

Title: How the Mighty are Fallen
Text: 2 Samuel 11.1-5
Theme: Unfaithfulness
Series: 2 Samuel
Prop Stmtnt: David's unfaithfulness as a husband began as unfaithfulness as the king

I do not believe the Bible because my parents believed it. I do not believe the Bible because it is my job. I do not believe it because it is convenient. Standing before you and speaking with certainty and clarity would be incredibly arrogant if the Bible were not true. But standing before you and not speaking with certainty and clarity would be incredibly arrogant if the Bible were not true. Since there are easier jobs than this, and since there are many situations where it is not convenient to believe in and follow the Bible, why on earth would I ever believe this and continue to do so? There is a lot of historical data that I can point to, but as weighty as that is, what I find so compelling is the internal witness of God's word.

This text is a perfect example of that. Evolution teaches the myth that we are simply higher functioning animals. We are nothing more than a sophisticated collection of cells that have inexplicably been organized together into various biological systems designed (without a designer) to work harmoniously together as the human body that for millions of years has learned to adapt to our surroundings. There is no soul. There is no life after death. We are just cells that try to live; therefore, they try to reproduce. Therefore, sex is amoral. It is like eating. Your body needs food and water to survive so you eat food and drink water. The human race needs sex to reproduce, so we have urges and desires to reproduce. That's it. Some find it convenient to be in a long-term relationship, but it is not necessary to reproducing, just a relational and financial convenience for some, but not better since there is no God, there is no moral code, there is no better. So, if that is the case, then why is the betrayal of adultery so incredibly painful? The theory of evolution has no explanation for that. That is my point. Over and over I have examined the theories of those who try to explain the existence, the experiences and the actions of humans apart from the Bible, and I have found them to be woefully inadequate and hopelessly inconsistent. I believe, teach and preach God's Word because I have found that nothing else can sustain the weight of the human experience. The Bible causes some people to get angry not because it records history, but because it interprets that history. It tells us how we are to understand that history. It not only points out cause and effect, it roots cause and effect in the original cause (God) and points to the ultimate effect (eternity).

The Bible is not controversial because it is unclear, inconsistent, or inaccurate. Oh no, the Bible is controversial because it is very clear, very consistent and so accurate that we find our life story on these pages. The Scriptures speak to our heart and cut into our hearts. There are accounts like this one that are hard to read, hard to preach and hard to listen to. I do not want to preach this text any more than you want to listen to this. But it is here because we all need to hear this and we all need to think soberly and wisely about this.

If you have committed adultery and have repented, you need to hear the promise of forgiveness as well as the warning not to be presumptuous that you would never do this again. If you are contemplating or planning on being unfaithful, you need to be warned. You need to see down the road of what this sin can do to you, your family, your friends, and so much of your future. If your spouse has committed adultery you will resonate with the heartache and even if it is a burden that you have born in private, you will find a strange comfort knowing that God knows. If you have had a parent who has been unfaithful, there is a lot of good counsel here for you. All of this is just further evidence for me in the truthfulness of God's Word. This account is hard to interact with, because this issue is so hurtful and complex. But in it all remember this. If God loves us so much that he will tell us the truth about adultery, then we can trust that he will tell us the truth about his provision for forgiveness for those who repent.

Read Text:

Another clear evidence of the integrity of the Bible is the honest treatment it gives of even its heroes. We see examples of this in Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Samson. Samson was disappointing for sure, but David's sin is devastating. This feels like Genesis 3 all over again. The rest of 2 Samuel is going to deal with the fallout of this one event that took place late one afternoon. Things were going so well. Israel was experiencing success like never before. No enemy could stand before David, but now we see that David could not stand before the enemy of his own heart.

1. **Beware of thinking that we are different.**

We are not different. This is what is so sobering. David was a good king. David was one of the best. Looking back, we can now see some evidences of weakness in this area as he had several wives. But lust is a thirst that is never quenched. You cannot satisfy lust. You have to kill it. You have to kill it by starving it. We are not different and it happened so quickly. This really happened quickly and this one afternoon changed his life, devastated his family and just about destroyed his kingdom.

David was a man after God's heart. And we are right to wonder how a man who so deeply loved God and who was so gifted at expressing this love through music and poetry that moves us and grips us to this today, could do this? But he did. This good king was also a bad king. This good leader was also a terrible father and husband. He was both and the duplicity tore him, his family and his kingdom apart. Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah. Eliam was probably the same Eliam who was one of David's mighty men (23.34). We know that Uriah was. If this is the same Eliam, this means that Eliam and Uriah were fighting for their king so he could do this to one's daughter and the others' wife. What is more, Eliam is the son of Ahithophel, one of David's closest advisors, who ends up siding with Absalom in his rebellion which may explain why he did this. In giving us the facts of the situation, the narrator is putting the pieces of the puzzle on the table so we can see the picture. This is a devastating mess. "It happened." (v.2a). Oh it happened and it happened so quickly. This was not a bad dream. It really happened. I didn't do that, did I? That is not like me. Anyone who knows me, knows that I would never do

such a thing. I never intended to hurt anyone. Look at all the good I have done. Listen carefully and humbly. I could do this. You could do this. You will do this or something like it, if you do not guard your heart. And when you do, you cannot bear the weight of both. The warning screams at us that past experiences of God's grace do not protect us from present temptation. If I think for a second that I would never do such a thing, I have already taken a major step into doing that very thing. Flee from sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6.18). Make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13.14) Why such strong language? Because sin is devastating to us and to those around us.

2. **Beware of ignoring the enemy of your own heart.**

We have this idea (this very foolish, unrealistic, and ignorant idea) that if our circumstances were better, then we would not have any problems. If I was healthy. If my husband loved me. If I had children, or more children. If I lived in a better climate. If my car worked. If I was accepted into this college. If I could get a divorce. If I had more money. If I could get people to respect me. And on it goes. When we think like that, we are placing the weight of our happiness on our circumstances. But, even fabulous circumstances do not satisfy nor are they any kind of protection from your own heart. You know this! Take your family on vacation. What happens? Your kids spend the entire week thanking you profusely for being such an awesome dad or mom, sacrificing your time and your money so you could lavish a vacation on them, right? They are so thrilled to be with you and sing your praise, that they give you their cell phones because they do not want to miss a thing and be distracted from everything you have prepared for them. They never complain about being hungry, waiting in a line, being bored, or anything of the sort. Oh, they are just fountains of gratitude attitude.

Our biggest challenges are not outside of us, but inside of us. David was safe in his palace, in his city, and in his country. But he was not unsafe from David. You need a Savior, because you need to be saved from your own sin. You need a redeemer because you need to be redeemed from the mess that you have made. This is good counsel. Please take this to heart. If you tend to be prideful and are constantly looking for ways to promote yourself and defend yourself, then you need to be very intentional about cultivating a spirit of humility. If you are prone to gossip about others in order that you can feel better about yourself or be seen as the one who is in the know, you need to be aware that there is an enemy in your heart that will tear you apart worse than your words are doing that to others. Your circumstances may get better or worse, but you will always have your heart to deal with and we are pre-programmed to trust ourselves instead of God. We believe that we know better, we know when to stop, we can get close and not get burned, we can just look but not try, we can be curious, etc. But, your life and the lives of those around you and more importantly the message of the Scriptures tell us a different story. It is not a sign of weakness to invite people into your life for encouraging accountability. It is a sign of folly, not to.

3. **Beware of power.**

The narrator deliberately uses the verb send. In chapter 10, David uses his power as a king for good. He sends envoys, consolation and Joab for good purposes. But there is a danger in being in power. You can tell people what to do and they do it. The way you exercise that power reveals how you view the source of that power and the purpose of that power. This was the warning that Samuel gave to the children of Israel about getting a king. The history of kings and people in power is that they take. They will take your boys for armies, your crops for food, your girls for their palaces, your animals for their herds. They will take your monies to pay for their building projects and your labor for their ideas. Kings take. Sometimes they do it, simply because they can. This is what is so dangerous about power. David thought he could use power and it ended up using him and defeating him. Both Saul and David were messed up by being in charge. Saul was so paranoid that he distrusted about everyone. He was so desperate to hold on to power that he was willing to kill that he might keep it from going to someone else. David was so secure that he became careless. He sent messengers to inquire as to who Bathsheba was. Then after they came back and told him who she was, he sent them back and took her. He sent for her. He was the king. The king gets what he wants and in that moment, she was what he wanted. Kings and powerful people have people who can do their dirty work. Clean this up. Make sure this cannot be traced back to me. Handle this for me. Power gives the ruler the illusion that he or she is in charge. That is why we pray, Your kingdom come, your will be done because there is no human ruler who is capable of handling power and should be trusted cart blanche with it.

If you are in a position of authority, there is a sense in which that should terrify you. You do not have inherent authority. You have temporary authority from God and you will give an account to God for how you exercised that authority. This is part of the reason why Jesus designed the church to be led by a plurality of elders who are accountable to the congregation even as the congregation is accountable to the elders. We are all under authority and we are all responsible to live carefully under that authority.

4. Beware of leisure (v.2)

Verse 2 is abrupt and direct. "It happened." It was late one afternoon. David, was not in his command post with his soldiers, encouraging his men, plotting strategy with Joab and Abishai, getting reports from his mighty men. He sent Joab to fight. David was able to leave the fighting to them. Now, there comes a time in the life of a man and woman when age takes its toll and there are things we cannot do like we used to do. It is wise and humble to accept that and prepare for that. But that is not what is happening here. There is no crisis that David has to attend in Jerusalem that causes him to take leave of us men so he could address it. This is disastrous leadership. Leadership that luxuriates while workers sacrifice has always been and will always be a recipe for disaster. But the story has repeated itself thousands of times in history. A leader gets drunk on the power and privileges of authority and is distanced from his people. Another comes along who identifies with the common person and loyalties are shifted, the old guard is thrown out or thrown over and the new one takes its place until it too becomes drunk on power and the privileges of authority. Power is seen as the means to leisure. Oh to be independently wealthy so that I can do what I want, when I want, how I want, no matter what.

It is late in the afternoon and David just got up from a nap. There is nothing pressing upon his schedule. He is bored. He is at leisure and when we are at leisure, we are in danger.

I have nothing to do, so I am going to channel surf. I have a few hours to kill, I think I will just get on Twitter, TikTok, etc and see what is interesting. I have nothing to do is not a blessing but a curse. You may need to retire from your job at some point because you are no longer able to do it like it needs to be done, you may need to take a break because you are breaking down, or you need to be refreshed. But waking up with nothing to do and no plans may be the American Dream, but that dream is a nightmare. David became lazy. Do not get lazy about your marriage. Pursue your spouse. Both of you. Intentionally do things to encourage, spend time with, build up, encourage, talk with, pray with, eat with, learn with, go with, etc. By the way, I loved the fact that so many of you signed up for the Disaster Relief training. You want to take the time that you have and use it for the good of others! That's what I'm talking about. Leisure is not the goal. Beware of pursuing leisure and indulging yourself with pleasure. You can do enjoyable things, but make others the goal. Don't waste a good meal on yourself, include others. David was indulging himself and he was not satisfied. His indulgence became the occasion for him to see something that he wanted and his power gave him the illusion that he could get it, if he wanted and he wanted.

5. **Beware of Sexual Sin.**

"Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death." James (1.14-15) is unflinching in his description of the process. David saw. David gave space in his heart for what he saw. Then David took what did not belong to him and in the moment he did not care. David was no match for his own sin. In that moment, he was owned and he gave in, although he had plenty of opportunity to stop. I do not believe that David raped her. He is her king, and I assume that she is much younger than he is. Bathsheba is not presented as enticing David. She is actually following the Mosaic law by her ritual cleansing following her monthly cycle. This makes it clear that David is the father of the child. David is the aggressor. David knows better and what is so hard to understand is the level of betrayal that his children experience, his advisors experience, his soldiers experience and his nation experiences. From this point forth, David is still the king. He still has authority to rule. But he loses moral authority. He loses the faith of his nation, the hearts of so many, and while he can be and is forgiven by God, there is a sense in which his leadership never recovers.

Sexual sin is no less devastating today as it was then. At the same time, sexual sin is so "normal" and championed. Free sex without borders and definitions promised to liberate us and no one wants to point out the obvious that we are a nation that is in bondage and it is killing us. In the coming weeks there is more that I have to say to this, but I want to leave us with three challenges:

- 1) To those of you who are vulnerable to sins of the flesh.

There is no shame in admitting your weakness. Weakness with humility leads us to taking steps of protection. Please find a trusted brother or sister and covenant to pray with and for one another and be in regular contact with one another. Identify the times when you are most prone to going down the path that James talks about and figure out how to put up barriers. Declare war on porn. This is not just a man's problem. Accept no excuses from yourself. The pornification of our society is having a clear impact in our families and relationships and is one of the most serious threats we are facing and there is no end in sight to the battle. As a follower of Christ, there are some things that you simply cannot view.

2) Help us cultivate a culture of safety and purity.

You may be attractive in appearance. That is nice, but be careful. We are to be mindful of one another. If you dress in order to attract attention to yourself, ask yourself, "why am I doing that?" Am I an encouragement or a stumbling block to brothers and sisters fighting for purity in a sex-crazed world? Fashion and styles are not necessarily morally neutral.

3) If adultery has affected you, there is hope.

The same God who speaks honestly to us about its effect, speaks honestly to us about its cure.