

“HOW GOD TURNS PRIVATE GRIEF INTO PUBLIC GOOD”

2 Samuel 11

INTRODUCTION

1. I think you’d agree that we live in a sexualized society. Children are bombarded with an onslaught of sexual images at a younger and younger age.

Eg. Researchers in Washington D.C. wanted to start a program to prevent sexual activity in youth. They initially developed the program for **7th graders**, but soon discovered it was ineffective because too many 7th graders were already having sex. So the program was re-worked to be offered to **5th graders** and younger.

Eg. Several years ago, Mattel introduced a version of Barbie called, “Lingerie Barbie.” Although the toymaker said the doll was for ages 14 and up, the average market for Barbie is ages 8-12.

Every day, children are targeted with an array of messages which glamorize sex. The fashion industry has responded through television programs like “America’s Next Stop Model.” Shows like this promote a body image that’s virtually impossible for most girls to achieve. We live in a sexualized society!

Eg. In a book called, *So Sexy So Soon*, Diane Levin and Jean Kilbourne emphasize that our sexualized culture affects kids as young as 7 years old. Here’s what they say:

“The sexual images these days are far more graphic and pornographic than ever before. Sexual images are

used to target younger and younger children, and we are seeing the harmful results in their behavior.

Boys learn to see girls as objects, and judge and value them by how they look and how ‘sexy’ they are... This is a very high price to pay.”

Eg. A 2007 report of the “American Psychological Association” said it like this:

“The proliferation of sexualized images of girls and young women in advertising, merchandizing and media, is harming girls’ self-image and healthy development.”

Eg. No wonder a *New York Times* article recently stated according to some studies, “*three-fourths of all girls have had sex during their teenage years and 15% have had 4 or more partners.*” We live in a sexualized society!

2. All of this helps to explain the growing incidents of sexual abuse. Most current studies demonstrate that 1 in 4 girls are sexually abused before the age of 18, and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before they turn 18. One in 5 children are solicited sexually while on the internet every day.

That shouldn’t surprise us because there are now **30 million users of pornography** on the internet today!! We live in a sexualized society!

Eg. A week hardly passes without news reports of another well-known athlete, politician, religious figure or Hollywood star who has fallen because into sexual misconduct.

The truth is, some people have come to believe the Bible is irrelevant and outdated. But **as we turn our attention to the story of David and Bathsheba today, we’ll discover that nothing is further from the truth. This story reads like today’s headlines!!** If you have a copy of the Scriptures, why don’t you turn with me to 2 Samuel 11?

Today, we conclude this brief series we’ve called, “*The View From Above*.” In light of the sexualization of our society, we’ll discover today two important principles that help us address the epidemic of sexual sin. I want you to see. . .

1. THE CHACTERISTICS OF SEXUAL SIN

This story gives us several identifying marks that help us grasp the trap of sexual sin. First of all. . .

- It is deceptive

“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... David remained in Jerusalem.

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 man said, ‘Isn’t this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?’” (2 Samuel 11:1-3).

David should have been fighting with his army. Instead, he sent his men to battle while he remained in the comfort of his palace.

One night, David decided to take a walk on the roof of his palace. Even today, many homes in the Middle East are flat-roofed. The palace roof was probably the highest in the city, so he was able to see from his roof what others could not see.

Eg. Now when the Bible says Bathsheba was “bathing,” she wasn’t taking a bath like we normally think in our culture. In fact, she probably was not even undressed. She was involved in a ritual cleansing called a “*mikva*.”

Some have suggested that Bathsheba was responsible for the seduction of David.

Eg. You might remember an old movie produced in the 50’s starring Gregory Peck and Susan Hayward entitled “*David and Bathsheba*.”

In that movie, Bathsheba knew that David was attracted to her and she did nothing to discourage him. If anything, she poured gas on the fire through her suggestive comments. It’s easy to think, from that movie, that David was the victim of Bathsheba’s seduction. **That’s just not the case.**

David is attracted to her because of her great beauty. Because he is interested in her, he sends a messenger to find out about her, and he learns she is already married.

Now, David has a choice: He can either commit adultery and break one of God’s laws or he can control himself. He chooses adultery.

Here’s the first characteristic of sexual sin: It’s always deceptive. It promises something it can’t deliver.

Maybe David thought, *“It’s only one night”* or, *“Nobody’s going to be hurt by this”* or, *“Uriah will never know.”*

This is the way sexual temptation works... “No one will ever know...” I’m alone on the computer... on the road... at dinner.... at a meeting... in front of the TV.... Lonely! The Bible is clear - the Evil One is a deceiver and the father of lies. **He will present the temptation of sexual sin in the most alluring way possible.** He appears as an angel of light.

Sexual sin is deceptive.

- It is also degrading

“Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her (she had purified herself from her uncleanness). Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, ‘I am pregnant’” (2 Samuel 11:4,5).

There’s been a lot of misunderstanding about this story. Many Bible students think that David just fell into sin because he was somehow helpless.... powerless against the great beauty of Bathsheba.

I don’t believe that’s the case. In fact, the story suggests David abused his power and assaulted her. In today’s world, David could have been charged with sexual assault, pure and simple.

When David called Bathsheba to come to his palace, she had no choice but to go. He was the king. For all she knew, David had news about her husband who was fighting for the king! She had no way of knowing what David would do to her.

I believe she wasn’t responsible for what happened.

Eg. You know, this sad story is replayed every time a person in power takes advantage of someone who reports to them. We’ve heard that with politicians. We hear about it in workplace. We’ve heard about it recently in the sexual misconduct of priests. Frankly, the story of David and Bathsheba is all about the abuse of power in a sexually destructive way.

Eg. The May edition of *Christianity Today* carries the story of Wess Stafford. He’s the president of “Compassion International. “

In that article, he tells a horrific story of attending a missionary boarding school in Africa where he was physically and sexually abused as a child.

When Wess was a young boy, the house parent responsible for the abuse tried to silence him by making him sit on a chair in front of 50 classmates. The house parent jammed a candle into Wess’ hand, and lit the wick at both ends. The two flames approached Wess’ fingers.

Here’s what he said:

“From deep within me arose a gust of strength I cannot fully explain to this day. I had a desperate thought. I could win this time.

This time, the house parent had unwittingly put himself in a place where I could actually win if I could endure enough pain. I knew in my heart that he was wrong. He was lying, and I felt the evil and injustice to the core of my soul. I was a little boy with a broken heart who had found his voice and cried out for rescue.

So enough - enough shame, enough abuse, enough lies. It had to stop somewhere, sometime. I made my decision: It stops now! I'm not letting go!

Nothing was going to make me cry out or drop that candle. I shook violently, tears brimming in anticipation of burned flesh. I clenched my teeth, tightened every muscle in my body, and pinched the candle as fiercely as I could.

Just then, a child in the front row couldn't stand it any longer and he jumped up and slapped the candle out of my hand. The children scattered in all directions.

Standing there alone on my chair, I had received my calling... I had gone from victim to victor. From that day forward, I would protect children. I would forever speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.”

Nobody was there to speak up for Bathsheba. Folks, that's the impact of sexual sin. It is deceptive, degrading, and ...

- It's also destructive

“In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, ‘Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die.’

When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died” (2 Samuel 11:14-15,17).

David does whatever he can in this story to cover his tracks. But nothing works. Eventually, he orders Uriah's murder while in battle. What started as a “one night stand” leads to death and destruction.

This is what James had in mind when he wrote:

“But 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” (James 1:14-15).

Tragically, David's sin not only cost the life of Uriah, but also the child that had been conceived.

“When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD” (2 Samuel 11:26-27).

You see, sexual sin is deceptive, degrading, destructive and...

- It is always discovered

God sends a prophet to confront David with what he's done. Nathan comes before the most powerful man in the land to confront him with his own sin. He says it like this in Sam. 12:7

“Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master’s house to you, and your master’s wives into your arms.

I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in His eyes?

You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own.” (2 Samuel 12:7-9a).

Eventually, other people discovered what David did, but God already knew. God always knows when we fall. Our sin may not be revealed immediately – but God always knows!!

Hebrews says it like this:

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13).

Jesus said it like this:

“There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs” (Luke 12:2,3).

The apostle Paul wrote,

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:7,8).

You see, the Evil One tempts us to believe that no one will ever know – that we can hide our sin. The Evil One is tempting some of us today to lie to ourselves. It’s easy to think nobody will ever find out. But, God sees every thing. He will not be mocked. Sin is always discovered. Even though no one spoke up for Bathsheba, God turned her private heartache to public good because she became the mother of Solomon. Matthew tells us she’s in the line of Jesus. This is a sad story but if David’s story stopped here, it would be tragic, but the Bible tells us David was miserable (Psalm 32). He is broken. The Bible also tells us...

2. THE CURE FOR SEXUAL SIN

In Psalm 51, David described his response to what he had done. The 51st Psalm emphasizes the cure for sexual sin involves true confession and repentance. David comes clean with God... He “get’s right with God!” That involves three things ! If I’m going to deal with any sin, I need these same steps.

- True confession asks for God’s mercy

David was broken by his own sin, so he cried out to God...

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions” (Psalm 51:1).

This is critical to salvation!
When we come to God with a broken and contrite heart... when we call out to Him pleading for His mercy... when we depend only on the finished work of Jesus on the cross to cover our sin... God never turns away. Paul said it like this in Titus:

“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit...” (Titus 3:5).

If I am going to deal with the problem of sexual sin, and any sin, first I must ask for God's mercy. And then...

- True confession agrees with the impact of my sin.

“For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...” (Psalm 51:3,4a).

Impact is tragic! If we study David's life, we discover that his own family experienced heartache because of his sin. One of his sons raped one of his daughters; two of his sons died because of rebellion; and, one son committed immorality with his wives where everyone could see. There's always an impact to sin...

True confession asks for God's mercy, agrees with the impact of what I've done and ...

- True confession admits that punishment is justified.

It doesn't rationalize or excuse! Look at this next verse on your outline.

“... You are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge” (Psalm 51:4b).

God would be justified to condemn us all, but John 3:17 says, “He did not come to condemn the world.” The truth is, in a group this size, I know there are several who have fallen into this trap. Some of you are battling sexual temptation right now. Some of you have been losing the battle of sexual temptation. Some of you are involved in a relationship you know does not honor God.

CONCLUSION

I invite you to demonstrate the spirit of David when he wrote in Psalm 139:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23,24).

Whether you have sinned like David, or have even sinned against like Bathsheba, God wants to take your broken life and change it for His glory.

- Have I honestly faced my sin with God?