

# ***“You Are the Man”***

## **2 Samuel 14:1-15**

Baxter Exum (#1007)  
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### **Introduction:**

If you were here with us last week, you might remember we studied a passage from the New Testament book of **Galatians**. We looked at the opening verses of **Galatians 6**, and we considered several guidelines for restoring those among us who have fallen into sin.

This morning I would like for us to actually look at a case study from the Old Testament—by looking at a well-known Bible character who fell into sin but looking especially at the process that brought him back into a right relationship with God. I am referring to an event that took place in the life of King David. Certainly David is one of the most well-loved characters from the Old Testament. When we think of David, probably most of us think of Goliath—the amazing faith that David had as a young man, and the courage he had. We think of David as a shepherd. We think of the songs that he wrote. Well, David became the king of Israel, and yet as David reigned as king he eventually got to a point where he slipped. **»PPT»** I am referring, of course, to the adulterous and murderous affair with a beautiful young woman by the name of Bathsheba. By way of background, perhaps we could look together at **2 Samuel 11**. In our pew Bibles, the passage is found starting on **page 507**. **»PPT»** The story begins in **2 Samuel 11:1-5**, where the Bible says...

***<sup>1</sup> Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. <sup>3</sup> So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" <sup>4</sup> David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. <sup>5</sup> The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, "I am pregnant."***

And so we discover that David stays home while the army is out fighting, he gets out of bed late one night, he looks out over the city from the palace roof, and he sees a very beautiful woman taking a bath. At this point David could have very quickly

looked away, but instead, he sends one of his servants to ask about the woman. The messenger comes back with an interesting answer as he says, ***“Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”*** In other words, the servant made it clear that Bathsheba was a married woman. The servant was warning David in the most polite way possible, ***“Do you know who this is? She is married to Uriah!”***

And yet despite having this information, David sends messengers and the Bible says (in **verse 4**) that they ***“took her”*** to be with David. In other words, this was not her decision. Some authors have made a big deal out of the fact that Bathsheba should not have been bathing out in the open. Perhaps there is some truth in that; however, the Bible is clear that the responsibility falls primarily on King David. King David is the aggressor. King David is the one who sins.

Well, at the end of **verse 5**, we discover that Bathsheba is pregnant. That, of course, is a huge problem for David, because Bathsheba’s husband is away at the battle. And so in the rest of this chapter, David tries to cover up his sin. He brings Uriah home from the front lines and invites him to wash up and go home to be with his wife. The problem, however, is that Uriah is an honorable man, and in **verse 11** he refuses to spend time with his wife when his fellow soldiers are still out in the field. King David then keeps Uriah in Jerusalem another night, only the next night he gets him drunk—but even when drunk, even under the influence of alcohol, Uriah refuses to go home—but he sleeps with David’s servants in the palace. Even under the influence of alcohol, Uriah is making better decisions than the king of Israel! David has a problem, and so the next day he writes a letter to the commander and tells the commander to put Uriah on the front lines of the fiercest battle and then to suddenly withdraw, so that Uriah will be left alone to be killed by the enemy. In a sick twist, David seals up that letter and gives it to Uriah to deliver to his own commander. Uriah, then, is basically carrying his own death warrant back to the battlefield.

Uriah is killed. How sad and ironic it is that David (a man after God’s own heart) murders a loyal and valiant warrior whose name means, ***“My Light is the Lord.”*** In **verse 26**, Bathsheba mourns for her husband, **»PPT»** and in **verse 27**, the Bible says, ***“When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son.”*** From all outward appearances, it looked as if David’s plan had worked, and yet the author of **2 Samuel** puts a strong and deliberate statement at the very end of **chapter 11** as he says, ***“But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD.”*** David thought that he was off the hook. David thought that no one would ever know. And yet we know from other Scriptures that David continued to be bothered by what he had done. **»PPT»** In **Psalms 32:3-4**, for example, King David said, ***“When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.”*** Again, all of this would have taken place during the summer. **Psalms 32** was written right here between **2 Samuel 11-12**. Politically, David was in the clear, and yet he was miserable on the inside. For several months he tried to live with a guilty conscience.

I am reminded of Edgar Allen Poe's short story, *The Tell-Tale Heart*. The man was guilty of murder and had sliced up the victim and had hidden the pieces under the floorboards of his house. But as the police came to investigate, he kept hearing the beating of the heart under those floorboards. He is going insane, the heart is beating louder and louder, and so he finally tells the police what he had done. It turns out that the beating of the heart he was hearing was actually his own—he was so overwhelmed with what he had done. Perhaps King David was in a similar situation. On the outside, David was still the king. On the outside, everything seemed to be going along as normal. But on the inside, King David was wasting away. On the inside, King David was choking in his sin. With all of this in mind, I would like for us to consider what happens next, as we consider God's solution to the problem.

»PPT» Our text for this morning's lesson is **2 Samuel 12:1-15** (page 509)...

***<sup>1</sup> Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said, "There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. <sup>2</sup> "The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. <sup>3</sup> "But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb Which he bought and nourished; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, And was like a daughter to him. <sup>4</sup> "Now a traveler came to the rich man, And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; Rather he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." <sup>5</sup> Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. <sup>6</sup> "He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion." <sup>7</sup> Nathan then said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. <sup>8</sup> 'I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! <sup>9</sup> 'Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. <sup>10</sup> '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.' <sup>11</sup> "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. <sup>12</sup> 'Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.' " <sup>13</sup> Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. <sup>14</sup> "However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of***

***the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die."*** <sup>15</sup> ***So Nathan went to his house...***

As we look back over this account with Nathan the prophet, I would like for us to consider several steps in King David's restoration, and I would like to apply each of those steps to our Christian faith even today.

**I. One of the first things we notice is that NATHAN HAD THE COURAGE TO CONFRONT THE KING. »PPT»**

We need to realize that kings would often serve as judges—almost like the Supreme Court—if a case could not be settled by a lower court, it would eventually end up with the king. We remember the situation years later as Solomon was called upon to decide between the two mothers who claimed the same baby and his decision to cut the child in half. Perhaps here we have something similar. As various cases are brought before the king, Nathan steps up. We can only imagine the courage it must have taken for Nathan to confront the king. Knowing what he knew, David could have very easily put Nathan to death. But at this point Nathan courageously steps forward, and we discover right away that Nathan starts telling a sheep story to a shepherd.

Coming from a rather poor family, this is something that David would have understood. David knew what it was like to treat an animal as part of the family. David could see it and feel it—he knew what it was like to share his food and his cup with a lamb. David knew what it was like. David could picture the little lamb playing with the children. With several older brothers, David could have easily been one of those children. David understood! We do not see this in English, but in Hebrew, the word for ***"daughter"*** (at the end of **verse 3**) is ***"BATH,"*** as in ***"Bath-sheba"*** (which literally means, ***"The Daughter of the Oath"***). Nathan says that this little lamb is ***"like a daughter"*** to the man. David never sees it coming. He never sees the play on words until it is too late.

Nevertheless, Nathan continues and explains how the rich man entertains a guest and is unwilling to take from his own flock or his many herds, but he goes and he takes by force the family pet belonging to the poor man. By the way, the word for ***"take"*** (in **verse 4**) is the same Hebrew word used to describe what David's servants did to Bathsheba in **verse 4** of the previous chapter. They ***"took"*** her to King David just as the rich man ***"took"*** the little lamb from the poor man. The same word is used, and again, King David never sees it coming.

David assumes that this is a real event, a real case, and so he renders a formal judgment. According to the Law of Moses, the man was to pay back four times what he had taken. He was to make restitution. But we find that David goes further than that—we can almost see his veins bulging and his face turning red, ***"As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die...because he did this thing and had no compassion."***

Of course at this point Nathan was just getting started, because he then had the courage to say, ***“You are the man!”*** We can almost see David’s face—anger now mixed with confusion and perhaps then mixed with tears, because Nathan continues with a lengthy indictment. David is sitting there in stunned silence, and Nathan never slows down, because he starts in the middle of **verse 7** with a message directly from God. We notice the ***“I”*** statements coming from God (in **verses 7-8**), ***“I made you king. I saved you from Saul. I gave you this palace. I gave you these wives. I gave you this nation. I could have given you so much more!”***

You can tell that God is heartbroken, and the real problem is addressed in the opening words of **verse 9** as he gets right down to it, ***“Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight?”*** In other words, the problem was not this or that—the problem was that David had ignored and despised the word of God! Nathan was speaking on God’s behalf. The indictment was devastating. There was no effort to soften the blow or to spare David’s feelings. There was no watering it down (as we might be tempted to do today). Sometimes today it seems like we may have it backwards: It is tempting to take the situation and try to fit it into God’s word instead of taking God’s word and applying it to the situation. Nathan understood, though: God’s word is not on trial, we are! Nathan, therefore, had the courage to very creatively and directly and lovingly confront King David with his sin. Let us learn something from Nathan’s example, and let us have the courage and the heart to do the same thing today.

Nathan, then, brings David to a point of decision. At this point it can go in one of two very different directions. On one hand, David can deny it, he can get angry and have Nathan dragged out of the courtroom, he can ignore it, but thankfully...

## II. **...KING DAVID DECIDES TO CONFESS.** »PPT»

In **verse 13**, David says, ***“I have sinned against the Lord.”*** There is no defense. There are no extenuating circumstances to be brought up. There is no plea of ***“temporary insanity.”*** The blame is never shifted to Bathsheba. There is no denial. There are no excuses. He does not argue about what the meaning of ***“is”*** is. But David simply responds, ***“I have sinned against the Lord.”*** What a refreshing statement! In a time when everybody seems to have an excuse for everything, in a time when attorneys and press agents make statements for our politicians, it is refreshing to see that David quietly listens to the charges, and then he agrees. This is something that counselors look out for—are people trying to justify their behavior, or are they willing to accept responsibility. David was accepting responsibility.

David is acting like the prodigal son in **Luke 15** who came to his senses and said, ***“Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight.”*** It was that son that the father welcomed back with open arms. So many times today, though, we are tempted to justify our behavior. We say to God, ***“I know I did it, but this is why I did it.”*** We say to our enemy, ***“I did not mean to hit you, but your nose got in the way of my fist!”*** That is not an apology, that is an explanation! Or maybe we



say to ourselves, **“Well, at least I am not a murderer,”** or, **“At least I’m not a sex offender.”** We tend to rationalize what we have done. We think about the sin that David committed here—the sin of fornication, the sin of adultery. We are confronted with that sin, and people tend to say, **“But don’t I have a right to be happy?”** Others will say, **“But we fell out of love with each other,”** or, **“We were never really in love in the first place.”** Others will say, **“But he was a jerk.”** And maybe he was a jerk. God, though, does not want to hear our excuses. The Lord wants us to admit that we have sinned. The Lord is looking for confession. And so we learn something else from Nathan and David: When confronted with sin, let us confess it. Let us admit that what we have done is wrong. Let us see our sin for what it really is, and let us get rid of it!

**III. There is a third important concept I would like for us to come away with this morning, and it goes back to the fact that DAVID WAS CLEANSED OF HIS SIN. **▶▶PPT▶▶****

In other words, David was forgiven. In fact, as soon as David admits what he has done, Nathan said to David (at the end of verse 13), **“The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.”** And again, the Law of Moses was clear—King David deserved to die. God had established the death penalty for adultery and murder. David, therefore, should have been put to death twice!

However, once he admits his sin, Nathan deliver’s God’s message, **“The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.”** The message for us this morning is a message of grace! The Lord will forgive anyone who is willing to turn away from sin. We learn more about David’s attitude in Psalm 51, a psalm that was written on this occasion. If you look at the heading for Psalm 51, it says, **“A Contrite Sinner’s Prayer for Pardon. A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet came to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba.”** And so to learn more about David’s attitude—his state of mind that led to his forgiveness, please notice what he says in Psalm 51...

<sup>1</sup> ***Be gracious to me, O God,  
According to Your lovingkindness;  
According to the greatness of Your compassion  
Blot out my transgressions.***

<sup>2</sup> ***Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity  
And cleanse me from my sin.***

<sup>3</sup> ***For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.***

<sup>4</sup> ***Against You, You only, I have sinned  
And done what is evil in Your sight,  
So that You are justified when You speak  
And blameless when You judge.***

<sup>7</sup> ***Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.***

- <sup>9</sup> *Hide Your face from my sins  
And blot out all my iniquities.*
- <sup>10</sup> *Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.*
- <sup>14</sup> *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation;*
- <sup>17</sup> *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
A broken and a contrite heart, O God,  
You will not despise.*

It is obvious that David had a change of heart! King David begged God for forgiveness, and God gave it. As David sang in **Psalm 32**, *“How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!”* David knew what that felt like!

**IV. As we look back at the confrontation between Nathan and David, there is another lesson we can learn, and that is: Even though David confessed and was cleansed from his sin, HE STILL HAD TO LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES. ▶PPT▶**

From our point of view, the consequences of David’s sin seem a lot more severe than they need to be, but we need to remember here that David was a leader of God’s people, and David’s sin had brought shame on the entire nation. There was a public aspect of the punishment. David, for example, had used Israel’s military to accomplish a private murder and a cover-up. In response to that sin, God said that the sword would never depart from David’s house—that David would never really be at peace. That is exactly what happens. We know from further reading that one of David’s sons rapes one of David’s daughters, and the first son is then killed by another. Another son tries to assassinate David. That son then dies, hanging by his long hair in a tree, during battle. We wonder: Where did these children learn how to commit sexual sin and violence? Where did that come from?

Concerning the adultery, God said that one of David’s companions would eventually commit sexual sin with David’s wives in broad daylight. And we know that this happened. Absalom would go on to commit fornication with David’s concubines on the palace roof—right in the very spot where David had looked over the wall at Bathsheba.

We may not see this as being very fair. Of course, we are looking at it from a human point of view. We think that if we apologize everything should go back to being okay. And yet these are some very natural consequences. Through his powerful example, King David had taught not only the nation, but also his own children, that fornication and murder are no big deal. We think of the next king of Israel, King Solomon, the next child born to David and Bathsheba, and we wonder why King Solomon had such a problem with women! King Solomon had 300 wives and 700 concubines. King Solomon was watching his father!

Even today, children learn so much from their parents. And even today, we realize that the sins of the parents can have some very real impact on the children. Sin will always have an impact, and forgiveness does not always take away the consequence. David had despised the word of God and those lessons would stick with his children and with the nation for many years to come.

### **Conclusion:**

Probably the worst consequence here is that David's innocent newborn son would die. We do not know why, this is something I struggled with quite a bit over this past week, but it certainly presents some very interesting foreshadowing about another innocent son of David who would die many years later—the Lamb of God who would die not only for David's sin, but also for the sins of the whole world.

We are reminded, then, that our sins also deserve death. As Paul wrote in **Romans 6:23**, ***“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** It was the story of the slaughter of a lamb that made David realize what he had done, and it is the slaughter of a Lamb that makes us realize what we have done. The New Testament teaches that Jesus came to earth to die for our sins as the Lamb of God—that He died, He was buried, and He was raised up on the third day. We read the Scriptures, and the Scriptures call out to us, ***“You are the man!”*** Nathan used nothing but the word of God, and King David responded to that word. King David confessed his sin, he turned around, and he asked God to wash his sins away. In a similar way today, we also turn our lives back toward God, we confess the name of Christ, and we allow ourselves to be immersed in water so that our sins will be washed away.

This morning, if you think you are getting away with something, or if something is bothering you—right now is the time to deal with the real problem. If you are trying to figure out how to make life work with sin in it, then please listen to the story of Nathan and David: It will not work! God will never let it happen! If you need the prayers of this congregation to help you make it through a difficult time, then let us know about it, let us pray about it together. The solution to sin is as easy as confession, repentance, and baptism. The Lamb of God has come to take away the sin of the world. If you are ready to obey the gospel, you can let us know as we sing this next song. Let's stand and sing...

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