

Text: 2 Samuel 11: 1-17

Theme: David, A Man After God's Own Heart: Idle Hands

Sermon delivered by Dele Agbelusi during Service of the Word on 23/07/2017 at 10.30am

Remember all that we have learned about David. At the age of 15 he was anointed by Samuel to be the next king of Israel. The reason wasn't his looks or his stature but it was his heart. God saw a young man that had a heart for God. He saw a young man whose inner being was centered on pleasing God. It would be that heart for God that would give him the motivation, ability, and attitude to slay the giant Goliath.

He spent the next 22 years of his life first serving Saul then fleeing from Saul. At the end of these 22 years David finally ascended the throne and became the King of a united Israel.

Several warning flags should have entered his mind. Complacency led him to neglect his duty. He should have been with his men. Instead he allowed someone else to have that burden. His success had made him feel invincible. Pride was allowed to fester and convince him that God was with him in all of his endeavours. When David was hiding in caves from Saul he needed God. Now his own accomplishments had diminished God's role in achieving them. He allowed his arrogance to listen to the reports of the people about his greatness. He revelled in his celebrity.

This is the progression of David turning from being a man after God's own heart to being a man after his own heart. Success, pride, and arrogance led to David neglecting his responsibilities. And in doing so he discovered idle time. To some, it is a story of judgment and condemnation. Others see it as a story of grace, restoration, and hope. For those willing to admit their sin and accept God's judgment, grace, and restoration, it is both.

No chapter in the Bible strikes more fear into my heart than 2 Samuel 11. When I read of how David, the man after God's heart, the courageous man of faith, the sweet psalmist of Israel, fell into the sins of adultery, deception, murder, and hypocrisy, I am horrified. The scary thing is, this did not happen when David was in his teens or early twenties. He was about 50; he had walked with God for years.

I would like to think that walking with God builds up an immunity against sin, so that after 15 or 20 years, I would be almost invulnerable. Satan would want us to believe that lie, because if we aren't painfully aware of our own propensity to sin, we won't be on guard against it. Thinking that we're beyond such temptation is the first step toward falling (1 Cor. 10:12). If it happened to David, it could happen to me or you. None of us--young believer or old, male or female--is exempt from the lessons of 2 Samuel 11.

Whenever somebody, especially a godly man like David, falls into gross sin, we tend to think that it happens suddenly, without warning. But it does not work that way. Nobody falls into serious moral failure in one sudden, impulsive outburst of passion.

It was the time of year, the Spring-time, when kings go to war. But King David stayed home. By chance, he saw a woman bathing - she was clearly naked and she was very beautiful. David enquired who she was, and he found out she was married to Uriah the Hittite, who wasn't at home but was fighting the king's battle. David sent for her, she came, and he slept with her. She had no choice; he was, after all, the king. And guess what? She became pregnant.

David paced back and forth on the roof. He couldn't sleep and was uneasy – uneasy because he wasn't where God wanted him to be. And he saw a woman bathing.

When we read and examine these Chapters, we give so much attention to David. It is at this point in my message that I want to now divert from King David. All too often we forget to pay proper attention to Bathsheba. I know many expositors say while preaching this text, that Bathsheba should not have been out bathing herself at that time of the day, that she should have been more modest and aware that somebody could see her from a roof gallery. I want to differ slightly.

She was where she was supposed to be, most likely having a difficult time in the extended absence of her husband at the war front. We need to understand that Bathsheba was the victim in all that was about to take place in her life. She did not have a choice but to respond to the request of the King. David's power was practically absolute. What David wanted he got. What he demanded he received.

David's many wives did not satisfy his lust. This was because you cannot *satisfy* lusts of the flesh; they are primarily rebellious assertions of self. It wasn't so much that David wanted Bathsheba; it was that he would not be satisfied with what God gave him. The principle would be illustrated in an exaggerated way in the life of Solomon, David's son. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. David and Solomon show us that *if one woman isn't enough, 1000 women aren't enough*.

The woman was very beautiful to behold: Bathsheba's great beauty made the sight tempting. But the real strength of temptation often does not lie in the quality of the tempting object, but in the state of heart and mind of the one being tempted. David was carefully "prepared" to stumble at this very point. Even so, this temptation was not too strong for David, no matter how beautiful Bathsheba was. For example, Joseph was more severely tempted to commit sexual immorality than David was here, but he fled that temptation.

(Verses 3-4)

David pursues the temptation and even after learning that the woman was married to Uriah the Hittite, one of David's mighty men of war, he still sent for her. And slept with her.

Learning that this woman's husband was away, because the Mighty Men were away in battle against the Ammonites made the situation far more tempting. David began to think, "I could get away with this." David committed adultery in his heart up on the roof. Now he knows that he has an opportunity to commit adultery in practice. Adultery in the heart and mind is bad; adultery in practice is far worse.

In this the man after God's heart went against his own heart, following through on a lustful impulse. David ignored every warning and way of escape God set before him.

(5) "The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

David and Bathsheba didn't *plan* on this. They were terrified both at the "problem" of the pregnancy itself and that it meant that their adultery would be found out. Her message "involved an appeal to him to take the necessary steps to avert the evil consequences of the sin, inasmuch as the law required that both the adulterer and adulteress should be put to death (Leviticus 20:10)."

(6-11) David attempts to cover his sin and murders Uriah.

So, David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. 7 When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. 8 Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. 9 But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. 10 David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?"

11 Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, [a] and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

When David heard the disastrous news of Bathsheba's pregnancy, he should have used it as a prompting to repent. Instead, David did what most unrepentant sinners do: he tried to hide his sin. He wanted to draw Uriah back home to have relations with Bathsheba to give a reason for her pregnancy. The whole concept of hiding our sin is deceptive. Our sin is never hidden before God and only hidden with difficulty from our conscience. Our hidden sin hinders our fellowship with God and others and is a barrier to spiritual life and power.

"David's design was that he should go and lie with his wife, that the child now conceived should pass for his, the honour of Bath-sheba be screened, and his own crime concealed. At this time he had no design of the murder of Uriah, nor of taking Bath-sheba to wife." (Clarke) Uriah had a passion for the glory of God, even though he was a Hittite and not a native Jew. Uriah was a man of great integrity. He was a true "team player" who did not want to enjoy the comforts of home as long as his fellow soldiers endured hardship on the field of battle.

(12-13) David's second attempt to cover his sin fails.

David hoped that getting Uriah drunk would weaken his resolve to identify with his fellow troops. Yet Uriah **did not go down to his house**, refusing to enjoy what his fellow soldiers could not while the battle still raged. David was drunk with lust when he slept with Bathsheba; he hoped making Uriah drunk with wine would bring the same result.

(14-17) David sends Uriah to battle with his own death sentence in hand. David trusted the integrity of Uriah so much that he made him the unwitting messenger of his own death sentence.

"David was better while a servant than when a king; for being a servant, he feared to kill Saul his adversary, but becoming a king, he basely slew his most faithful friend and dutiful subject." (Trapp)

"Though we mourn over David's sin, yet we thank God that it was permitted, for if he had not so fallen he had not been able to help us when we are conscious of transgression. He could not have so minutely described our griefs if he had not felt the same. David lived, in this respect, for others as well as for himself." (Spurgeon)

(18-25) Joab sends word of Uriah's death back to David.

Joab did exactly what David commanded. He knew it was wrong but simply followed orders and murdered Uriah at David's order.

If not immediately confronted, one sin can take a wretched course.

In the garden of Eden, our first parents first saw the fruit that it was good, then they took it and they ate it. That is the usual sequence of sin. You see and look, then desire then covet and then do it. He allowed temptation to turn into lust and lust to turn into adultery. When the consequences of his adultery threatened to expose his sin, he covered it first with deception and then with murder. **Satan could never tempt David with the entire package at once, but he deceived him with it piece by piece.**

(26-27) David marries Bathsheba.

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.

We have no reason to believe that Bathsheba knew that David arranged the death of her husband. It is likely that David concealed all this from Bathsheba. At the same time, she was partly relieved to hear of her husband's death.

And she became his wife: This was nothing new for David. He had added wives before, so now he simply added another. "David is sort of a hero now, in the eyes of the people. He has taken into his harem, the poor, pregnant wife, the widow of one of his fallen captains, so that the people say, "My look at the way he stands behind his men! He takes care of their widows when they are killed in battle. My what a marvelous king!" (Smith)

But **The thing that David had done displeased the Lord:** This is the first mention of God in the chapter. God witnessed every event and read the intent of every heart, but His displeasure is only implied until this specific statement.

David was in that terrible place where he had too much sin in him to be happy in God, but he had too much of God in him to be happy in sin. Because David was a man after God's heart, God drew David to repentance and restoration.

We may not commit outward adultery, but to look lustfully at another is an adultery of the heart; we may not be murderers, but to hate someone, to think in hate, 'I wish you were dead' is as culpable in the eyes of God as the actual act of homicide. Paul was clear, 'All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.' How gracious is our God who seeks the sinner out of love in order that the sinner can enjoy His grace! How amazing is this love and grace of God in Christ Jesus! **Unless you realise how sinful we are as human beings you will not appreciate how much God did and gave for you to be called a man or woman after God's heart, for that is what you are in Christ Jesus. You can be a friend of God not by virtue of what you do but because of what Jesus did for you.** If you take Jesus into your heart, He will do something wonderful in you. We shall hear more about our patient seeking God next week and one of the acts that made David a man after God's own heart!