

Introduction

1. In the introduction to 2 Samuel weeks ago, I mentioned that the first 10 chapters of 2nd Samuel focus on the LORD fulfilling His promise to make David king
2. These 10 chapters portray David in all his goodness and righteousness as a man after God's own heart
3. I also mentioned in that introduction that chapters 11-20 reveal a very different side of David, one where we see him struggle with sin and face the consequences of his actions
4. These 10 chapters, rather than portraying David as a type of Christ, appear to portray David as a type of Israel (e.g. struggling with sin, facing the consequences of their actions, yet also being forgiven by God and ultimately retaining His loyalty)
5. Today we come to 2 Samuel 11 where we see one of the most well-known sins of David—his adultery with Bathsheba, and it reminds me of something James wrote regarding the nature of temptation and sin (James 1:14): **“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”**
6. As we study this passage today we will see a perfect example of this truth

A. David's temptation began innocently enough (READ 1-2)

1. The text tells us that it was Spring time and that kings normally went out to battle, but David stayed behind in Jerusalem:
 - a. Some argue that this was David's first sin, and that he stayed behind because he was planning to sin with Bathsheba
 - b. The problem with this is that there is nothing in this text, or the parallel account in 1 Chronicles 20:1 to suggest this (in fact 1 Chronicles doesn't even mention Bathsheba)
 - c. Rather, it is more likely that David didn't go out to battle with his army because he simply didn't feel it was necessary
 - d. Joab was a skilled military commander with a proven record, and Ammon was no match for Israel's more numerous and more powerful army (as indicated by the previous battle against Ammon in 1 Samuel 10:6-14, and the quick defeat of Ammon recorded in this text in v.1)
2. Rather than some devious plan to sin, the text suggests that David was tempted in the course of something he likely did on a regular basis:
 - a. It was evening and David had just risen from a nap and took a stroll on the rooftop of his palace
 - 1) It was fairly customary in the ANE to nap in the late afternoon because it was warmest part of the day
 - 2) It was also fairly customary to spend time on the rooftop in the evenings because that was generally the coolest part of the home in the mornings and evenings
 - b. The text tells us that while David was walking around the rooftop of his palace, he saw a beautiful woman bathing:
 - 1) The Bible doesn't tell us where Bathsheba was bathing, but v. 4 indicates she was cleansing herself ritually after her monthly cycle--this certainly suggests it was in the

privacy of her own home (contrary to those that claim she was doing out in the open to attract the eye of the king)

- 2) David's vantage point from the rooftop of his palace would have allowed him unobstructed views of the home below him

Our bedroom window—can't see in from the ground but neighbors could from their second stories

3. This is often how temptation begins:
 - a. We don't necessarily have to plan or scheme to sin (though we sometimes do, and we will see that in a moment with David)
 - b. Rather, temptation often begins simply in the course of everyday activities and events, sometimes when we least expect it

B. David allowed himself to be carried away and enticed by his own lust (3-5)

1. The problem for David wasn't that he was tempted, but in how he handled the temptation:
 - a. Temptation is a part of life because of our sin nature; Paul told us this when he wrote that **"No temptation has overtaken [us] but such as is common to man"** (1 Corinthians 10:13)
 - b. In fact, Jesus was even tempted (Hebrews 4:15)
 - c. However, Paul also wrote, **"God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it"** (1 Corinthians 10:13b)
2. According to the Bible, temptation becomes a problem when we allow ourselves to be **"carried away and enticed by [our] own lust"** because inevitably that lust **"will conceive and give birth to sin"** (James 1:14):
3. This is where David first failed, and we see a progression from temptation to sin:
 - a. He had an opportunity to look away and should have taken it:
 - 1) The Hebrew tense for **"saw"** is the imperfect which often refers to ongoing, rather than, completed action
 - 2) The use of the imperfect tense here might suggest that David didn't just catch a glimpse of Bathsheba ("saw"), but instead might have been watching her ("was seeing")
 - 3) The easiest point at which to avoid sin is when the temptation first begins, not after we've fed it
 - b. He allowed himself to be carried away and enticed by his own lust, and in actuality fed his temptation by seeking information about Bathsheba (3a): **"So David sent and inquired about the woman."**
 - 1) What reason would David have had to seek information on Bathsheba?
 - 2) He was a married man, in fact by this time he already had at least seven of his own wives, plus he had inherited (if you will) Saul's wives and concubines
 - 3) We also have to assume that David was intimately familiar with the Law and the LORD's commands against sexual immorality
 - 4) There is no reason for him to seek information about Bathsheba except that he has allowed himself to be enticed and carried away by his own lust

- c. By the time we get to the second half of v. 3, David has crossed the line and given into the temptation—he has allowed himself to be enticed and carried away by his own lust and it gives birth to sin (3b-5): **“And one said, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. 5 The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, “I am pregnant.”**
- 1) In spite of learning that Bathsheba is the daughter of one of his most trusted and loyal advisors, and the wife of one of his closest military commanders, David sends messengers to fetch Bathsheba and bring her to his palace where he commits adultery
 - 2) As a result, Bathsheba becomes pregnant
 - 3) Do any of you see the irony in this? David’s lust has conceived and given birth to sin, while his physical actions have resulted in conception and impending birth of a child
 - 4) NOTE: the NASB is the only translation that suggests she cleansed herself after the adultery; all others see this phrase as parenthetical indicating that she has just finished or was in the process of cleansing herself after her monthly cycle when the sin occurred

C. David’s sin led to a spiral of other sins and wickedness (6-27a)

As shocking as David’s behavior has been up to this point, what comes next is even more so as David attempts to cover up his sin

1. David’s first attempt to cover up his sin is to recall Uriah from the front and encourage him to go home and sleep with his wife (6-11):
 - a. He recalls Uriah from the front and sends him home hoping he will sleep with his wife, and therefore assume the child is his once it’s born (READ 6-11):
 - 1) Notice the deception and false pretense—David gives Uriah the impression that the reason he recalled him from the front was so that he could give David a report on the battle
 - 2) Notice also that David sent Uriah a present (8)
 - b. David’s first attempt fails when Uriah refuses to go home, and instead sleeps at the door of David’s house along with David’s servants (READ 9-11):
 - 1) Uriah refuses on the basis that it’s not fair for him to go home to his wife when his fellow soldiers were living in tents at the battle front
 - 2) We can’t help but see the irony here as Uriah’s complete devotion and loyalty to David and his fellow soldiers is contrasted with David’s disloyalty to him!
2. David’s second attempt to cover up his sin is to get Uriah drunk (READ 12-13):
 - a. Since his first attempt failed, David tries a different tactic—getting Uriah drunk in the hopes that in his inebriated condition he’d go home and sleep with his wife
 - b. However, this attempt fails as Uriah again spent the night sleeping at the entrance to David’s palace with the servants
3. David’s third attempt to cover up his sin is to eliminate Uriah so he can marry Bathsheba and make it look like the child is a result of that union (READ 14-27a)—and there are so many shocking and disturbing details in this text:

- a. David not only devises a wicked scheme to have Uriah killed and make it look like a battle fatality, but he has Uriah carry the orders to Joab, his commander—David literally has Uriah carry his own death warrant!
- b. David orders Joab—his military commander and the one who is responsible for the care, wellbeing and safety of his soldiers—to join him in his sin and murder one of his own men!
- c. When Joab carries out David’s plan, it’s not just Uriah that is killed but other soldiers as well
- d. Even David’s response when he learns Uriah is dead is stomach churning (25): **“Then David said to the messenger, ‘Thus you shall say to Joab, “Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another; make your battle against the city stronger and overthrow it”; and so encourage him.”**
 - 1) Essentially, David tries to make Joab feel better by telling him not to let it bother him and that it’s just one of those things than happens during war
 - 2) He then commands him to beef up his attacks against the city and overthrow it, apparently thinking a nice victory would encourage him and take his mind off the fact that he was personally responsible for killing not just Uriah but a handful of his other men
 - 3) David’s response indicates a wickedness, hardness and callousness that is nearly impossible to describe, let alone accept, from one of God’s children...especially David

D. In spite of David’s attempts to cover up his sin, he couldn’t hide it from the LORD (27b): **“But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD.”**

- 1. There is some disagreement among English translation on whether this verse should read like the NASB and Holman—that the LORD considered what David did to be evil—or as the rest—that what David did upset or displeased the LORD
 - a. The reason is that the word used here, ra’a, can mean both--to be evil or to be displeasing
 - b. What’s interesting is this is almost the exact phrase David used above in v. 25 when he told the servant to tell Joab not to be upset over the death of Uriah and the other men
 - c. Almost the exact same phrase is also used in Genesis 21:11 to refer to the distress that Abraham felt when Sarah told Abraham to send Hagar and his son, Ishmael, away
- 2. I’m not sure how much it matters because clearly David’s actions can be described as evil, and that certainly displeased...even distressed...the LORD

Conclusion

There are many things we can learn from this passage today

- 1. The first is that temptation often begins innocently enough as we go about our daily lives, doing the things that we normally do; we don’t have to go looking for temptation because it will find us:
 - a. It comes internally through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life as John wrote in 1st John 2:16
 - b. It comes externally from the enemy, the Devil, as he prowls around like a roaring lion looking to devour us as Peter wrote in 1 Peter 5:8

2. The second thing we can learn from David's experience is that temptation will inevitably lead to sin if we allow it to carry us away and entice us:
 - a. Temptation is always easiest to battle when it first begins, rather than after we entertain it
 - b. Rather than look away when he first saw Bathsheba, David kept looking and it was all downhill from there
3. A third thing we can learn is that one sin often leads to other sins:
 - a. In fact, one sin often leads to further temptation, and additional sins
 - b. In David's case it led to not just adultery, but manipulation, deceit, lying, and even murder
 - c. In fact, we've not even seen the last of the consequences from David's sin (more on that in our next passage)
4. Finally, the last thing we can learn is that no matter how much we try to cover up our sin, the LORD always sees it and is displeased by it