

David: Issues of the Heart
A Convicted Heart
Part 5
2 Samuel 12
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If you have a Bible with you this morning, I am going to read from 2 Samuel and Chapter 12.

Before I read these verses I need to tell you the story that takes place in Chapter 11, which is the story of David's adultery with Bathsheba.

Many of you are familiar with this story. David was on the roof of his palace just taking a walk in the evening and saw what is described as a beautiful woman bathing. And he sent for her and he seduced her and she became pregnant.

This of course presented a problem for David, so he sent for her husband Uriah, who was out on the battlefield, and had him sent home in the hope that Uriah would sleep with his wife. And when it was discovered that she was pregnant (as she was) that he would assume the child was his.

But Uriah is a man of integrity and he says, "My colleagues are out on the battlefield. I don't know why I have been given the privilege of being brought home but I am not going to go in and enjoy my wife." And he slept on the steps outside of David's palace.

So David invited him for a meal in the home. And he got him drunk and said, "Now go home and spend time with your wife."

But even in his drunken state Uriah said, "No, I cannot do this. My colleagues are fighting in the battle." And again he slept on the step of David's palace.

And so he was sent back to the battle with a note for the commander, Joab. And the note was Uriah's own death sentence. The note said to Joab, "When you go into battle, put Uriah in the most dangerous place on the front and then withdraw from him." In other words, leave him exposed.

Well they fought the Ammonites and they were defeated. And Joab sent a messenger back to David and the message that was sent back was that there is some bad news and there is some good news.

The bad news is that we have been beaten in the battle of the Ammonites. But the good news is Uriah the Hittite has been killed.

And David thought to himself, "Phew! Nobody will ever know. Dead men tell no tales."

And he took Bathsheba into his home and made her another wife (he already had one).

Now let me read you the follow up to that in 2 Samuel Chapter 12.

“The LORD sent Nathan...”

(Nathan was a prophet.)

“The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, ‘There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor.

“The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

“Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.’

“David,” (when he heard this), “David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!

“He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.’

“Then Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man!’”

That is as far as I am going to read. A little bit later we will be looking at some of the later verses as well.

You know the Bible never flatters its heroes. It always tells us the truth. And the truth is usually a mixture of faith - great acts of faith on the one hand, and failure, pathetic acts of failure on the other, in many instances.

We see them as men and women with strengths. We see them as men and women with failures.

And the Bible doesn't protect us from their failures and doesn't protect us from their weaknesses and their frailties.

But you know it seems that the best way for people to think clearly about what is right and what is wrong is to do so by talking about somebody else.

We are very quick to join in the condemnation of somebody else's sin. We are very clear-sighted about right and wrong when it regards somebody else, but blinded to our own sin.

And Nathan very cleverly lures David into the trap by telling him this story of two men. One is exceedingly rich; the other is exceedingly poor.

The rich man has a large number of sheep, a large number of cattle. The poor man has nothing except one ewe lamb which he bought and it has grown up with him in his home and with his children. It shared his food, it drank from his cup; it even slept in his arms. It was more than a family pet; it was like a daughter to him.

And one day a traveler came to visit the rich man. He needed to prepare a meal for his guest and instead of taking one of his own many animals, he went down to the house of the poor man and took his one ewe lamb that he loved, that his children loved, that was like a daughter in the family. And he killed it and he cooked it for his guest.

When David heard this story, all his sense of justice was inflamed. He burned with anger against the man, Verse 5 tells us – burned with anger.

David, after all, as king, is the highest judge in the land. He is a man called upon to make judgement in situations and this one is clear cut. And he vents his fury by saying, “The man who did this deserves to die. He must pay for that lamb four times over because he did such a pitiless thing.”

And Nathan listened to this tirade of anger and judgement. Then Nathan points his finger at David and says, “David, you are the man. You are this man. You stole another man’s wife. You smashed the covenant that she had made with him. You covered your tracks with deceit, with lies, with arrogance. You brought her husband back from the battle to get him drunk in the hope he would sleep with his wife and the assumption would be made that the baby is his. And when in his integrity he didn’t do that, you arranged his brutal death in the most dangerous part of the battle. And you are angry when you hear this story of a man taking a poor man’s lamb? With all your sense of justice, David, you are this man.”

How did David come to this? David was close to 50 at the time of this event. He wasn’t some young pup. He was mature, had been on the throne for 20 years. Chronologers who try to put together the sequence and the dating of David’s life put him between 47 and 50 years of age at this stage.

He was a man who had had a rich experience of God. He had likely written most of the profound psalms that we relish in and feed our souls with.

Psalm 18:

“I have been blameless before God. I have kept myself from sin.”

David wrote that before this ever happened.

“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.”

In other words, I am satisfied in Him.

“He makes me lie down in green pastures. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness.”

This is before he ever committed adultery with Bathsheba.

He didn't write Psalm 119 as far as we know. We actually don't know who wrote it. He might have done. But he probably knew it.

“How does a young man keep himself pure? By guarding it according to your word.

“Your word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you.”

In Psalm 36 David writes about the sinfulness of the wicked and he says this:

“For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to (either) detect or to hate his sin.”

He flatters himself too much to see his sin and to hate it.

David wrote that. Now look at him. He neither detects sin nor hates sin. He has begun to flatter himself. I am sure there were times in David's life when he would have said, “I would never sin like that.”

But I will tell you this: that's a dangerous place to get to. When you say, “I would never do that,” your guards are down. And we are all capable of sins that would have shocked us a few years ago.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:12,

“If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall.”

If you say, “I could never do that,” you have actually taken the first step to your own fall. Of course you could do that. Of course the temptations that war against our souls are present and ever-present.

And I remind you that David was described as a man after God's own heart when he was set apart for the throne. I remind you that he wrote in the Psalms he was afraid of secret sins – afraid of them – they are the most dangerous ones.

He was afraid of presumptuous sins where you feel entitlement to something. He had experienced richly the protecting power of God in his life and his conflict with Saul that went on for year after year and in his battle with Goliath where he experienced the protecting power of God. And yet this is a man who fell.

And David shows us we can fall from the height of rich experiences of God. We can fall from the height of rich blessing of God in our lives. We can fall from any height of rich anointing of God on our lives.

And we must understand why because we meet here this morning as a group of people vulnerable, every one of us, in ways we may never have believed in the past.

I am going to look at three things to understand what happened here with David.

I want to look first at what I am calling the cause of David's sin. How does a good man fall so heavily? A godless man, yes, but a godly man; how does he fall?

In Chapter 11:1, it says,

“In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.”

Well there's a massive clue there. David should have been at war but he stayed at home. It's the time of the year when kings go off to war. David was king – when kings go off to war. But instead he sent Joab and others and stayed back in Jerusalem.

There are earlier statements before this.

1 Samuel 18:13:

“David led the troops in their campaigns.”

Also in Chapter 18:

“All Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns.”

2 Samuel 5:2:

“In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns.”

Now notice a difference here.

David sent Joab out with the kings and the whole Israelite army. Previously David had led them out. He was respected for his leadership. He led them out. He led them out. He led them out.

Now he sends them out under the command of Joab, his general, and he himself stayed back in the comfort of the palace. He exempted himself from the battle, from its dangers, from its discipline. He could direct it from behind a desk.

We are not at our most vulnerable, I am sure, (and I speak from my own life); we are not at our most vulnerable when we are on the front line of spiritual battle and warfare. That is when our defenses are at their strongest.

We are at our most vulnerable when we are out of the battle. We have stopped fighting. We have become comfortable, we have become complacent.

And Verse 2 says,

“One evening” (this is in Chapter 11) “David got up from his bed...”

Let me pause there. What is he doing in his bed in the evening?

“One evening he got up from his bed...”

Was he taking a long siesta? Has he just got too much time on his hands?

“One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her.”

The time on his hand, having had a nice late afternoon nap, he sees this woman.

Now he can't help seeing her if she happens to be there. He can't help unwittingly walking on his roof and there is a woman over there.

But he stayed and he scrutinized and he fantasized. A glance is not the problem; it's when the glance becomes a gaze that it becomes the problem.

And I am sure he convinced himself it was a totally innocent gesture to send someone to find out who she is. “Who is she? I'm curious. She's a beautiful woman – not seen her before.”

I am sure he convinced himself that that was a purely innocent gesture. Nothing wrong in finding out who somebody else is.

But he opened the door, and when he knew who she was, he knew her husband was on the battlefield. He invited her over.

And power is seductive. To be invited into the king's palace, into the king's presence, by David, a woman he didn't know; therefore she had never been in the palace, not part of his circle.

And she responded. Maybe she felt she had no choice. He was the king. Maybe this is a summons.

David is the pursuer in all of this and she came to him and he seduced her and they slept together. Scripture does not hold Bathsheba responsible. She is simply the pawn.

David is help responsible. Chapter 11:4 says,

“David sent messengers to get her. She came to him. He slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.)”

Which is simply making the point that she was not pregnant before she came to David. She had just finished her time of period.

And as a progression, he saw, he sent, he slept.

He probably didn't intend to sleep with her when he first saw her. But he foolishly did not apply the brake at the beginning.

When he tried to put brakes on after it was evident damage is being done, it was too late; the vehicle was out on the road and out of control.

But you know, for ten years this had been brewing because back in 2 Samuel 5:13,

“After he left Hebron,”

(David was seven years in Hebron, you remember, and then he came to Jerusalem.)

“After he left Hebron,”

37 years of age.

“David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem.”

Now that was common for kings and leaders in the general culture around the Middle East but it had been specifically forbidden to David when back in Deuteronomy Chapter 17:17 Moses said when you appoint a king, or when God said, “when you appoint a king over the nation eventually he must not take many wives. If he does his heart will be led astray.”

But David clearly has been influenced, his mind infiltrated by the cultural norms around him where kings have their harems and they could pick the woman they wanted any time they wanted her.

And he took several wives and no doubt it's the way of the world, he could justify it, it's no big deal, others are doing it, this is my private life anyway.

But sin doesn't just offer the pleasure of the moment. We think it does. We think this is now, this is the pleasure of the moment, this is it, this is over now, we can cut it off. But the answer is that we can't, because the second thing we will see from David is not just the cause of this sin, but the corrupting power of his sin.

You see sin doesn't come cheaply. It may appear so at first. But sin carries with it a massive price tag. If you get nothing else this morning, get this. There is a massive price to pay for our sin.

We do not commit our sin in isolation. Our sins escalate. One deliberate sin creates a corrupting influence that goes all the way through.

Now I know that we all are sinners. We are not offered sinlessness in this life in Scripture, but there are those willful sins about which the Scripture speaks. There are those vulnerabilities because of our fallen broken nature that we confess to God frequently. But this is deliberate. This knows all about this. It's not just caught in a sin; it is intentional and it creates a corrupting influence. It plants a poison into a person's heart.

And that deliberate sin leads to another which leads to another which leads to another which leads to another.

You see David starts off looking and lusting. That is his first failure, his first sin.

And having looked and lusted he then brings her over and commits adultery. That's the second of his sins.

The adultery led to Bathsheba becoming pregnant, which means we have to cover it up, which means we have to lie, which means we have to be deceitful. That's the third sin that comes from this.

And let me say this to you: when you have to build a wall of secrecy around something, that is toxic; it is dangerous.

Proverbs 28:13 says,

“He who conceals his sins does not prosper.”

When you conceal your sins they do not go away; they grow, they develop, they multiply.

And David thought, “We can cover this up.”

And so the fourth thing he tried to do is get rid of the evidence. No one would know the baby was his. Let's bring Uriah back home from the battle. Let's put him at home, let him sleep with his wife; let him assume, when he finds out she is pregnant, that the pregnancy is his. Let him assume it's just a premature birth when she gives birth a month earlier than he might have expected.

But because Uriah was a man of integrity he said, “I don't want to be self-indulgent when my colleagues are out in the battle.”

You know Uriah the Hittite was not just any old soldier. David had a bodyguard that was ruled over by three, the three best soldiers David had. They are called David's mighty men.

You can read about their exploits and David's mighty men had under them a group of 30 strong, skilled, brave soldiers who protected David's life. They were his bodyguard. And Uriah the Hittite was one of the 30. You read that in 2 Samuel 23. He had been one of the 30 – crack top soldier.

And part of his being a top soldier is that he was a man of integrity, refuses to indulge.

So David has to bring in Plan B, which is his fifth sin. "Let's violate this man's integrity, let's destroy his honesty of spirit for the sake of covering up my sin."

And he invites him to a banquet, he ingratiates him ("You are such a wonderful soldier; I brought you, blah, blah, blah.")

And he gets him drunk and sends him home. This time his faculties are impaired; he is going to sleep with his wife. But he doesn't. He won't go into the house. He says, "I will not indulge my colleagues who are at the battle." He goes back and sleeps on the doorstep.

The sixth sin is "in that case, we have to get rid of Uriah." He carries, as I have said, his own death sentence in a note to Joab the commander. "Get him killed on the battlefield." Dead men tell no tales and no one will know.

And as an act of charity David can bring Bathsheba into his home, this poor, pregnant widow. "Let me look after her."

Ah David, what a kind man you are.

That's his picture.

So Uriah is killed. The seventh sin that comes from this is that David breaks Bathsheba's heart by stealing her husband in this way and killing him because in Chapter 11:26,

"When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him."

There is no reason at all to assume these were crocodile tears because she also was hooking up with David and so this was nice and convenient - not at all.

This is genuine grief. They were probably young. They were probably newly married. They had no children as yet. She mourned for him. Her dreams died when he died.

And now the eighth sin – the repercussion. Now David can claim his victim for himself. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house. And she became his wife.

David remains the pursuer if you look carefully all the way through. Bathsheba is only the responder.

When David looked a second time, invited someone to go and find out who she is, he did not know where that bouncing ball that he kicked down the road would end up and who it would destroy in the process.

But there was another factor that David may well have kidded himself over – we do. It's in Verse 27,

“But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.”

What a fool!

In Psalm 90:8 – Moses wrote Psalm 90 – it says,

“You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.”

Our secret sins which we are desperately covering up down here are fully exposed. And David's controversy was not just towards Bathsheba in stealing her, it was not just towards Uriah in having him put to death, it was not just towards his own conscience; his controversy was with God.

And the next verse, Chapter 12:1,

“The LORD sent Nathan to David.”

Up until now David has done the sending, the sending, the initiating, the pursuing. David is the active one in Chapter 11.

Now God sends Nathan. God becomes the active one, this is His initiative. He tells David this story and finishes with, “you are the man.”

Now we may ask the question why didn't God send Nathan at the beginning and prevent the process, the progress? When David looked out from his roof and saw this beautiful woman bathing, why didn't Nathan come up and tap him on the shoulder and say, “David, I have got a word from God for you – get out of here.”

Why didn't he?

Well I suggest to you David would never have heard it. “What do you mean? What do you mean?”

“Well, you are looking at that woman.”

“Yeah, well, yeah sure, so what?”

“Well, you have just asked...”

“Yeah, I am curious who she is.”

You see at that stage you kid yourself. At that stage you justify yourself. At that stage you back out of it.

The baby has been born when Nathan comes to David. It's at least 9 months then since this process began. Why didn't he come to him when he found out that Bathsheba was pregnant and before he called Uriah home? Why didn't he come and say, “David, you are in a very difficult situation now but you know, don't make it worse. Face up to it. Deal with it now.”

No, because David wouldn't have faced it. He would have denied it. He is living in denial. He is saying, “This is not – I am not responsible.” Uriah will be seen to be responsible.

You know you can believe the lies that you orchestrate – you really can. You can so try to deceive that you believe the deception yourself.

It tells us in the book of James Chapter 1:14,

“Each one is tempted, when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

“Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

And sometimes you have got to wait until the sin is full-grown before we can face it in all its ugliness. Meanwhile, all the damage has been done.

And the third thing we need to look at is the consequences of his sin. Nobody sins in isolation. And Nathan comes, exposes David's sin, tells him, ‘you are the man’ and David is immediately convicted.

In Verse 13,

“David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the LORD.’ Nathan replied, ‘The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.’”

This is genuine repentance – I will show you why in a few moments. And Nathan assures him “the Lord has taken away your sin.”

So now everything is good, right? Wrong.

The damage has only just begun because forgiven sin has a life of its own. It's already out there doing its damage. You see there is more to dealing with sin than just being sorry for it. We want

a vending machine forgiveness where we come along, as long as we say sorry at the top, we'll get our forgiveness out of the bottom; we're fine.

We want God to treat our sin the way we treat dog pooh, you know. You go with your dog; it makes a mess; you get out this plastic thing and you clean it up and put it in a bag and off you go, and it's all okay.

That's what we would like God to do with our sin.

But forgiven sin still has consequences and consequences of our sin are out of the gate before you have time to repent of it. There is collateral damage to our sin, usually to those we love most.

Let me show you just briefly three things. In Verse 10 (Chapter 12:10),

“Now, therefore,” says Nathan “the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.”

David, you did an acute damage to your house in this act of adultery and this is going to come back and it is going to haunt you again and again. And your house is going to be a mess and your home is going to be a mess. And don't blame your sons. This is the collateral from your sin.

And you go to the next chapter, Chapter 13; his son Amnon raped his half-sister, Tamar, in the next chapter.

In Chapter 16, his son Absalom rebels against him and tries to become king and his advisors tell Absalom to humiliate David by pitching a tent on the roof, and Absalom, going in with his father's concubines and having sex with them in full view.

Later his son Adonijah lost his life because he asked that Abishag, who was David's nurse, should become his wife, and it was not to be.

And David's sin; it goes on reverberating through his family. And God told him it would. He had forgiven David, said Nathan, but here is the collateral: “your family is going to be messed up by this; your kids are going to be messed up by this.”

You see other people always pay for our sin. Sin always hurts somebody else. Sin can be hidden but it cannot be silenced. It speaks.

And in the end the truth will reveal it because hidden away in the dark place of our hearts it will scream out and people will know something is wrong. We can be blinded by our selfishness; we can be blinded by our self-preservation.

And thank God for the courageous Nathan's that come along and put their finger on it and say, “David, you are this man.”

You can bury 80 women in a grave in Iraq that had been slaughtered and hope the evidence is all buried with them. But their blood cries out. They have discovered it this week.

Sometimes a Nathan has to be a friend, sometimes it has to be a spouse, but you thank God for the Nathan that comes into your life. Don't blame them for getting you into the mess – you thank God for them.

Second thing – first thing his whole family is going to be haunted by this.

And in Verse 13,

“The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die, but...the son born to you will die.”

Somebody else is going to pay a price. You are not just cleaned up as though everything was fine, David.

And Verse 15 says,

“After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill.”

And you find this picture of David pleading with God for the life of this child to be preserved. He fasted, he prayed, he spent the nights prostrate on the floor, on the ground pleading with God. That's an evidence, by the way, that his repentance was genuine earlier – pleading with God.

And yet the child died, the victim of David's sin. You say the child was a product of David's sin. So it was. But every child has its own life and dignity and value no matter what its source is.

I have had to deal from time to time with folks who have fallen into deliberate sin, damaging sin. I have heard more than once from their lips, “God has forgiven me now. The issue ought to be over, but it isn't. There are consequences.”

I knew a man in Christian ministry and I had to call him out on a particular sin and he was angry with me, which is okay. He told them I was responsible for the ensuing trouble that came that he had to endure.

You see this cost him his marriage, it cost him his family, it cost him his ministry, and I believe to this day he holds me responsible. No, he is responsible – totally, totally.

And covering it up doesn't deal with it. That's why confession is such an important virtue in the Christian life.

David doesn't blame Nathan. "If you hadn't come, Nathan, none of this would have been known; we could have gotten on with the original plot and hidden it all."

No, David accepts with humility. He doesn't say, "You are going to destroy my kingship if this gets out, Nathan." No, he doesn't say that. "You are going to stumble my kids if this gets out." No, he doesn't. He says, "I have sinned."

When a man has the courage to say, "I have sinned," he has to courage to say, "I will face the consequences of it."

If you look through this passage you will notice that Bathsheba continues to be called not Bathsheba but Uriah's wife – that's what she is called – Uriah's wife. Even in the New Testament you have the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew Chapter 1 where it tells you who is the father of who and so on.

"David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife."

Even by the New Testament she has not become Bathsheba; she is still Uriah's wife, and all the implications of that, because truth doesn't change when you are forgiven of sin. The truth remains the same. And she is Uriah's wife.

And thirdly, in the middle of Verse 14 he says,

"By doing this you made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt."

"David, you have loaded the barrels of the enemies of the LORD. You have made His enemies show utter contempt."

"You, man of God? You wrote Psalm 23? Really? You wrote Psalm 18? Really? You are a con man."

And the sad thing is that if people treated us with contempt we could handle that, but they treat God with contempt on the basis of our own sin.

Paul said in Romans 2:22; he said,

"You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?"

"You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?"

"As it is written,"

Listen to this:

“As it is written: ‘God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,’” the believers, the ones who say all the right things.

You know, God is a God of justice and God is not embarrassed when the justice makes Him look bad in the light of the truth – He is not defending Himself.

“You see the issue is a lot more than whether David was forgiven or not. Don’t finish at that point in this story. The issue that comes out in this story is that sin is not a private affair. Sin has a life of its own. Sin has consequences.

And Moses told the people as they went into the land of Canaan in Numbers 32:23, he told them there were certain things they must do. And then he said,

“But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the LORD; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out.”

Notice that – be sure your sin will find you out.

Not your friends will find you out. Not your wife will find you out. Not your husband will find you out. Not your parents will find you out. Not your kids will find you out. But your sin itself will expose you because the sin itself is alive; it will find you out.

And you will discover your sin is never your friend you thought and hoped it might be. David thought and hoped that this indulgence would give him some fleeting pleasure, something that he could handle. But sin is never a friend; it is always an enemy and it is always destructive.

Yes there is cleansing. And if you read Psalm 51 some time, that’s the Psalm David wrote after Nathan had come and told him, “You are the man.” It is a psalm of deep repentance. There is cleansing.

But yes, also there are consequences, there is collateral, there is damage that comes from our sin.

And yes, there is chastening, and we may talk about that next week because it comes out in later passages, the chastening hand of God, because the rest of David’s life, the rest of it, is impacted by this instant.

There is never a time in David’s life after this that the tint of this, that the legacy of this, that the influence of this, is not in his life.

But because God is the marvelous, kind, loving Father that He is, even that evil effect can be used as a chastening effect that corrects and disciplines and brings him back home into a deeper relationship with God.

That’s why the story is never final simply when we confess our sin or try to put it right or try to make amends. The final chapter of that story is a good one if we submit ourselves to God; even that evil thing will praise God by what it does in our lives to bring about something better.

But we will pick that up on another occasion.

I wonder if there is a David here this morning. And as I have spoken to you, your conscience has spoken to you as well and the Holy Spirit may have spoken to you.

Can I say to you, cry your tears of repentance now before it escalates. Maybe there is a Bathsheba here and you have been sucked into something you have been unable to resist. Would you also repent and turn away from this?

Maybe there is a Nathan here. You might be a husband, you might be a wife, you might be a parent; will you have the courage to be bold because you may save a life by confrontation and challenge.

We are going to bow together in prayer. I don't know how the Word of God has shone a searchlight into your heart this morning. But that is its task. We can block it of course; we can resist it.

But if the searchlight of God's Word has gotten through to your heart, don't try to get over it, but accept it and embrace it. And where the Holy Spirit is bringing conviction, would you agree with Him about it and confess it and name it.

Lord, You know every one of us here this morning. None of us are at parity of righteousness because we know our own hearts too well to ever even think we might be. We know how we come short of the glory of God. But I want to pray for those who are wilfully playing with sin. Wake them up to it, we pray. Show them its true nature and call them home. And I pray they will have the grace to turn back.