

Christ Community Covenant Church
The Fall of a King - The Story: Chapter 12
Pastor Dave Scherrer - December 4, 2011

This is an interesting Christmas sermon. You may think that the story of David and Bathsheba has nothing to do with Christmas but before the morning is over I think you will see the Grace and Forgiveness in this story that is all about God with us. Cut me a little slack and we will get started!

We are following along in the story and we find ourselves on page 161 of *the Story* or in 2 Samuel 11 and 12. We will get to that in a minute but first let's catch up on some of the history that has been taking place:

- David has become King, you remember the story from last week, we learned that David, a young man that loved God very much. He believed it when he faced Goliath and said, "Though you come with a sword and a spear and a javelin, I come in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel and He will deliver you into my hands." He really believed it and God did.
- David grows up and becomes a great warrior and leader. He rules his armies with wisdom and a fair hand and his men are loyal and fierce for him. He twice defeats the Philistines and many other armies and becomes the golden boy of Israel.
- Still not everything goes well, while at war with the Philistines once, the Amalekites attack the base camp of Judah and take all the army wives away, including David's wives. The army considers stoning David for that, but David takes two hundred men and captures back his people and their spoil including all the wives
- After the death of Saul, David was anointed King and the surrounding armies and cities for the most part declare a truce with David. They saw what his armies did to the heavily fortified and walled capital city of the Jebusites, Jerusalem. David made it his city and from then on Jerusalem was called "the City of David."
- Here David settled in, seemingly he no longer even had to go to war with his troops, he could stay home and take care of his affairs of state. He was at the top of his game and seems as though power and success went to his head. David was headed for a fall.

How can it be? We learned last week that David was a man after God's own heart, 1 Samuel 13:13-14 tells us so. He loved God, and he loved His word. He loved to pray and He loved to worship and sing. This was the first true "Renaissance Man": poet, singer, instrumentalist, warrior fully in love with the Father. I think I agree with one writer who said this is what sums it up, "David longed to do the will of the Father, his heart never turned to other gods, not even himself." His heart was turned unalterably toward God.

It seems that even a man after God's own heart can still fall and fall hard.

A man "After God's own heart" falls

I want to remind us now of something we have been saying for a few weeks. The people of Israel wanted a King. God wasn't good enough so God gave them a King. Saul was tall and strong and good looking, but he failed. David had a heart for God and he fell. Solomon was the wisest of men, but he let his pursuit of pleasure trump what he knew.

All human kings fall us

2 Samuel 11:1

- V. 1 "But David stayed in Jerusalem"
V. 2-5 David saw a beautiful woman purifying herself from uncleanness."

“On the roof” makes sense as many in this time used the roof as a kind of great room or sitting room or even laundry room. He saw Bathsheba and saw she was beautiful and fell in lust and invited her up to his room. Two months or so go by and she let the King know she was pregnant from this one night stand.

V. 6-26 Then comes the cover up! First he tries to get Uriah home from battle so that it looks like the baby is his. When Uriah has too much integrity David murders him by having the armies fall back when Uriah is in the heat of battle. And David takes her for his wife. And all is quiet . . . for a while.

Six or seven months pass and David thinks he has escaped notice. But the Prophet Nathan has been informed by God of the details and he confronts David in chapter 12.

I find it interesting that Saul’s acts of sin that brought him down were ones that to us seem pretty soft – he offered a sacrifice when he wasn’t supposed to – doesn’t seem so big. David committed adultery, and murdered a man in the cover-up and he stays King?

The difference was their heart.

The difference between Saul and David – their ‘Heart’

Saul made excuses and blamed others, and though it seems like a small sin, God knew the heart of Saul was for himself not God. We see the true merit of David in this small verse (2 Samuel 12:13):

“David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’”

David could have had Nathan killed, he could have denied it, he could have said that Nathan was mistaken. But David repented and he returned to the Lord.

Right here is what brings us to the Christmas story: It is called the gift of Grace and Forgiveness. Christmas is all about God’s gift of Jesus to the world and that is the gift of forgiveness and God’s unmerited favor poured out on humanity.

I have a concern for some of you. I am concerned that you have heard about this gift of grace and you have believe in Jesus based on this grace and forgiveness but you are still living under a partial truth. And a partial truth is still a lie.

The fact is ***“You must believe in ‘the Whole Gospel’***

You have heard it preached that God has saved us from our sin. That our sin has created a barrier from God and that the wages of this sin is death. You have heard it said that if we confess our sins and ask for forgiveness that God is faithful and just to cleans us from all unrighteousness. And of course that is true. It all starts with asking Jesus into our hearts, is true as far as it goes. But there is so much more.

Get off the Teeter Totter and ‘into Christ’ [Picture]

This teeter totter is a symbol of what is wrong with so much of how we see our Christian lives: On one side of the teeter totter is Legalism. I have given my life to Christ but I still have to perform a certain way or live my life according to certain religious standards or I may still face judgment. So I wander down to this end of the teeter totter:

“Holiness” or Legalism

But then I find that I have certain desires and there are temptations in the world. I don't want to live a boring so called "Holy" life. So I wander down to the other end, the end of license – a spirit of entitlement that tempts me to choose the shortcut – to satisfy the flesh.

"Freedom in Christ" or Licentiousness

We move back and forth trying to find some place of balance. It is exhausting and it can't be done. And it is not the Christian life. ***In just a few more verses after that passage that says confess our sins and God is faithful to cleanse us," the same writer describes the second half of the Gospel that is so often left unsaid.***

1 John 4:15-17

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand . . .

The first part of the Gospel is that we have been ***freed from*** the consequence and power of sin, death and condemnation but the second part of the Gospel is that we have been ***freed to*** something: We have been ***freed to*** righteousness and peace and obedience.

Freed from the consequence of sin and freed to righteousness

That is all part of Grace too. We cannot have the first part of the Gospel without also having the second!

Cheap Grace VS. Costly Grace

"Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church. We are fighting today for costly grace."

"Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."

"Let the Christian rest content with his worldliness . . . Let him be comforted and rest assured in his possession of grace—for grace alone does everything. Instead of following Christ, let the Christian enjoy the consolations of his grace! That is what we mean by cheap grace."

"The only man who has the right to say that he is justified by grace alone is the man who has left all to follow Christ."Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*

There are two ways to live in grace: one is wrong and one is right

The wrong way to live in grace: False Security

This is living with a kind of selfish arrogance, living only in the first part of the Gospel. I have been saved, so why worry about my lifestyle and my choices. God is going to forgive me; he might as well really forgive me! The Apostle Paul wrote about this kind of arrogance:

Romans 6:1-3

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

It is living with a compartmentalized commitment to God that allows me to confess Christ on Sundays and sing about Him and celebrate His birth, but the rest of the week and in my heart, I really have not let him have authority over my life. The second half of the Gospel says that there is, to borrow a phrase from John Piper, a demand that Jesus puts on the world, a demand that Jesus puts on my heart:

Romans 6: 6-7

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.

‘Evangelical Christianity is now tragically below the New Testament standard. Worldliness is an accepted part of our daily life. Our religious mood is social instead of spiritual. We have lost the art of worship.

‘We are not producing saints. Our models are successful businessmen, celebrated athletes and theatrical personalities. We carry on our religious activities after the methods of the modern advertiser. Our homes have been turned into theaters. Our literature is shallow and our hymnody borders on sacrilege. And scarcely anyone appears to care. We must have another kind of Christianity soon or in another half century we may have no Christianity at all. Increased numbers of demi-Christians is not enough. We must have revival.’ AW Tozer, *Of God and Men*.

What is this “better kind of Christian” that Tozer longs for? It is not a Christian that tries harder by running faster on the teeter totter. It is instead the Christian that has given up trying. It is the Christian that has become broken.

The Right Way: Brokenness

Brokenness of heart means that we are not sorry for sin in general, but that we are sorry for my sins in particular and that we set our eyes on Jesus so firmly that everything else starts to fade and most particularly what starts to fade is my selfish commitment to me.

‘When Christ bids a man come He bids him come and die.’

This is what David had as a man after God’s heart. He knew in the Old Testament times what Jesus would teach us in the New Testament times, that living just ‘freed from sin’ is tempting to enjoy that so called cheap grace to continue to let *me* be king of my life.

Psalm 51:10-12

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

It is this passage that gives us a window into the true heart of David. It is this heart that God was looking at. A broken heart for his sin; this particular sin. This psalm was written in the quiet moments after being undone by his affair with Bathsheba. He wants his heart cleansed so that he can be put back on display, so that others can follow him again as he chases after God.

Psalm 51:13-17

¹³Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

¹⁴Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.

¹⁵O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

¹⁶For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Freed from the consequence of sin and freed to death of self

Remember what I said earlier, that every human king has failed us. When I am king of my heart I will fail me too. Have you experienced that? I have. God has invited us into Grace. In the song we sang last week it said if grace were an ocean we would all be sinking – or at least we should be. We should be drowning in Grace, submerged and consumed.

Drowning in Grace

Psalm 63:1-3

¹O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

²So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.

³Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.

This message today is about leaving behind me as king and instead bending a knee to the true King, picking up our cross and dying to self.

This is the message of the Lord's Table. This is the Christmas message and the Easter message all rolled into one. This is the whole Gospel. Christ comes in the flesh to save us from our sins: Christmas. The first part of the Gospel. But then Jesus dies to self in obedience to the Father because of His great love for the world. Easter. This is Jesus showing us the way to a life of obedience and self denial and even self death so that the Father will be glorified. You see, it is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me.

Communion