

# The Power of Sin

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, well let's have our Bibles open. I always encourage you to do that, so let's have a look there at our Bibles. We're in 2 Samuel 11 and 12. We won't cover all the material, it's quite long, but it's a well-known story, is it not?

It's the story of David and Bathsheba, and the title that I've given is simply The Power of Sin. We'll run with that title today, The Power of Sin, and we're going to have a look at the story.

And as we begin, just a few things for us to think about as we cast our eyes over the passage. I think the first thing is that God has told us the story. It is in the Bible because God wants it in the Bible, and we can't help but be a little bit bewildered and ask the question, why does God want us to read this?

Why is this in the Bible? Because today's account really is about the power of sin.

Now think about that disturbing comment that Dylan made about what's happening in our schooling system. We live in a world that largely rejects the Bible and the existence of God and the Word of God.

[ 1 : 20 ] And as we think about that, we realize that in our sinful world, there are always going to be consequences.

It's true for all of us here today. This story is in the Bible because it is an account of the reality, the terrible reality of sin and sin's power.

The power of sin to destroy us and to destroy everything we hold dear. So we have a well-known story in the Old Testament.

It's right there in front of us. Perhaps it's a story we'd rather not have. But we're also going to discover something else, and that is that the sexual boundaries which God provides for us in the Bible are there for our own benefit.

For those of us here today who don't keep the sexual boundaries that God has laid out for us. You don't keep those boundaries.

[ 2 : 35 ] This is a story for you because the boundaries that God has put there for us are for our own benefit. Because if one of the greatest leaders, one of the wisest men the world has ever known, can fall the way David did, believe me, so can you.

You are not immune. Now let's set the scene to our account, to our story. Two quick observations as we prepare ourselves to dive in.

The first observation is that this is a turning point in David's life. So he's the king.

He's the king of Israel. He has fought many, many battles. God has poured out his favour on David. David has had victory over all of his enemies. He is invincible. By the time you come to this point in the life of David, which of course covers 1 and 2 Samuel.

[ 3 : 48 ] We're in 2 Samuel. You read about David and you come to this point. You realise that David has been favoured by God in a way that is truly unusual, exceptional.

And up to now, he has probably not really made any major mistakes. He's at the height of his realm. We are told that God is with him. God is with him in everything that he does. God has blessed him. He's had success after success.

He has rest from all of his enemies. And God has given him this great name. He has become famous.

He's become famous all over the earth, you could almost say. He's at the height of his powers. I think that's the point. He's a very, very, very, very capable and impressive man.

[ 4 : 51 ] He's a hero. He's a great man. He's a great man. The second introductory observation is simply this, that our account today is, it's not about any normal fall into sin.

This account is more significant than that because it impacts the history of the world, this tragic incident.

It's one of the reasons why it got into the Bible. It has significance for the history of the world. Why is that, you ask? Well, because God had given David a promise in 2 Samuel 7. So prior to this tragic incident, God came to David in the person of the prophet Nathan and said to David, your offspring who comes up after you will be the king of the kingdom that will last forever and ever. How's that for favor? And that makes David just about the most favored king in the history of Israel. God had said to him, your kingdom will last forever.

[ 6 : 18 ] How's that for God's favor on one of his servants? That after you, David, a Messiah will come and this Messiah, we know it's Jesus, is going to be your descendant and he's going to be a king of a kingdom without end.

So in another way I can put it this way, the salvation of the world depended on David's success. And what really stuns me is that David knew it.

David knew that. And so with all of this in mind, we're going to have a look at chapters 11 and 12. Chapter 11 was read out to us, but we're going to look at chapters 11 and 12 quite quickly because I'm assuming you know the story quite well.

First of all, we're going to have a look at how sin is conceived in David, in his heart. Then we're going to look at how sin gets out of control.

It gets conceived. Secondly, it gets out of control. And then thirdly, we're going to have a look and see how he tries to cover it up. Conceived, control, and how it's covered up.

[ 7 : 37 ] And then, of course, concealed. He tries to hide it away. That's what we're going to have a look at. So we're going to start with this idea of sin conceived. This word conceived from verse 1 to 6 of 2 Samuel 11.

Now, we all know the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments, Exodus 20 verse 17. David knew it. You know it. I know it. Thou shalt not covet thou neighbor's wife.

I'm also reminded of one of the most powerful verses in the Bible about how sin works.

It's in James chapter 1 verse 14. It's a very powerful verse because it tells us how sin takes root in our hearts. And when it isn't controlled, it sets our lives on fire.

It's what James says. 1 verse 14. Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin.

[ 8 : 50 ] And when sin is fully grown, what does sin give birth to, says James? Death. Death. So that verse in James has got a great deal to say about sin and about David.

How does it start? It starts with a desire, does it not? A desire in one's heart. A desire for something. My life is somehow incomplete without this thing.

It's conceived. Another way of describing to be conceived is to give birth. And because it's not nipped in the bud, it's not nipped in the bud straight away, it gets bigger and bigger until at some point it's out of control.

Do you know that sin has its own promise? Did you know that? Sin has its own promise that it extends to us. I can make you happy.

I can make you happy. Now let's see how this is the case with David in verses 1 to verse 6 of chapter 11. Now we'll observe that there are a lot of doing words here in the original.

[ 10 : 16 ] And when I went to high school, they told me that a doing word is a verb. That's a doing word. Right? There are lots of doings going on here in these verses. David saw. David saw.

David took. So David is doing a lot of stuff here. He sees. He sought. He took. In fact, the verbs rush upon us as David's last rushed.

And so because of sin, sex, as a good thing, is being turned into something selfish and evil. And by the way, those of us who are struggling with sex, our sexuality goes to the heart of who we are in the image of God.

That's why that announcement that Dylan made is so distressing and so disturbing. Because what our secular government is doing is attacking the very heart of our identity as human beings.

It's wicked. In my opinion, it is a demonic thing. And I think as parents, you need to attend those meetings. It's a very, very, very, very destructive thing that our schooling system is doing.

[ 11 : 38 ] Our sexuality goes to the heart of who we are. That when you mess with gender, when you destroy the goodness of sexuality in your life, you will destroy yourself.

So sex here in the story is something to be taken. It's not a means of service. Saw, sent, took, lay with her.

See that? Saw, sent, took, lay with her. So let's have a look at saw. David, what did he do? He saw. Is that a problem? No, not necessarily. But it's what you do with what you see. Seeing. Seeing.

Such a powerful thing. You know, one of my problems is books. Books. I've got so many books, they don't fit in my flat. When I went to the Georgia School College, they had to give me the church bookshop or the college bookshop for my books for my office.

[12:45] Okay? I've got a problem. I love books. You might say, well, that's okay. You're an academic. But I really love books. Okay? So I'll go on to Amazon.com and what do I do?

I, I see, oh, I see that book and I say to myself, well, I must have that book for my library. Okay? I don't think, I think Nick's a lot more controlled than I am. You know why? Because he's married. Okay? I'm sure Gene will say, what are you spending your last hundred grand grocery money on? I'll spend it on a book, but I'm sure Nick's far more disciplined.

Okay? But the sight, sight is powerful, isn't it? You see, but seeing is not necessarily a problem. It's, it's, it's what you do with what you see.

Now what's going on in the background? Well, Job is David's army military commander. The Israelite army is at war with the Ammonites. David is hanging around in Jerusalem.

[13:44] He's a little bit bored. He's no doubt made himself a nice cup of coffee. He's sort of wandering around on the roof of his palace. What is the scene? The scene in Jerusalem is, it's calm.

It's, it's peaceful. David is safe. He's behind the walls of his city. But of course, Jerusalem isn't going to be protection against the sins within.

So in the past, the devil working through David's enemies, the Philistines, the Ammonites, well, they might attack David from the outside in the past.

But now what is Satan doing? He's, he's, he's attacking David from the inside. So he sends Job out to battle. And again, it's important also to see that in these two chapters, one word, one verb that is repeated 20 times is sent.

Everybody is doing a lot of sending. And most of the sending has been done by David because he's trying to control the situation. Either he's sending out people to do his bidding or he's ordering others to send on his behalf.

[14:54] And once more, the, the, the significance of all the sending here is that it illustrates David's desperate attempts to stay ahead of the situation which is about to unfold.

He's trying to control the fallout of his sin. He's trying to, he's trying to remain in control. Many of us know what that's like. You know, I cannot help it be reminded of Adam and Eve because Eve saw, didn't she?

She, and Adam too, they, they saw, they saw the forbidden fruit. And what did David see? He saw Bathsheba. And this is, I think, again, this is a connection to Adam and Eve here.

But we also need to appreciate that there's nothing that Bathsheba is doing that appears to be wrong. I don't think Bathsheba's wrong. She, she's on the roof of her house.

How was she to know that David was looking? I mean, I think David's palace would have been higher than the roof of her house. But I don't think Bathsheba had the slightest idea of what was going on.

[15:57] She was washing and she was naked. It's interesting that later on David is going to say to Uriah the Hittite, her husband, go home and wash. Bathsheba's washing herself now.

And later on David's going to say to Uriah the Hittite, go and wash. Go and wash your feet. That's a euphemism for, oh, go and lie with your wife. The word plays here in the story.

So he saw. Now what does he do? Well, he doesn't have the temptation in the bud. He, he sent. He saw, he sent.

Discreetly inquires about the woman. What should he have done? He should have taken his cup of coffee. He should have gone back inside and turned on the TV and I don't know, watch something on YouTube.

But no, he, he decided, no, he's going to send. I'm the king. I can do what I want.

[17:00] I'm the king. We've got to be careful. Ought we not? When we've got power, when God has given us power in a community, we need to be very careful. So what does he do?

He sends. He should have turned his attention away, but he didn't. So what does he do next? He, he took. He took.

Look, that is a real, it's a nasty word, is it not? It's a real nasty word. You know that earlier on in the story, if you know your Bible, the Israelite elders at a very, very sinful moment one day, they went to, they went to Samuel and they said, you know, we want a king like all the other nations. Remember that story? We want a king like all the other pagan, unbelieving nations. And Samuel said, well, the Lord says, fine. Is that the kind of king you want? They said, yes, we want that kind of a king. And, and the Lord said, you know what that king's going to do? Do you know what he's going to do? No, we don't. He's going to take. That's what those kind of kings do. They take. Which is true, isn't it? If we look at politics today, read the Zondo Commission, read the Zondo Commission report.

[ 18 : 09 ] Ungodly people, ungodly leaders, they take. That's exactly what David did. It's a powerful word. David just takes. He sends out messengers.

To take. I'm reminded of Mark chapter 10, verse 45 about the Lord Jesus. What is Mark 10, verse 45?

The son of, the son of man came to serve, not to be served. The son of man came to give and not to take. Well, David is doing the taking.

He took her. And if you look at verse 2 and verse 3, you will appreciate that she's referred to as the woman. Isn't that interesting? She's got no name.

She's got no name. She's got no name. Her humanity is lost in this tragic story. He's using her. He's abusing her.

[ 19 : 08 ] As far as David is concerned, she's just a plaything for the king. And you'll also read your passage and you'll observe there's no tenderness. There's no conversation.

There's no nothing. All there is is sex. In fact, it seems to me that it's basically rape. She's not even a woman.

She doesn't have a name. She's just a person. But a non-person. But we read later on that that's not true. She is a person. Her name is Bathsheba.

She's a human being. She's the daughter of Eliam. Do you know that Bathsheba means daughter of the oath? That's what Bathsheba means.

In other words, in a sense, we might say that it's reminiscent of the oath she shared with her husband. When they got married, they shared an oath.

[ 20 : 03 ] But now, of course, David, well, he's making a mockery of her marriage oath. He lay with her. This horrible, brutal sentence. Bang!

He lay with her. That's it. So that's now sin that is conceived and sin that now takes place. Now let's have a look at sin out of control.

2 Samuel 11 and verse 5. You know, I'm reminded of Galatians 6 and verse 7 where we read, God is not mocked.

You reap what you sow. That's true. And when you make decisions in your life, when you come to crossroad moments in your life of whatever nature, and you're about to make a decision, think about the decision because there are always implications.

God is not mocked. You reap what you sow. And sin conceived that isn't nipped in the bud? Well, it comes out of control.

[ 21 : 09 ] Remember a man in my congregation who had a gambling addiction. And he let it run out of control. And it destroyed his finances. It destroyed his job. He lost his wife. She divorced him.

He lost his kids. She moved to New Zealand. And his life was ruined. I warned him many, many, many times. But he allowed sin to get out of control. Similar story of a student at the George Hitchell College who had a problem with pornography.

Came to see me. But he wouldn't take the right steps to stop. And what I've heard now, he's no longer really serving the Lord. Sin out of control is a great tragedy.

And we're wrong if we think that somehow we can control sin when it gets out of control. And that's exactly what's happening. 11 verse 5, what do you read in your Bible story there?

What does Bathsheba say? The only recorded words of Bathsheba in the story. The only recorded words. I'm pregnant. That's it.

[ 22 : 12 ] So now we've got sin conceived. We've got sin out of control. And now what? Sin covered up. And you've got a long section from verse 14 to chapter 11 to verse 27.

It's a long confession of what David is trying to do to cover up his sin. And of course we can learn an enormous amount from that, can't we? Instead of confessing his sin, instead of going to Uriah

the Hittite and saying, I've sinned, going to the Lord in prayer.

No, he doesn't give up. No, he's not going to give up. Now we have the cover up. Right, says David to himself. Plan number one.

6 to 11. And we've got sent again. Sent. In fact, sent appears six times in verse 6. Send, send, send, send.

If I can just get her hubby back from the battlefield. Send him home to sleep with his wife. I'm off the hook. Right.

[ 23 : 17 ] Send, send, send. Sends word to Job the commander. Bring this dude back. Bring Uriah back. And so Job sends Uriah to David. And Uriah arrives at the palace.

And David interviews him. And it's so incredibly hypocritical. I mean, how's it going, Uriah? How's it going there? How's the war going?

How are the troops? In fact, literally in the original language, David asks, How is the shalom of the war? How is the shalom doing?

You know, shalom means peace or wholeness or prosperity. How is your wholeness? How is the prosperity of the war? How is your prosperity, Uriah?

Shalom is used three times in verse 7. Incredible. You'll observe we don't even hear Uriah's answers to these questions.

[ 24 : 15 ] Why? Well, because David's not interested in Uriah's answers. David just wants to fix the problem. So David says to Uriah, Come on now, take some oranah. Wash. See that word?

Wash. Wash. Wash your feet with your wife. That's a euphemism. Go home and sleep with your wife. But David realizes after a while that this guy is going to be a problem.

Because David realizes that Uriah turns out to be more godly than David. He refuses to sleep with his wife. It's amazing how God just intervenes and prevents us from covering up our clever little ways of evading the consequences of our sin.

Verse 11 and verse 12. Lord, Lord King, Lord King, I can't sleep with my wife. All of my colleagues, your commander, Job, they're all out there sleeping on the ground, sleeping in tents in the battlefield.

I can't sleep with my wife. That would not be appropriate. I will not do this thing. Drat, says David to himself. What a pity that Uriah is such a godly man.

[ 25 : 23 ] What am I going to do? Aha. Plan 2. Verse 12 to verse 13. I'm going to get him drunk.

So again, no confession of sin. No asking for forgiveness. Let's get Job drunk. Send him to sleep with his wife. That's going to work. So, instead of confession, David goes to all these extraordinary lengths to cover up his sin.

He tries to send Uriah home. It's not going to work. Right. Sit down. Here's some Johnny Walker, whatever. Why don't you down this Johnny Walker double black?

Download. Have as much Johnny as you like. Uriah. Uriah. And Uriah drinks and he drinks and he drinks. And guess what? Uriah is more godly drunk than David is sober.

He still won't go home. And David is starting to gnash his teeth. He's starting to rub his hands together because he realizes that this whole situation is getting away with him and everything is running out of control.

[ 26 : 30 ] More drastic action is needed. What am I going to do? And of course, plan three is murder. Verse 14 to verse 27.

He's tried everything. Twice. He's tried to avoid the repercussions of sin. And now we come to plan three. And this section begins again with more sending and sending and sending and sending.

David is sending and sending. He's trying to control the fallout. We don't need to go into detail, but we know what happens, don't we? David sends Uriah back to the battlefield with his own death warrant in his pocket to Job the commander.

It's hard to believe, isn't it, that David is God's chosen king. Little did Uriah know that his own death warrant was in the letter. And the letter from David to Job essentially reads, Take this guy.

Take Uriah. Put him in the front line. Go right up against the wall of the city. Put him right there where the fighting is the worst. In verse 15, make sure that he dies. Oh, it's a terrible story.

[ 27 : 36 ] So the faithful and godly Uriah is killed. He's murdered. And I want you to note one more detail of the murder. Job later reports back to David.

Uriah was killed in verse 24. And how does David reply to Job in verse 25? In the original language, literally, Do not let this thing be evil in your eyes.

And what is the end of the account going to tell us at the end of chapter 11? But the thing that David had done was evil in the Lord's eyes. Come on, don't worry, Job.

Don't let this thing be evil in your eyes. But it was evil in God's eyes. See, it doesn't matter whether the things you do are evil or not in the eyes of your neighbor. But what does God think of what you're up to?

When nobody else is watching. So now we've got sin confronted from 11:27 to about 12:7. You know that famous verse, by the way, in Jeremiah 17, verse 9.

[ 28 : 44 ] The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick. Who can understand it? That is just so true, is it not? The heart is deceitful.

Think about your own heart. Above all things and desperately sick. Who can understand it? I, the Lord, search the heart and test the mind.

Now has God featured in the story so far? No. Throughout the story there's somebody that David has overlooked and that's God. Up to now God has been silent. God has been, he hasn't featured but of course God is watching.

Isn't that so? God might not obviously be intervening in your life right now. You might not have got an SMS this morning from heaven but God is watching, guys. We must never forget that. God is watching.

And I suspect now some time has passed since committing adultery. But you see, we don't have the last word. God will always have the last word. Whether in this life or on the day of judgment.

[ 29 : 54 ] Up to now David has been doing all the action. You see that? David is sending. David is sending. David is sending. Guess what's going to happen now? God's going to do some sending. Now God's going to do the final sending.

And he sends Nathan the prophet to speak to David. David thinks, I'm home. I'm safe. I'm free. I organized it. But look at 11:27.

The thing that David had done was evil in the Lord's eyes. So sin has been conceived. Sin has been covered up. Sin has remained unconfessed. To Samuel 12 and verse 1.

Now God sends Nathan the prophet to confront David. Now this is very, very interesting. Because instead of saying to David, you've sinned. Which is what I would expect Nathan to do.

What does the prophet say to David? But what does the prophet do? He tells him a story. Isn't that odd? Weird. Tells him a parable. You say, but why tell him a parable?

[ 30 : 55 ] Think about that. And at this point, while you're thinking about it, let me ask you. How bad is sin? I mean, how bad is sin?

Well, I think this account gets us readers to ask. To what extent, to what extent can human beings, even good, well-intending human beings, suppress the truth and try and cover things up?

How bad are we? Is the heart really that bad? I mean, look at your own life. You know, it seems that David has buried this knowledge of the sin to such an extent that he's probably almost forgotten about it.

You might say, no, Mark, that's not possible. He killed somebody. Well, I think that the reason why Nathan has got to tell David this little parable is to get David to remember.

And you know the parable, don't you? Nathan comes along and says, good morning, David. Good morning, prophet. Do you want some coffee? No, no, I've just come to tell you a story. Let's hear it. There's this very, very rich guy who's got a big palace and a big place.

[ 32 : 02 ] He's got lots of money and lots of cattle. And there's a very poor dude living down the road. And all he's got is a little ewe lamb. And he loves this ewe lamb. And he treats it like his daughter. And he brings a little ewe lamb.

And he sleeps with it at night in the winter to keep it warm. And it's a wonderful little ewe lamb. And David says, yes, yes. And then Nathan says, guess what? The rich guy took the ewe lamb, killed it, and ate it.

What? What? Says David. Are you kidding me? That rich guy is a disgrace. He ought to die.

And then the word of God, Nathan drops the bomb and says, you're the rich guy. And everything just comes crashing down into David's world.

This little ewe lamb was like a daughter to the poor man. Do you know what daughter is in Hebrew? Bath. The lamb was his bath.

[ 33 : 00 ] The lamb was his Bathsheba. David suddenly realizes, thank God, that the word of God smashed through into David's consciousness in his life.

You know, one of the greatest gifts that God can give you is an awareness of your own sin. Now we've got the climax there in 12 verse 7. You are, you are the man. And David is shattered. Smashed by the word of God. The word of God is very powerful. Hebrews 4 and verse 12. What do we read? The word of God is living. It's living and active. It's sharper than any two-edged sword. Piercing to the division of soul and of spirit. Discerning the thoughts and the intentions of the heart. And that's exactly what happens when David comes under the word of God. And he confesses and he wrote Psalm 51 about that, by the way. But note what Nathan says further to David in verse 9. [ 34 : 01 ] Why have you despised? Despised. That's a powerful word. Why have you despised the word of God, David?

You know, earlier on in the account, in 1 Samuel, when Goliath faced David, what does it say about Goliath when he looked upon David? He despised David. The evil, demonic Goliath. Despised David. David has become another Goliath. Can you believe it? So now let's bring things to a conclusion. What are the consequences of sin? Verses 7 to verse 15 of chapter 12. How does the story impact us? Two quick observations. I think the story looks backwards. And I think the story looks forward. So let's see how the story looks backward. [ 35 : 02 ] Well, I've already suggested that it points us back to another great time. Another great temptation, doesn't it? To that of Adam and Eve. Another nakedness. Another taking. Adam and Eve.

Genesis chapter 3. It reminds us that we're all sinners, are we not? We're all like David. We're all without Jesus and his help and the help of the Spirit. We're all subject to the same temptations. And we are capable of the most terrible, heinous sins. All of us. Many of us know what that is like. Maybe right now in your life you're guilty of serious sin. That is unconfessed. You're sitting here today and you think that you can cover it up. Whatever it is. Maybe it's sexual sin. Maybe it's theft. Maybe it's pornography. Maybe it's lying, manipulating people.

Remember, sin is always caught out. One way or the other. David's story might be your story, you see. We all need to ask ourselves, what sins are we covering up this morning? [ 36 : 02 ] Because, you see, like David, we're not up to ruling ourselves and we're fooling ourselves and we think that we can control our sin and control our lives. You need to be aware of that.

You cannot worship God and sin. You cannot serve God and pornography and sexual porneia. Sexual immorality. Points us back to Adam and even reminds us that we are outside of God's grace, capable of the worst possible sins. And then finally it looks forward. The story looks forward. Because Jesus, we know, is the son of Adam, but he is the son of David and the son of God. We know that. What's great about that? It means that despite David's sin, as bad as it was, the sins of God's leaders, the sins of God's kings, are not sufficient to deter God from his plan to save the world.

Isn't that wonderful? We might be in a broken world. We might be broken people. We might be broken leaders. But what I love about the story is that it points forward to Jesus Christ. [ 37 : 17 ] We're reminded that despite what David did, God is still building his church and the gates of hell will not prevail over it.

Despite the sins of his leaders. And we can thank God, can we not, that unlike David, Jesus was without sin. Jesus was tempted, but there was no sin in his mouth. He committed no sin. That's a wonderful comfort. It's a reminder to us today. If we are sinning and we are running away from sin, we need to come before the Lord and confess. But unlike David and unlike us, Jesus wasn't deceived and he did not fail. And that is why you can trust Jesus. Because if God can heal David, he can heal you and me. So I close with this. Perhaps on this day, you're struggling with sin, with some secret sexual sin or some other kind of sin. And maybe you have actually, without anyone's knowledge, you've become captive to your own secret sexual sinfulness. [ 38 : 27 ] Don't put your conscience to sleep. A conscience that worries us. A conscience, a Christian conscience is a great gift.

Listen to your conscience. Do something about it. Go and speak to your pastor. Come to the Lord in prayer. Remember that it is only through acknowledging and repenting of your sin today before Jesus.

It's the only way forward for healing. Amen. Let's bow for a few moments. Let's confess our sins to the Lord. And I'm going to pray.

And we're going to close. Spend a few silent moments in prayer. Think about our own secret sins. We try to cover up.

Let's bring those to the Lord. Let's bring those to the Lord. Let's bring those to the Lord. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away.

[ 39 : 52 ] through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

But those who honour me I will honour and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.  
Amen.