

¹¹ This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. ¹² You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.' ¹³ Then 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. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die. ¹⁵ After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. ¹⁶ David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. ¹⁷ The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them. ¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, While the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate. ¹⁹ David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized that the child was dead. Is the child dead? he asked. Yes, they replied, he is dead. ²⁰ Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshipped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate. ²¹ His servants asked him, Why are you acting in this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat! ²² He answered, While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' ²³ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me. ²⁴ Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and lay with her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him; ²⁵ and because the LORD loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah.

REPENTANCE IS FOLLOWED BY OBEDIENCE

- I. Repentance does not remove consequences
- II. Repentance leads to whole hearted worship
- III. Repentance brings our confession to life

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

There are probably some who wish these events in the life of David would never have been recorded in the Bible. They are sordid events that make a person blush. Perhaps we should rather say today that this story would have made our grandparents blush. Similar goings on take place all around us and our political leaders, yes, and our teachers and pastors and members of our congregations are not immune from such sins, either.

Obviously God in His grace saw fit to include these events in the inspired record because these things are written for our learning. We need, then, to take a good look at what was happening so that we understand the nature of sin and to also understand God's forgiveness. The key factors in this lesson are repentance and forgiveness. The sequence is sin, repentance, forgiveness, and renewed seeking to do the will of God.

Let us consider as a theme for our study – Repentance is followed by the obedience of faith. Listen again to the first verses of our text. **This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your**

own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in the broad daylight before all Israel. David had kept the cover on of his sins with Bathsheba for more than a year. He refused to confess his wrong doing. This time of silence before the Lord and his leading two lives turned out to be a low point in David's spiritual life. He who had been a man of prayer had now become a person who was all but silent in prayer. He was depressed and distraught and was losing sleep and losing all joy in living. Later he refers to this time in his life as a time when he kept silent and his bones wasted away through his groaning all day long. Day and night God's hand was heavy upon him. His conscience did not give him rest. His strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. The king was emotionally and spiritually drained.

This is remorse over sin, but it is not repentance. Remorse leads only to bitterness and regret and the loss of peace of heart and mind. It focuses on the consequences of sin and it turns the heart away from God. In the midst of this kind of remorse and regret Judas went out and hanged himself.

Remorse does not focus on God. This is why God sent Nathan to David to speak with him. Nathan waited for just the right moment to do this. Nathan was an old friend of David. Together they had planned the construction of the temple. It had to be one of the hardest assignments Nathan ever faced.

You remember the story Nathan told of a poor man who had but one lamb which he treated like a pet and there was a rich neighbor who one day took that lamb, slaughtered it and served it to his guests. David was on the edge of his chair as he listened to this heartrending story. David who had been a shepherd understood how this poor man felt. In anger he ordered that this heartless rich neighbor be sentenced to die.

At this point Nathan brought the story home when he said to David: "You are the man!" Do you think that David was caught off guard by that statement? One click and it all had to be clear to him. It was also obvious that it was clear to Nathan. David came clean. **I have sinned against the LORD.** God waits for each of us to come clean in the same way when we approach Him. All of our sins are known to God. There isn't one of them that we can hide from Him. It is really foolish, then, to pretend that He doesn't know some of the sins we have committed. He knows them all and He waits for our repentant confession of all of them because He wants to assure us that we are forgiven.

No sooner had David confessed his sin than Nathan also announced, **The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.** Nathan's work was done at this point. He had confronted the king in regard to his sin. And upon the confession of the king, the prophet absolved him of his sin. Perhaps it is at this point in his life that David wrote Psalm 51. Listen to it. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me." David did not try to excuse himself. He said nothing to minimize his guilt. He did not try to pass the buck. His was a frank admission of his guilt and an earnest plea for mercy. Doesn't this take a burden off of the heart and soul? The weight of sin is removed. Just two weeks ago, having received the body of Christ and His precious blood, you were dismissed from the Lord's Table with this parting blessing. "Go in peace. Your sins are forgiven!" You then went back to your seat with the resolve not to continue in the sins for which you just received forgiveness.

It is a mistake to think, however, that there may be no consequences to our sins. We reap what we sow. Though we are forgiven, we sometimes live with the consequences of our

sin for the rest of our lives. Solomon was inspired to write, “My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.”

Nathan let David know what some of the consequences of his sins would be. **Because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die. The prophet added, Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. ... the sword will never depart from your house.** By his sin, David had given the enemies of God occasion to show contempt for God. David has sinned in secret but one would come and take his concubines and violate them in broad daylight. One from his own house would rise up in rebellion against him and the sword would not leave his hand as long as he lived. Finally the son born of this sinful relationship would die. Notice that God did not say that the son his wife bore to him, but rather the son Uriah’s wife had borne to him. It is another reminder of his wrongdoing and its consequences.

David was forced to spend time in soul searching. The text tells us that he spent the night lying on the ground, praying that the child would be spared. The palace staff tried to get him to come to the table and eat and go about his business. But how could he do so when all he could think of was his little son.

On the seventh day the child died. The staff was afraid to tell the king what had happened. They were sure that he would crumble and come apart at the seams. When David saw them whispering, he realized what had happened. But rather than breaking down, he got up to meet life and the consequences of his sin head on. He bathed and dressed and went directly to the house of the Lord for worship. Bitterness could have drowned his spirit at a time like this. But David worshiped God. Then he returned home and ate the first meal he had had in a week.

Many people have been troubled by the death of David’s son. It appears to them that God is punishing the child for the sins of the parents. But notice that David did not see it that way. He explained to his servants the weeklong fast and prayer. The Lord’s will was clear. There was no longer any reason to continue fasting and praying for the child. Nothing would bring him back. He had said, **Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.** Not gracious to the child, but gracious to me and let the child live. Not gracious to the child, but be gracious to me and spare me the pain and reminder of what I have done. Instead it was David’s son who was spared the pain. He did not have to grow up under that stigma of his illegitimacy with fingers pointing at him and questioning his parentage. It may be difficult for us to understand, but God knew what He was doing when He took the child. It is important to remember that we are forgiven. Even when pain follows forgiveness it is not a matter of keeping us in despair over our sin, but is God’s way of keeping us humble lest we fall again.

Did you notice that David took comfort in the hope of the resurrection? He said, **I will go to him, but he will not return to me.** Where do you suppose David believed the child was? In heaven, of course! Where do you suppose David believed that he was going when his life ended here on earth? To heaven, of course, and there he would be reunited with his son.

With this faith in his heart David was prepared to go forward and carry out the responsibilities which lay before him. Obedience follows repentance. We all have responsibilities in the various capacities of our lives. We want to meet these responsibilities faithfully. We look to our Savior for the strength to do just that. Amen.