

**CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART****2 Samuel 11:1 – 12:23; Psalm 51**

**Intro:** The background for David's rebooting is based on a lurid tale. It's a story of betrayal, murder, a deep cover up, tragedy, loss, and most of all, **SIN!** Hollywood couldn't improve on it (as if Hollywood can improve anything).

For those of you who are on email, hopefully you got my message on Friday to read over the background texts for this talk since I'm not taking the time to read them today because that is not primarily my focus. I will, however, recount the highlights (although, perhaps, they would be better referred to as lowlights) of the background before we end up with Psalm 51.

Here we go . . .

2 Samuel 11 begins with, *In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.* 2 Samuel 11:1.

King David didn't go out in the season that kings go out to war, But David probably wasn't being lazy, or lax as much as he had gotten to the point, because he had a good general in Joab, that he could send his armies out rather than leading them in person. His kingdom had flourished, and there was much to do that kept him from the risk and danger of leading troops. But this change meant that he was where he was not supposed to be when an opportunity presented itself.

He was strolling across the roof of his palace when he looked down over the city of Jerusalem and he saw a beautiful woman who was bathing. Her name was Bathsheba, and she was married to one of David's Mighty Men, a man named Uriah the Hittite.

A quick aside here, because it really adds to the impact of the story: If you want to read about David's Mighty Men you can find them described and identified in 2 Samuel 23 and 1 Kings 15. Uriah the Hittite is specifically referred to in 2 Samuel 23:39 and 1 Kings 15:5. David had some 30 men who were his elite guard referred to as Mighty Men who worked with him: they protected him, provided for him, they loved him, and were so loyal to him they would have done anything for him, and did, even unto death.

Uriah was one of this elite group. Some background that is not in the text you read is that Bathsheba's father was also one of David's Mighty Men. Not only that, her grandfather was also one of David's key advisors. So, this young lady was someone David knew, and she was beautiful, and she caught his eye. But most of all what caught his eye, was that she was bathing. She was uncovered.

Don't judge Bathsheba as many have done. This is what people did – they bathed in their backyard. In India I saw this on a regular basis. David had a home that was much larger than the homes of the other people around him and he could easily look down into the courtyards of his neighbors. He was the peeping Tom and Bathsheba was merely bathing and cleansing herself after her monthly period.

Also, things would not have escalated if David had turned away and put the visual out of his mind. Instead, David gawked and couldn't tear his eyes away as an evil thought formed in his mind. Then he acted on that evil thought and sent for Bathsheba and she was brought to him. Because when the king sends for you, you go see what he wants. What David wanted was something that was not his. You cannot make this G-Rated, he had sex with Bathsheba and it soon came back to him that she was pregnant.

David, who was in mire up to his ankles at this point, sank into his waist by sending for Bathsheba's husband – his Mighty Man named Uriah who was at the battlefield. He treacherously wanted Uriah to come home from battle and sleep with his wife so that it would look like he was the one who had impregnated her.

The problem was Uriah was a man of integrity. There were a couple things at play here for him: One was that a soldier did not have sexual relations when he was on a military campaign. The other was that, as Uriah thought of his comrades in arms at the battlefield fighting for their life, for him to be back home and enjoying the comforts of home and his marriage bed, was out of the question. No matter what David did, even trying to get Uriah drunk so that he would forget his integrity, ended in failure. So, finally David sent Uriah off to battle with a note to the commanding general, Joab, to put Uriah in the thickest part of the fighting so that he would die.

The mire that David found himself in had become manure and he sank down until he was completely engulfed. Uriah died in battle as planned, the victim of a murderous adulterer who could have any woman he wanted, as long as she was not married to someone else. But David stole Uriah's wife and murdered his faithful Mighty Man. It was the height of betrayal.

David is often referred to as a man after God's own heart but this is NOT an example of that. Even after all he had already done, he took Bathsheba as his own wife and then he acted as if everything was normal.

Still David was a man of God and all of this could not have brought peace to his soul. Indeed, the turmoil that stirred his heart was, without a doubt, horrific. F. B. Meyer, as you already know, is always a favorite of mine because of his way with words, says this of David, *"But, oh, the bitter sorrow, that he who had spoken of walking in his house with a perfect heart, who had had so great a faculty for divine fellowship should have fallen into this double sin! Psalmist, king, lover of God—all trampled in the mud by one passionate act of self-indulgence!"*

Moving into chapter 12, we have a powerful account of a courageous prophet and advisor by the name of Nathan, who came to King David and confronted him with his sin. Nathan shares a story with David. Looking back on it, we know it is a parable of David's story wicked scheme. But as Nathan presented it, David thought that it was a true account. Let me read it to you.

**(Read 2 Samuel 12:1-9)**

I don't have to explain anything more to you from this text. It's very dramatic and very clear: David had condemned himself. He deserved the death he wished upon the evil and selfish man in Nathan's parable. Meyer

writes, "*Nathan's parable was the mirror in which the true enormity of the king's sin was held up to his face. He was judged, and he judged himself.*"

As you finish out the reading of chapter 12, you realize that the baby that was born to David and Bathsheba suffered and eventually died. David's sin destroyed so much because tragedy follows sin. The baby died while David lived and he had to live with his sin for the rest of his life.

But he was rebooted and that's where we pick up with Psalm 51. Let me read that to you:

**(Read Psalm 51)**

**His mercy is more**

God's love and grace are infinite. The hymn says it all,

*Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,  
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!  
Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Grace that is greater than all our sin*

Here is the kicker, we must recognize our need for it. David does and he pleads for it in verse one. David is not like the person who is remorseful because he has been caught, his remorse comes from knowing that, before God, who sees everything anyway, he is at God's mercy, and relieved to be able to come clean in complete candor.

He asks God to blot out his sin. Notice he minces no words in describing his sense of personal accountability as he uses a veritable thesaurus of words for his sins. He talks about his transgressions, his iniquity and his sin. There is no attempt to make excuses like being a victim of circumstance, or she should have kept her clothes or an inability to control his urges. Nope, the blame was all his and his alone. Wrong has been done and it was David's responsibility. And he was ready to accept it.

This is what is required for God's mercy. God reboots those who know their need for his mercy.

This is good since . . .

**Sin can be hidden—but not from God**

David rightly points out,

*Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you may be justified in your words  
and blameless in your judgment. Psalm 51:4*

This is ultimately true, but it's even worse when David realizes that his sin didn't hit him alone. Just think about its far-reaching ramifications:

A man lost his life for being married to a woman the king desired for himself. In other words, Uriah's murder was committed to cover up sin.

Bathsheba was violated, widowed, bore the shame of an adulterous relationship that resulted in a pregnancy and the birth of a baby, and then she lost her baby.

The baby that was born suffered and then died. We don't even know his name if he was ever given one.

The entire Kingdom suffered because their leader was treacherous and perpetuated evil. A country does not thrive when evil is practiced in its highest offices.

David's dynasty, which God had promised would go on forever, was forever ruined because of the sin that he began.

Here's the take away: DON'T SIN!

### **Only God can cleanse**

*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;*

*wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* Psalm 51:7

John Durham points out that the word, purge, which is what my text uses, does not come close to what the original language implies. The original has the literal meaning of "Un-sin me". David is serious. And so, we must be as well. Meyer, using his picturesque language writes, "*Sin introduces discord into the music of life, but the establishment of right relations with God brings back the joy of living.*

*Renewal from the inside out as well as forgiveness is needed."*

When Jesus went to wash Peter's feet in John 13, Peter didn't want just his feet to be washed but he wanted a total bath. Jesus's response was, *The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean.* John 13:10. Peter had been with Jesus for three years and he was cleansed by that experience, and besides, that wasn't the message he was trying to get across. But here in Psalm 51, David needs and is asking for total cleansing – as he must.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,*

*and renew a right spirit within me.*

*Cast me not away from your presence,*

*and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation,*

*and uphold me with a willing spirit.* Psalm 51:10-12

The verb used here for the creation of a clean heart in verse 10, is the same verb that is used in Genesis 1:1 for the creation of the heavens and earth. The same power at work in the creation of the universe is at work in the recreation of a human heart. Only God can do such re-creation. God reboots the one who comes to him with a request to create a clean heart.

Finally, rebooting is only possible when we . . .

## Truly repent

It is not enough to be forgiven unless we long for and pray to be kept from, and truly do refrain from returning to sin. Repentance – the complete turning away from sin is the only way to restoration to relationship with God.

David does this by promising to be once again a teacher of the way to holiness and righteousness. And that's good, because he has not been a model of that at all, and his witness has been destroyed. Meyer makes an understatement when he writes, "*It is an awful thing when servants of God give the enemy such occasion to blaspheme.*" Satan claps his hands and the world smugly smirks when God's people fail him with hypocrisy and scandal. We cannot do a thing to clean up the mess of fallen Christian leaders other than to live a life of humility, Christ-likeness, and holiness. What God desires is *a broken spirit; (and) a broken and contrite heart,* (v. 17).

**Conclusion:** This is way to long, but you cannot skimp on a key issue like this one. We are Christ Followers – we must not fail him. We do know that his mercy is abundant, but we also know it's far easier and less damaging to the kingdom to be holy as he is holy. David was rebooted because he acknowledged his terrible sin and threw himself upon God's mercy. But let's not get in that situation. To that end, make you daily prayer, all day long to be CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, and then walk in his mercy, grace and protection. Amen.