

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Samuel: God's Shift Of Israel From Apostasy Under The Judges To David's Reign

II. 2 Samuel: The Reign Of David Over Israel

O. Discerning, Facing, Confessing And Avoiding Adultery (2 Samuel 12:1-13)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Our last two sermons, first on David's adultery with Bathsheba and then of his murder of her husband Uriah to cover it up, has led to several intense discussions I have had with some of our members: (a) two believers have asked about how the Bible claims divorce and remarriage are adultery and (b) two others expressed concern about people being able to avoid yielding to the temptation to commit the act of sexual adultery itself. Many Christians we know struggle with temptation and sin relative to these very matters, so we need to address them from the pulpit.

Today's message out of 2 Samuel 12:1-13 regarding God's confrontation of David about his sins of adultery and then of murder gives us an opportunity to address these matters, so we view this passage to that end (as follows):

Need: *We thus ask, "In view of my marital history, how does God want me to know IF I have committed adultery, what should I THEN DO about it and HOW can I AVOID the temptation to commit the ACT of sexual adultery?!"*

- I. After David had sinned, God sent His prophet Nathan to confront David about his sin, 2 Samuel 12:1a.**
- II. Nathan told David a parable to make him face his guilt so as to admit he had sinned, 2 Samuel 12:1b-12:**
 - A. God's prophet Nathan explained to David that a rich man with lots of flocks and herds had taken a poor man's one beloved, ewe lamb and butchered it to feed a traveler who was visiting the rich man, 2 Samuel 12:1b-4.
 - B. David expressed great anger about the rich man's deed, calling for his execution for doing such a heartless thing and directing that the lamb be recompensed fourfold for rich man's theft in accord with the stipulations of the Mosaic Law, 2 Samuel 12:5-6 with Exodus 22:1.
 - C. Having made David commit to the sinfulness of the rich man in the parable, Nathan confronted David about his guilt of adultery and murder against Uriah, saying, "Thou art the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7a KJV)
 - D. Nathan explained how God had enriched David, anointing him to be king of Israel, delivering him from Saul and *figuratively* giving him Saul's harem, what literally occurred in Oriental shifts in dynasties, and here refers to the shift of everything that had belonged to Saul, not to David's actual acquisition of Saul's wives (Jamieson, Faussett and Brown, Com. on the Whole Bible, 1977, p. 236). God also gave David rule over all Israel and Judah, and, if that were not enough, God could have given him more, 2 Samuel 12:7b-8 NIV.
 - E. Yet, David had despised God's Word by murdering Uriah and taking his wife to be his own wife, a violation of two capital offenses of the Ten Commandments, 2 Sam. 12:9; Ex. 20:13-14 with Lev. 20:10 and Deut. 19:21.
 - F. Thus, (1) David would experience tragedies of the sword in his family for having slain Uriah (2 Sam. 12:10) and (2) he would have his own harem appropriated by another like he had taken Uriah's wife, but where David had taken Uriah's wife in secret, God would have David lose his harem to another in public, 2 Sam. 12:11-12.
- III. We know from Psalm 51 that God had already been extensively at work subjectively convicting David of his sin prior to the prophet Nathan's confrontation of David, Psalm 51:3, 8, 12:**
 - A. The introductory notes of Psalm 51, being part of the psalm in the Hebrew text (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1019), claim David authored this psalm when Nathan had confronted him about his adultery with Bathsheba.
 - B. This psalm reveals that God had subjectively, greatly convicted David of sin before Nathan confronted him:
 1. In Psalm 51:3, David admitted his sin had continuously been bothering his conscience, that the Holy Spirit upon David (1 Sam. 16:13) had been convicting him of sin well before Nathan spoke to him, cf. John 16:8.
 2. In Psalm 51:8 NIV, David admitted that this conviction of sin had given him emotional anguish, the meaning of his figurative phrase about God's having "crushed" his "bones." (Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 832).
 3. In Psalm 51:12, David admitted that this conviction of sin had left him without joy, Ibid., p. 833.
- IV. Knowing he had violated God's Word, experiencing the Holy Spirit's convicting work coupled with Nathan's confrontation about his sin left David no option but to face the fact that he was guilty of sin.**
- V. Facing his sin, David quickly confessed it to God, and God quickly forgave him, 2 Samuel 12:13:**
 - A. When the prophet Nathan confronted David about his sin, without giving any excuses, David faced the fact that he had sinned and he immediately confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord," 2 Samuel 12:13a KJV.
 - B. David's immediate, transparent confession resulted in God's immediate forgiveness: Nathan replied, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die," a very gracious act on the Lord's part! (2 Samuel 12:13b KJV)

VI. However, the Holy Spirit who was then upon David (1 Samuel 16:13) can enable one to avoid immorality and murder (Galatians 5:16-23), so David could have avoided sinning had he relied on the Holy Spirit!

Lesson: *When confronted by the relentless disciplinary work of the Holy Spirit to convict him of having violated God's Word by committing adultery and murder and when confronted by God's prophet with the charge that he had sinned, David faced his sin and immediately confessed it, and God immediately forgave him! However, David could have avoided sinning in the first place had he been relying upon the Holy Spirit to retain a righteous life.*

Application: *If we wonder if we have sinned in the realm of adultery and wonder how to handle it, (1) may we trust in Christ to be saved and find forgiveness, John 3:16; Colossians 1:13-14. (2) However, if we have done what may SEEM wrong AFTER salvation, (a) may we check Scripture to see IF God's Word defines what we did as sin while also (b) noting any attending circumstantial ministrations of the Holy Spirit to (i) keep our guilt in mind, (ii) to leave us in emotional anguish (iii) and joyless. (b) If we find we are innocent, we should treat the "guilt" sense as FALSE, whether it rises from our own minds or from another party's charge. (c) Yet, if Scripture and the Holy Spirit's work indicate we DID sin, (i) may we immediately confess it to God (ii) for immediate forgiveness, 1 John 1:9. (3) To AVOID committing any form of adultery in the future, may we rely on the Holy Spirit, Gal. 5:16-23.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) In applying this message, we discern from Scripture what constitutes adultery and what to do about it:

(a) Scripture teaches that **either** (i) divorce (cf. Matthew 5:31-32a) **or** (ii) divorce and remarriage (Luke 16:18) **or** (iii) marrying a divorced person (Matthew 5:32b) constitute adultery. [The "except for fornication" clause in Matthew 5:32a, as in Matthew 19:9, refers to situations that affected only Jews in Jesus' time, so the "exception" clause has no application today. Jesus treated divorce as adultery. See our notes on this in Matthew 19.] Also, Jesus claimed that (iv) to look with sexual lust on a party who is not one's spouse is adultery, Matthew 5:29.

(b) However, Scripture also teaches that if any of these events occur before one believes in Christ as his Savior, the instant he trusts in Christ, he is forgiven all such pre-salvation sins, Colossians 1:13-14.

(c) On the other hand, if one commits any of the violations in "(1,a)" immediately above **after** salvation, he commits adultery and needs to confess his sin to the Lord for God's forgiveness, Hebrews 13:4 with 1 John 1:9.

(d) Also, as a believer confesses his adultery, 1 Corinthians 7:20, 24 in principle directs him to stay in his latest marital state. If divorced, he must either stay single or be reconciled to his last spouse unless either one has rewed a third party, making the couple's reconciliation impossible, 1 Cor. 7:10-11 with Deut. 24:1-4 NIV, ESV.

(e) If a believer is in a marital union that violates the model on3-man-with-one-woman model, the union is sin, so it must be ended and confessed to God, Lev. 18:1-30 with Gen. 2:20-25 and Rom. 1:24-27; cf. our Church Bylaws.

(f) If a believer experiences the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin, i. e., a relentless memory of sin with emotional anguish and a loss of joy and a keen awareness of a his violation(s) of Scripture, he must confess his sin to the Lord.

(g) Yet, if a believer is restless over an act he has done that either he thinks or others claim is sin, but no Bible passage critiques it, or if he has already confessed it to God, but he is still bothered by it, he suffers "false" Satanic guilt, Revelation 12:10; Zechariah 3:1-5. He needs to reject Satan's charges and cling to 1 John 1:7 that claims God **keeps on cleansing** us from forgiven sins (present tense of *katharizo*, "cleanse, purify," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 814; Arndt & Ging., A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 388; The An. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 206).

(2) Then, to **AVOID** committing any form of adultery, may we (a) rely on the Holy Spirit to live righteously versus living by means of the sin nature that is prone to immorality, Galatians 5:16-23. (b) Also, in reliance on the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), husbands must express selfless, nurturing love to their wives (Eph. 5:25-33a) and wives must submit to their husbands as to the Lord, Eph. 5:22-24, 33b. (c) Doing so greatly enables married couples to meet each other's sexual needs (1 Cor. 7:1-5) and minimize the risk for either one to be tempted with adultery. (1 Cor. 7:5)

[(3) A personal observation: after 4 decades of pastoral ministry, I believe that a husband's lack of a selfless, nurturing love for his wife is the biggest single threat to a marriage and a huge risk of adultery for both spouses: if a husband fails to love his wife selflessly and with nurture, she will not respond or submit to him, and he will be tempted with adultery. Meanwhile, such a wife is left vulnerable to falling in love with another man outside of the marriage who is selfless and nurturing even if he has no false motives, creating problems all around. Thus, husbands must rely on the Holy Spirit to love their wives in a selfless, nurturing manner to set the marriage on a good course.]

May we trust in Christ as Savior to receive eternal life and forgiveness of sins, John 3:16; Colossians 1:13-14. However, if we sin after salvation, may we define it as sin by Scripture coupled with the Holy Spirit's convicting work and confess it for cleansing. Then, may we rely on the Holy Spirit to avoid sinning again.