

Nathan Confronts David

Note: your group may not have time to discuss all of these items. You may need to choose one or more from among them to talk about. Follow your Bible study leader's instructions for your discussion and report.

Second Samuel 11 reports King David's adulterous affair with Bathsheba, the resulting pregnancy, and David's arranging for Bathsheba's husband Uriah to be killed in battle. Second Samuel 11:26-27 states forthrightly,

²⁶ When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. ²⁷ And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

God held King David accountable for his sinful actions. Second Samuel 12:1-25 reports the initial aftermath of David's sins. God "sent Nathan [the prophet] to David" and confronted him directly.

To his credit, David confessed his sin when Nathan confronted him. "I have sinned against the LORD," David said (2 Sam. 12:13). God was merciful to him, forgave his sin, and spared his life; but the baby died, and, as Nathan put it,

^{12:9} "Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. ¹⁰ Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' ¹¹ Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. ¹² For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'" (vv. 9-12).

Nathan did David and all of Israel a great service by telling David the truth. Bible scholar Warren Wiersbe writes,

The sword did not depart from the king's household, and his wives were taken and violated just as he had taken Bathsheba.

Indeed, David did pay fourfold, for Bathsheba's baby died, and his sons Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah were slain (13:29; 18:14-15; 1 Kings 2:25). David's beautiful daughter Tamar was raped by her half brother (chap. 13), and David's concubines were humiliated publicly by Absalom when he captured the kingdom (16:22). For the rest of David's lifetime, he experienced one tragedy after another, either in his family or in the kingdom. What a price he paid for those few minutes of passion with his neighbor's wife! (Warren W. Wiersbe, *the Bible Exposition Commentary, Old Testament: History — Joshua–Esther*, [Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2003], 337).

David subsequently penned Psalm 51, a powerful confession of his sin to the Lord and a prayer that God still would be with him and use him. It reads in part,

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
¹¹ Do not cast me away from Your presence,
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
¹² Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.
¹³ Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
And sinners shall be converted to You.

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Note the bolded portion of what we've already said: **Nathan did David and all of Israel a great service by telling David the truth.** Nathan, of course, was just doing his job, but we cannot deny that in this instance, his job wasn't easy. He did not know how David would respond, but the reality was that David needed to be confronted.

The words of the Lord to Ezekiel in Ezekiel 3:16-21 come to mind. If God gives His spokesman an

assignment to warn a sinner to correct his ways or face judgment, and the spokesman fails to warn the sinner, "that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand" (Ezek. 3:18). But if the spokesman warns the sinner, God's spokesman has done his duty. God says to him that the unrepentant wicked man "shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul" (v. 19). God gave Ezekiel a similar message in Ezekiel 33:1-9.

Reflection and Discussion

Who are the people God has given warnings to share with those living in sin? Isn't it all those He has redeemed? God is a righteous and holy God who judges sin. All are sinners, and the only hope anyone has is to come to Christ on His conditions. A sinner must repent of his or her sins, believe Jesus is God and that He lived a holy life and died on the cross for people's sins, and receive the gift of salvation He offers. Without that, a person faces eternity in hell. But people need to know about their sinful condition and the only remedy for their alienation from God! "How shall they hear without a preacher?" Paul asked in Romans 10:14.

The point here is that people need to understand how dreadful and corrupt they are in their sins. This isn't the whole gospel, but it is an essential part of it. By upholding God's truth **and contending for laws consistent with God's law, God's people help everyone, and help society as a whole, understand the value of God's laws and their need for a Savior.** Laws that align with God's law honor the Lord and actually advance His kingdom and promote the gospel, albeit at times in indirect ways. No, His is not an earthly kingdom, but upholding His truth on earth does indeed help to advance His spiritual kingdom. Shortly, you will hear a pastor (Pastor Matt Trewhella) share some of these very ideas in a brief video.

Discuss: Why has the modern American church largely abandoned warning individual sinners and the culture at large? What can you do to help the church recover this essential ministry?