

The thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

This is a very terrible phrase – *displeased the Lord*. It is a terrible blend of grief and anger at the human heart, with the Almighty in a fury over the unfaithfulness of His servant David. David had sinned. He had not committed some simple little grey area sin, he had committed murder and adultery.

Murder and adultery head the list of the world's most despised inequities and David had done both. The same is true of others as well; doesn't everybody sin? Scripture has no hesitation to underline the fact in Romans and Isaiah, *all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and, all we like sheep have gone astray*. And, *All we like sheep have gone astray*. But David was different than most. He had received unbelievable grace, unique privileges and endless opportunities. David had known God; he had known him with such wonder that it set him to sing and sent his shepherd's tongue to poetry. David was not a common ordinary run of the mill person, he was not just one of the crowd. He was very special before God. David was described as, *the least*, and the last of Jesse's sons. After Samuel was sent to find a replacement for the throne of Israel when King Saul was a hopeless derelict, God saw royalty in what has been described as, *the family runt*.

David was anointed to be the second king of Israel. From that moment on, the shepherd's life became a tale of divine sovereignty where the marvels of God's grace spilled over him. The boy slayed Goliath and became the national hero. He soothed the crazed Saul with his harp while learning the ways of the court. He became a competent warrior and lead successful armies. After the death of Saul, David was crowned King of Judah (the tribe of his origin) and reigned for seven years in Hebron. Finally all of Israel joined in making him sovereign by acclamation and the shepherd of the deserts became God's chosen ruler.

What rise from obscurity! We might say, *what a success!* Success can corrode a person's soul. David's spiritual light began to erode with its evidence nearly obscured by their subtleties. He violated the procedures for handling the Ark of the Covenant. Also, the Lord had warned against multiple wives and David took on more as a sign of security is throne with posterity. He married girls from families of influence. David had a very large harem on top of this. The moment of David's fall was not one event or a moment. Study of his life reveals the slow erosion of his devotion, with the substitution of rituals instead of devotion. Although he kept

singing, and praying and talking about devotion and dedication, he had a defective heart.

With the with the world at his feet, why not Bathsheba too. So David took her to his bed and sent her husband to the front lines and had him killed in battle. *The thing David had done displeased the Lord.* What a terrible wrapper for the inequities of the throne room. Seldom has there been a greater spiritual disaster than David. One teacher put it this way: “it is when the man who ought to have been against such behaviour, prostitutes his spiritual nature to gross and carnal sin that the depths of Hell are touched”.

The sinful prominence of an enthroned King cast a shadow from border to border and its shadow reached across the centuries even to our day, bringing scoffing and ridicule on both the things of God and the people of God. Think of it as a large tree in the forest falling. When David fell, lesser lives were crushed in his fall. His own family felt the blows; it twisted their character, worked with their morals, and turned most of his sons into rogue beasts.

Worse still, was the denial of divine blessing which God desired to give to all Israel. Just as the ripple effect of a stone cast into a pond, sin leaves consequences which touch the lives of others.

In such a case as David’s, surely there could be no hope for him. Murder was not the carnage of some rage, it was calculated and planned. From the servant who was sent to bring another man’s wife to David bed; to her explanations of purifications being passed; to the plotted seductions of Uriah, which were intended to cover his sin – planned! Even the letter of Joab ordering the method of execution for Bathsheba’s husband was all planned.

From this we might well conclude, how could the Lord have anything other than the deepest reaches of Hell for him? Then we have this phrase in 2 Samuel 12:1, *The Lord sent Nathan to David ...* Behind all the empty sacrifices and sin, God saw the lost, floundering soul and *the Lord sent Nathan to David.* God cares for the fallen and goes after them. We sometimes miss the point of Jesus’ life on earth and why He came. Here in the Old Testament we see the love of God and the movement of God towards providing redemption for His created.

The prophet did not handle David’s sin lightly. You will remember that David wanted to know what man would do such injustices and so on, and he replied to him, *you are the man!* When God exposed the iniquity of his chosen servant, He

also exposed himself to shame and scorn at the hand of an already godless world. God could have handled this, as we might say, behind closed doors, but He didn't. God never deals lightly with sin, because of what it does among all people, to us and ultimately to his own son. But in spite of the fact that David shame spilled over and stained divine reputation, God knew that he was worth going after - so He sent Nathan.

Psalm 51 is David's response to the straightest sermon he had ever heard preached. Psalm 51:1, *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness.* The way back into the will of God must include a personal ownership, and a personal responsibility for sin, not just the exposure of it.

20th-century flip Wilson might have said it best, *the devil made me do it*, or made some other argument in order to lighten the burden. David owned up to his sin for what it was, his sin. Until sin is called *sin* and until it is declared to be ours and no one else's, there is no hope of redemption. 1 John 1:9, *if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Some people are proud of their heroic sins. One example of this is the story of the man who went to confession and asked for forgiveness because he stole ½ a load of hay. The priest said to him, *only half a load?* And the man answered, *well, while I'm at I might as well confess, tonight and going back for the other half.* But David cried out, *have mercy upon me.*

A person has never drowned in the river as long as they can come up for one more breath of air to cry for help. In Psalm 51:7, it continues, *a broken and contrite heart, O God thou wilt not despise.* The character of God was the one point that David knew could not fail. Nathan said: *the Lord also hath put away your sin.* David prayed: *purge me ... make me to hear joy and gladness.* And this is the gladness of heart that belong to the prodigal, to you to me. Luke 15, the good father says, *bring forth the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Bring the fatted calf and, for this is my son who was lost but now is found.* We, knowing the love of God as discovered by David, might also pray as he did in Psalm 51:10, *created me a clean heart O God and renew a right spirit within me.*

Create, means to make out of nothing that which has never been. David cried out, *Do a miracle Lord!* and the Lord heard David's cry for mercy. This is grace!

Paul wrote many years later, 2 Corinthians 5:17 – 18, *therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, all things are passed away - all things are become new*. Conversion, salvation and spiritual restoration is a creative miracle! The way back to the will of God is in our response to the work of God. The Lord sent Nathan to David. God sent his only Son into the world so that the world through him might believe and be saved.

I invite you to come to Christ and confess your sins to Him. Own up to them and then pray to God for forgiveness, and as James 4:7 says, *God will lift you up*. We sinners all need the Saviour. We need to be saved as did David. Why not come and renew your relationship with Him right now? Move back the will of God. Amen.