51, "I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me." David hoped that Uriah's death would free him from his guilty conscience: the man who could have revealed his sin was dead, and the woman bearing his child was now his wife. But David's guilt was still there, weighing David down. He described it as crushing his bones. Imagine what that burden of guilt must have felt like.

But it's not too much a strain on our imaginations. We're familiar with rushing headlong into sin with no concern for the consequences. We know the sudden, sharp stab of guilt. And when I'm reminded of my sin tomorrow, that wound will open again. I wish that sin would just stay in the past, where it won't bother me anymore. But that guilt is always with me, ready to jump on my back again with each new day. I'm just like David; I know what it's like to try to escape guilt, only to have it weigh me down even more.

We are just like David: we want to get rid of this burden of guilt. We have the same solution David did. When he did not confess his sin, he said it was like his bones were being crushed. But he says those bones the Lord crushed would rejoice. He prayed that God would give him the joy of salvation and a spirit that was willing to obey God. David confessed his sin, and God removed his guilt through the miracle of forgiveness.

The prophet Nathan came to David and pronounced God's forgiveness. Just like David, you have God's servants to pronounce the forgiveness Jesus won for you. We begin every service with the confession of sins, followed by the announcement of forgiveness. Think about the beauty of that truth. You come to your Savior, with all of the guilt you feel, all of those sins that torment you, all of the burdens you bear, and you lay them at Jesus' feet. Jesus takes that burden from you and tells you that you are forgiven. Jesus frees you from the burden of guilt.

Jesus has put your sin to death on the cross. Instead of running from the guilt of your past, you can run into your Savior's arms. You have found grace and peace and comfort for your burdened conscience. Your guilt is in the past, along with your sins. When guilt rears its head, remember that Jesus has taken your burdens, even the burden of your guilt, and carried them to the cross. Therefore, your future holds the blessings Jesus won for you: salvation and eternal life.

What great things God does for his people. He blots out our sin. He takes the burden of our guilt. David rejoiced to know God's salvation, even after his many sins. Just like David, we recognize that we need a Savior. Just like David, we see the power of our Savior's forgiveness through the means of grace. We rejoice to see that Jesus has covered our sin and removed our guilt.