

Title: And all the time, God is good.
Text: 2 Samuel 12.15b-31
Theme: The big picture of forgiveness
Series: 2 Samuel
Prop Stmt: Sin has serious repercussions, but for the believer, eternity is not one of them.

Some things you may feel deeper because of your experience. If you lost multiple pregnancies and then carried a child to full term then the joy of this delivery is certainly enhanced. If you were deaf for 35 years and then were able to hear, or blind and able to see you appreciate those senses more than others who always had them. If you were separated from your birth parents and then reconnected, you know and treasure the warmth of being found because of your sense of being lost. The depth of your pain or loss creates a tenderness in the soul that feels like a deep bruise. I know that, therefore I don't preach this text as a clinician, or even a bible teacher, but as a pastor, a brother, a friend. Looking at David's infidelity has been difficult for so many because this text presses upon that bruise in your soul. But it is in the pain where we hear God so clearly. C.S. Lewis was a brilliant child, but his mom died when he was young and his dad was emotionally disconnected from him. He struggled with a respiratory disease, was wounded in W.W.I and buried his wife whom he adored. It was Lewis who wrote, "Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world." (The Problem of Pain)

There is a lot of pain in these chapters. But in this pain God is shouting and I pray that this text will be a megaphone to rouse your soul and breathe life into your heart.

Read Text:

"God is great and God is good. Let us thank Him for our food." Amen. That is a wonderful prayer. It is rich in profound and practical theology. I believe that it is easier to acknowledge the greatness of God, but the greatness of God does not necessarily cause us to love him or trust him. If we really understood the goodness of God, then our love for God would be just as deep as our awe of the greatness of God if we could grasp how immense the universe was. Satan's deception of Adam and Eve was built on his accusation against the goodness of God. He does not want you to believe in the goodness of God, and he has been, to a large extent successful at that. In fact, "the God of the OT" is supposedly harsh and angry. But here in this painful story of David's failure is a perfect opportunity for God to be harsh and angry. We brace ourselves for the blast of fury but instead we encounter a God who forgives, who restores, who redeems and who loves. At the same time, there are serious consequences. David's son dies. There is a righteous and weighty response by God, but that response points to Christ. What I am trying to help you see that even in judgment, God remembers mercy. Both judgment and mercy are displayed because sin is serious and God is gracious. How God does that is fascinating, humbling, and amazing.

It is true, that we do not understand the ways of God. His ways are higher our than our ways. They are exponentially WAY better. At the end of the text for last week, we are left wondering,

why did God say that David would not die (and he was guilty) but that the child would die (and he was not guilty)? Imagine you are Nathan the prophet and you are delivering this message to David. Does this make sense to you? Probably not. It doesn't make sense to any of us, really. Oh, we could say, that this spared the child the shame of being the result of all of this. But that is really not a satisfactory answer. The truth is, we don't get it and we are tempted to say, that isn't fair. We are tempted to say that, because it isn't fair and if you say that, if you feel that, if your internal attorney is raising an objection, then God has just masterfully drawn you in and has you right where you need to be. The reason that guilty David was spared and his innocent son wasn't, points forward 1,000 years. Then we see Jesus and our jaws drop open, and our heads shake in amazement as we see what God was up to. The reason David was spared and his son wasn't, was a preview of David's ultimate son, Jesus, who died not only to pay for David's sin, but now to pay for yours. How could David live and not die? The same reason you and I can. Christ, the son of David and the Son of God.

1. **Forgiveness removes the barriers, but not the repercussions.** (15b)

David confesses his sins. God forgives. God makes a promise to David to not hold his sin against him. That is, the barrier of fellowship is torn down. There is restoration of the relationship. There is nothing greater in the world than to have a relationship with God. There is nothing worse in the world not to have a relationship with God. David had a relationship with God, but his sin became a barrier to his fellowship. His joy was gone. His confidence was gone. His internal peace was gone. All of these he writes about in Psalm 32 and 51. When he confesses and is forgiven, all of that is restored. At the same time, sin is no game and while the vertical fellowship is restored, the horizontal consequences are real. David's son became sick. In David's case, he knew that this was a direct consequence of his sin.

I don't know if there is anything that is worse for a parent than to be the cause of suffering for your child. We want our kids to be able to trust us, no matter what. We want them to be able to look up to us for council, for wisdom, for stability, for security, for strength and protection. We want to be able to say to your children, "You can always talk to me. You can always come to me. You can always trust me. You can always come home." But if we fail them, if we are the cause of their suffering, their shame, their demise and their fears, they won't want to talk with us, or come to us because they can't trust us for fear that it will happen again. David is forgiven, but this forgiveness comes at a cost.

A. **Forgiveness is costly because sin is so serious.**

David's son is sick. His sickness is a deeply personal example of the fact that David's sin is so serious. The fact that we can be forgiven does not mean that our sin should be treated lightly. Oh beloved, I want you to get this. We are right to speak of the grace of God, but if you think that the grace of God is an excuse for sin, or that it minimizes sin, then I don't think you understand God's grace. In order to understand God's grace, you have to understand God's righteousness.

Have you ever considered doing something sinful and as you debated it, you thought, “I can always ask forgiveness.” Forgiveness is not like having a “get out of jail free card” in Monopoly that you can throw onto the board. Forgiveness is costly. This son of David died, but while this son of David died as a consequence of David’s sin, this son of David did not pay for David’s sin. This son of David suffered for David’s sin. This son of David died for David’s sin, but this son of David’ did not pay for the pardon of David’s sin. What he did was point to THE son of David who would. (slide)

Romans 3.21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are **justified** by his **grace** as a gift, through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Forgiveness is costly because sin is serious, but the fact that it is so costly does not mean impossible or elusive. God forgave David because he knew that Christ would pay for that sin. God is able to forgive you because Christ has paid for the sins of every single person who trusts in him. That means that...

B. Forgiveness is real because God is truly gracious to the repentant.

There are two ditches that we have to stay out of. The one is the ditch of being dismissive of sin. The other is being dismissive of forgiveness. The one believes and acts as if God is not serious about sin and the other believes and acts as if God is not honest about forgiveness.

Let’s say that you decided to leave home and make a go of it on your own. After a couple of years, you were in debt and were facing a crisis, so you asked a family member for some help. They gifted you funds that in the moment relieved you, but they never let you forget it. Every time you see them, they find a way to remind you that they did this for you. At the time, they said that it was a gift, and that you did not need to pay them back, but as time has gone on, you now realize that it really wasn’t a gift. They hold it against you. God does not give forgiveness like that. He does not hold it against you. He really forgives you. In fact, his forgiveness of you is the basis and pattern for why we are to forgive others. Forgiveness is very important to God. Jesus tells us the story of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18 and warns us about the consequences of not forgiving your brother “from your heart.” (v.35). We are commanded to forgive those who repent from the heart because God forgives us from the heart.

Our forgiveness is real. God is truly gracious. And I will argue in a minute that one of the reasons why David is truly a man after God’s heart is because David believes this. He truly believes that God is gracious. That is displayed in David’s curious behavior in this text.

2. David becomes an illustration of God's saving grace. (16-23)

Look at v.16. The child became sick. God said that the child would die, and now the child is sick. What does David do? "David therefore sought God on behalf of the child." David fasted, and "went in" which I take to mean that he went to the tabernacle and prayed to God. Why would David do that? David believed that God was gracious.

A. Grace to believe

Warnings are mercies intended to drive us to repentance. Sometimes repentance stays the consequences. David believed that God was gracious and that it was possible that God would not follow through with his warning (v.22). That is a beautifully bold faith! We may be inclined to think that after all of David's sin, that he had no business thinking that he had any hope at all of changing God's mind on this. But David believed God. He believed that his sin was forgiven. He believed that God was what God said he was. God is good and God is gracious. David was not presumptuous, but he believed God. His believing in the goodness of God meant that he could plead with God. David was not mad at God for his son's sickness. We are fools to be mad at God and think that we can punish him by withholding our worship and trust. That is madness! David had a right view of his sin and knew that he did not deserve to live. In fact, my guess is that in David's pleading that he offered his life for the place of his sons.

This is not the same David of chapter 11. The old David is back. The humble, believing, lay it all out in the open before God David is back. This is the David we love. This is the David who grabs the levers of our heart and infuses our affections for God. This is a man who is the recipient of grace and therefore, he believes God.

Do you pray? Seriously, do you pray? I tried that before. What good does it do? If you do not pray, it is because you do not believe that God is either great or good. Again, if God answers with a no, it is only because his no is better than your yes. It looks like David believed that.

B. Grace to accept (20)

David's servants did not know what to do with him. In their minds they feared that if David was like this in response to his son's sickness, what would he be like if his son died? So, they were afraid to tell him that his son had died. David could tell and asked and they affirmed that indeed his son had died. Then David did another unexpected thing. He accepted it. He had prayed. He had asked. The Lord answered. No. David had believed that God was gracious and that it was possible that God would change his mind. When God said no, David did not accuse God of anything. No, David believed that God was good which meant that David could accept the answer from God without believing that he had been betrayed. God's no, was better than David's request for a yes. It was now time to go forward.

C. Grace to go forward

David did not go forward in the sense that he could forget about this. In fact, David talked about going to his son (I shall go to him) which I believe that David was talking about the day of his own death. But, David so believed in the grace of God and in God's commitment to his Word, that David could live knowing that God wasn't going to hold his sin against him.

3. Solomon is an illustration of God's grace. (24-25)

These two verses are some of the most amazing verses in the Bible to me. David treats Bathsheba as wife with compassion and no more as an object. In order to comfort her, he had to confess to her his role in her husband's death, and God's grace in his life. Now we witness that another aspect of God's grace. God does not treat them as being forever under his disfavor. Bathsheba gets pregnant – again and delivers a son – again. Once again, God sends Nathan the prophet with a message. This message was a promise of God's grace. Yahweh loves your son. What a kindness of God! If you have ever lost a child, you know the potential for crippling fear that you might lose another. God sends the prophet with a word of assurance. I love him. So, even though his name was Solomon, David called him Jedidiah because that means, beloved of the LORD.

Can God love me, even though I messed up? Can God use me, even though I messed up? Is there a future for my kids even though I messed up? Beloved, we have the answer.

The Word of the Lord came to Jonah, a second time.

Peter was forgiven of denial and preached at the founding of the church.

God's grace can ensure that your sinful past does not have the final word on your future.

Conclusion:

- 1) Why I am convinced unborn children and babies who die are in heaven.
- 2) Why David is still a man after God's heart.

Note the similarity with Saul and the difference. Both sinned. There is a sense in which David's sins were just as egregious if not more so than Saul's. Both were confronted by the prophet. Both said, "I have sinned." Both admitted their sin, but David clearly repented and it was evident that in the end, he cared more about what God thought than what people thought while Saul cared more about what people thought than what God thought. Therefore, David could not stay in his sin, and Saul couldn't get out of his. David truly believed that God was good. Even in correction, God is good.