

Nathan Condemns David

2 Samuel 12:1-9, 13-15
SS Lesson for 02/06/2022

Devotional Scripture: Ezekiel 3:17-21

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: 2 Samuel 12:7

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

CONDEMN THROUGH MAKING SIN KNOWN (2 SAM 12:1-4)

Be led by the Holy Spirit to confront (1)

Be led by the Spirit because only the spiritual should attempt to restore those who have been caught up in sin (Gal 6:1)

Be led by the Spirit because it promotes peace (Rom 8:6)

Be led by the Spirit because the strong should bear with the failings of the weak (Rom 15:1)

Be led by the Spirit because restoring someone covers a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20)

Seek the conviction of the Holy Spirit (2-4)

Conviction through the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 1:4-7)

Conviction through the certainty of God's word (2 Peter 1:19)

Conviction to obey is to be counted righteous (Rom 2:13)

Conviction because God will punish those who do not obey (2 Thess 1:8)

Conviction because it is shameful to be disobedient (2 Thess 3:14)

Conviction because judgment starts with the family of God (1 Peter 4:17)

Conviction because no one knows the time when Jesus will come back (Rev 3:3)

CONDEMN THROUGH INDIGNATION (2 SAM 12:5-9)

Indignation because of the gravity of the sin (5)

God examines all and hates wickedness and violence (Ps 11:5)

The seven detestable things to God: pride, lying, violence, wicked heart, eagerness to sin, false witness and sower of discord (Prov 6:16-19)

The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23)

A man must reap what he sows (Gal 6:7-8)

Every work will be judged and if found lacking, loss will be suffered (1 Cor 3:12-15)

Indignation that leads to restitution (6)

Restitution through repayment (Luke 19:8)

Restitution for stealing (Ex 22:2-3)

Restitution through reconciliation (Matt 5:23-24)

Restitution through repentance (2 Cor 7:8-11)

Indignation because of guilt (7)

Guilt because evil causes war in our mind (Rom 7:23-25)

Guilt because there is a longing to clear oneself (2 Cor 7:10-11)

Guilt because it brings remorse at the knowledge of our weakness (Matt 26:75)

Guilt because it leaves us unworthy and seeking mercy from God (Luke 18:13)

Guilt because of the accountability and responsibility (Matt 27:3-5)

Indignation because of missed blessings (8-9)

Missed blessing that leads to death without knowledge (Job 36:12)

Missed blessing because of destruction through lack of knowledge (Hos 4:6)

Missed blessing that leads to eating the fruit of own ways (Prov 1:29-32)

Missed blessing by not recognizing the way to eternal life (John 5:38-40)

Missed blessing that leads to God's wrath and anger (Rom 2:8)

Missed blessing through rejecting God and His Holy Spirit (1 Thess 4:8)

CONDEMN TO BRING TRUE CONFESSION (2 SAM 12:13-15)

Confession of sin (13)

Confession acknowledges sins and leads to forgiveness (Ps 32:5)

Confession renounces sin and finds mercy (Prov 28:13)

Confession acknowledges that God is right in His judgment (Ps 51:3-4)

Confession of sins to God leads to forgiveness (1 John 1:9)

Confession along with repentance leads to healing (2 Chron 7:14)

Confession of being a stumbling block to others (14)

- Stumbling block by standing in the way of others entering the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 23:13)
- Stumbling block by misuse of freedom (1 Cor. 8:9)
- Stumbling block by not loving our brothers and sisters (1 John 2:10)
- Stumbling block because we are not perfect (James 3:2)
- Stumbling block by causing others to sin (Matt 18:6)

Confession because others will be impacted (15)

- Confession because of questions of guilt (John 13:21-24)
- Confession through prayer to God (Josh 7:4-8)
- Confession by questioning the cause of problems (John 9:2)
- Confession by calling to God for mercy (Ps 51:1-4)
- Confession by calling to God for forgiveness (Ex 32:30)
- Confession on behalf of family (1 Sam 2:17, 22-25)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

At the time of today's lesson, the Israelite army was fighting the Ammonites (Genesis 19:38; Deuteronomy 2:19). The date was about 990 BC. The particular backdrop for us is a siege of the Ammonite capital, Rabbah. This was located at the site of the modern city of Amman, Jordan. Situated at the sources of the Jabbok River, the city was about 40 miles east of Jerusalem. With a good general directing his army, a king could stay home to take care of administrative concerns or personal matters. King David had such a man in Joab (2 Samuel 8:16). Although not without ethical problems of his own (see 3:30), Joab was a fierce and unrelenting warrior, at that time very loyal to David. One day while home, David seemed to have been enjoying a nap on the roof (compare 1 Samuel 9:25). After waking, he began to walk around the roof (2 Samuel 11:2). The highest point in Jerusalem was Mount Zion. Next to the mount on the south side was David's palace, making his rooftop the second highest position in the small city (probable size: about 2,000 people within 12 acres). This is how David could have observed activity on a nearby rooftop (2 Samuel 11:2b). What David saw was the woman Bathsheba performing a ritual bath for purification (see 2 Samuel 11:4; compare Leviticus 15:19-24). David may have known Bathsheba's family, for her father was Eliam, thought to be the son of one of David's counselors Ahithophel (see 2 Samuel 11:3; 15:12; 16:23). King David's notice of Bathsheba quickly turned to lust. He ended up sleeping with her, which resulted in a pregnancy (2 Samuel 11:5). David tried to influence her husband, Uriah, to go to his own house before returning to battle. That way everyone (except David and Bathsheba) would think that the baby was Uriah's. But Uriah's sense of honor kept him from spending time with his wife (11:6-13). Little did Uriah know that his sense of honor sealed his fate (11:14-17), as he carried his own death warrant back to Joab. After Uriah's death, David took Bathsheba as his own wife. Nine months later, it looked as though David had gotten away with these crimes.

Key Verse: 2 Samuel 12:7

Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul'

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

12:1-6. Sometime after the birth of Bathsheba's son, **Nathan** the prophet told David a story of a **rich man** who, in spite of having everything, stole a **poor** neighbor's only **ewe** (i.e., female) **lamb** to provide a feast for a guest. Enraged, **David** pronounced that **the man who** would do such a despicable thing ought **to die**. Though the Law contained no such penalty for the theft of property, kidnapping was a capital offense and it may be that David viewed the taking of a pet lamb in this light (Ex. 21:16). In addition, he said, **the rich man** must restore **four** lambs for the one stolen for not even the rich man's death could compensate the poor man's property loss (Ex. 22:1).

12:7-14. Nathan's reply to all this was a bombshell: **You are the man! The LORD**, he said, had given **David** everything, but he had taken, as it were, the pet lamb of a poor neighbor (v. 9). **David** now would

suffer **the sword** as had **Uriah** and David's **wives** would be taken from him as Bathsheba had been stolen from **the Hittite**. This was fulfilled by Absalom (David's own son!) when he lay with David's concubines (16:22). But David's shame would be even greater because, in contrast with David's sin **in secret**, all these things would happen in the glare of the public eye, **in broad daylight**. One may wonder, perhaps, why David was not punished with death as he had so sternly advocated for the guilty man. Adultery and murder both were sufficient cause for the execution of even a king (Ex. 21:12; Lev. 20:10). The answer surely lies in the genuine and contrite repentance which David expressed, not only in the presence of Nathan but more fully in Psalm 51. David's **sin** was heinous, but the grace of God was more than sufficient to forgive and restore him, as **Nathan** could testify. And yet, though David could be restored to fellowship with his God, the impact of his sin remained and would continue to work its sorrow in the nation as well as in the king's life.

12:15-23. Shortly **after** the interview with **Nathan... the child** became terminally **ill**. Despite David's intense fasting and prayer the baby **died** within a week. Only then did **David** cease his mourning, wash, worship, and eat, contrary to custom and much to the amazement of **his servants**. David's response is classic: **While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept... But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again?** David attested to the irrevocability of death—its finality renders further petition absurd. **I will go to him**, David said, **but he will not return to me**. This reflects his conviction that the dead cannot return to life as it was. Rather it is the living who go to the dead.

12:24-25. Eventually another **son** was born to David and Bathsheba, one who bore a double name. Called **Solomon** ("peace") by them, **the LORD... through Nathan** named **him Jedidiah** ("loved by the **LORD**").

12:26-31. In the meantime, the Ammonite war went well for **Joab**. He had all but captured the Ammonite capital, **Rabbah**, having taken **the royal citadel** and the city's **water supply**. And now, in order that **David** might gain the credit for its fall, **Joab** urged the king to lead the final assault himself. This **David** did. He sacked the city of its wealth, including the 75-pound (**a talent**) golden **crown** of the Ammonite **king** (*malkām*, which could also be a reference to "Molech," the Ammonite god). David also put the survivors to slave labor (using **saws... iron picks, and axes** and working **at brickmaking**) and **returned** in triumph to **Jerusalem**.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Condemn through Making Sin Known (2 Sam 12:1-4)

1 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor.

2 "The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds.

3 "But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him.

4 "And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

Be led by the Holy Spirit to confront (1)

Be led by the Spirit because only the spiritual should attempt to restore those who have been caught up in sin (Gal 6:1)

6 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Be led by the Spirit because it promotes peace (Rom 8:6)

6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

Be led by the Spirit because the strong should bear with the failings of the weak (Rom 15:1)

15 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Be led by the Spirit because restoring someone covers a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20)

19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Seek the conviction of the Holy Spirit (2-4)

Conviction through the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 1:4-7)

4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

Conviction through the certainty of God's word (2 Peter 1:19)

19 And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Conviction to obey is to be counted righteous (Rom 2:13)

13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

Conviction because God will punish those who do not obey (2 Thess 1:8)

8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Conviction because it is shameful to be disobedient (2 Thess 3:14)

14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed.

Conviction because judgment starts with the family of God (1 Peter 4:17)

17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Conviction because no one knows the time when Jesus will come back (Rev 3:3)

3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

Condemn through Indignation (2 Sam 12:5-9)

5 So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!

6 "And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.

8 I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!

9 Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.

Indignation because of the gravity of the sin (5)

God examines all and hates wickedness and violence (Ps 11:5)

5 The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates.

The seven detestable things to God: pride, lying, violence, wicked heart, eagerness to sin, false witness and sower of discord (Prov 6:16-19)

16 There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19 a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23)

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A man must reap what he sows (Gal 6:7-8)

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Every work will be judged and if found lacking, loss will be suffered (1 Cor 3:12-15)

12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Indignation that leads to restitution (6)

Restitution through repayment (Luke 19:8)

8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Restitution for stealing (Ex 22:2-3)

2 "If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; 3 but if it happens after sunrise, he is guilty of bloodshed." A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft.

Restitution through reconciliation (Matt 5:23-24)

23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

Restitution through repentance (2 Cor 7:8-11)

8 Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it — I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— 9 yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

Indignation because of guilt (7)

Guilt because evil causes war in our mind (Rom 7:23-25)

23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Guilt because there is a longing to clear oneself (2 Cor 7:10-11)

10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

Guilt because it brings remorse at the knowledge of our weakness (Matt 26:75)

75 Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Guilt because it leaves us unworthy and seeking mercy from God (Luke 18:13)

13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

Guilt because of the accountability and responsibility (Matt 27:3-5)

3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. 4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." 5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Indignation because of missed blessings (8-9)

Missed blessing that leads to death without knowledge (Job 36:12)

12 But if they do not listen, they will perish by the sword and die without knowledge.

Missed blessing because of destruction through lack of knowledge (Hos 4:6)

6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

Missed blessing that leads to eating the fruit of own ways (Prov 1:29-32)

29 Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord, 30 since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, 31 they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. 32 For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them;

Missed blessing by not recognizing the way to eternal life (John 5:38-40)

38 nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. 39 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

Missed blessing that leads to God's wrath and anger (Rom 2:8)

8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

Missed blessing through rejecting God and His Holy Spirit (1 Thess 4:8)

8 Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

Condemn to Bring True Confession (2 Sam 12:13-15)

13 So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

14 "However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die."

15 Then Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill.

Confession of sin (13)

Confession acknowledges sins and leads to forgiveness (Ps 32:5)

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" — and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Confession renounces sin and finds mercy (Prov 28:13)

13 He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Confession acknowledges that God is right in His judgment (Ps 51:3-4)

3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

Confession of sins to God leads to forgiveness (1 John 1:9)

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Confession along with repentance leads to healing (2 Chron 7:14)

14 If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Confession of being a stumbling block to others (14)

Stumbling block by standing in the way of others entering the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 23:13)

13 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

Stumbling block by misuse of freedom (1 Cor. 8:9)

9 Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

Stumbling block by not loving our brothers and sisters (1 John 2:10)

10 Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.

Stumbling block because we are not perfect (James 3:2)

2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

Stumbling block by causing others to sin (Matt 18:6)

6 But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Confession because others will be impacted (15)

Confession because of questions of guilt (John 13:21-24)

21 After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me." 22 His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. 23 One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. 24 Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

Confession through prayer to God (Josh 7:4-8)

4 So about three thousand men went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, 5 who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted and became like water. 6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the Lord, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. 7 And Joshua said, "Ah, Sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan! 8 O Lord, what can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies?"

Confession by questioning the cause of problems (John 9:2)

2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Confession by calling to God for mercy (Ps 51:1-4)

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

Confession by calling to God for forgiveness (Ex 32:30)

30 The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

Confession on behalf of family (1 Sam 2:17, 22-25)

17 This sin of the young men was very great in the Lord's sight, for they were treating the Lord's offering with contempt. 22 Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 23 So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. 24 No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the Lord's people. 25 If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the Lord's will to put them to death.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Real Repentance

Two short sentences sum up much of chapter 12. The first is that spoken by Nathan: **"You are the man!"** (verse 7). The second is spoken by David: **"I have sinned against the Lord"** (verse 13). It is this second statement and its outworking which I wish to explore. Consider the following characteristics of David's repentance, simply stated here, and more fully expounded in Psalms 32 and 51, and evidenced in David's life.

(1) David's repentance was the culmination of a painful process, climaxing in the confrontation of David by Nathan. In our text, David's confession follows shortly after the account of his sin. But the text itself indicates that David's sin took place over a considerable period of time, slightly more than nine months by normal estimates. While our text only informs us of the time and events that have elapsed, Psalm 32 gives us some very pertinent insight into God's work in David's heart during this time:

3 When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away *as* with the fever heat of summer. 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin (Psalm 32:3-5).

In this psalm, David informs us that he was silent about his sin. David knew what he did was wrong, but he chose to persist for a time. He did not confess his sin, and the result was "pure hell." It is an amazing thing, but while sin has its momentary pleasures (see Hebrews 11:25), they are not as pleasurable for the saint as they are for the heathen. *The reason is that God's Spirit indwells the saint. As sin grieves the Spirit who indwells us, our spirit cannot take great pleasure in the sin either.* I am not saying there is no pleasure; I am saying that the pleasure is minimized by that which gives us joy in obeying God and enjoying fellowship with Him. The agony David describes finally brought him to cease his silence and confess his sins. His repentance was the result of a painful process, most of which took place privately.

This seems often to be the case. I am thinking of the "repentance" of Joseph's brothers, which Joseph brings about through the events described in Genesis 42-45. They clearly sinned against Joseph by selling him into slavery. (They may have salved their consciences by thinking that at least they didn't kill him as they had first conspired to do.) When Joseph rose to the second highest position in Egypt, he had the power to deal with his brothers any way he chose. When they came down to Egypt to buy grain, he could have easily gotten his revenge, but instead he chose to bring them to repentance. He did this by disguising his identity. (If he had wanted to get even with them, he would have told them who he was.) Joseph orchestrated events so that his brothers had to make a decision almost identical to the one they had made years before. He put his brothers in a situation where they could hand over Benjamin, abandoning him as a slave in Egypt, or they could all stick together and seek to save him. Judah, who had recommended the sale of Joseph as a slave, now offers himself as a slave so that Benjamin may return to Jacob, his elderly father. This is real repentance. *Real repentance not only regrets having done what is wrong* (Joseph's brothers regretted the evil they did to Joseph earlier in the story -- 42:21-22), *it will not repeat the same sin if given the chance to do so.* Joseph gave his brothers the chance, and this time they chose to do what was right. Real repentance is often the result of a long and painful process.

(2) David's repentance was expressed by an unqualified confession of His guilt before God. The brevity and simplicity of David's confession is most impressive. Saul's confessions were not simple, straightforward. Today, he would have had a lawyer (and a press agent) draft his words for him. David takes full responsibility for his sins; Saul seeks to place the blame on others, or at least to share it with others. David confesses his sin as sin, without any excuses, without any finger pointing toward others. He sees his sin as against God.

(3) David took his sin very seriously. Saul constantly sought to minimize his sin, to make it appear less sinful than it was. David did the opposite. Psalms 32 and 51 indicate to us that David gave his sin a great deal of thought, and the more he reflected on it, the more heinous it was. Since these psalms were preserved for worship and for posterity, David's sin and his confession became public knowledge. Ultimately, his sin was against God, God alone. This is not to diminish the evil he had done to Uriah and Bathsheba. *Sin is the breaking of God's law, and in this sense, all sin is against God, for it breaks His laws.* Crimes are offenses against people, but sin (in this highly specific sense) is only against God, in that it breaks His laws. David had broken at least three laws. He coveted his neighbor's wife, he committed adultery, and he committed murder (Exodus 20:13, 14, 17).

(4) David did not expect any of his good works to offset or reduce the guilt of his sin. We come now to one of the great errors of all time -- the false assumption that God grades on the curve. It is commonly thought (or, more accurately *assumed*) that men need only outnumber their sins with their good deeds. If they do more "good" than "evil," then they believe that, on the whole, they are more good than bad, and thus qualified to be accepted by God. They do not understand that the kind of righteousness God requires of men is perfect obedience to His Word. One failure is all it takes to make us unrighteous, and thus worthy of death:

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all (James 2:10; see also Matthew 5:19; Galatians 5:3).

David was a man after God's own heart. He loved God's law. The hand of God was upon him in nearly all he did. Overall, David's life was an example for us to follow, setting a standard for which we should strive. His sin regarding Uriah and Bathsheba was clearly the exception, rather than the rule:

Because David did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite (1 Kings 15:5).

If there was ever a man who could have pointed out that his good deeds outweighed his sins, it would have to be David. But instead, we find David confessing his sin, avoiding all reference to anything good he had done, knowing he deserved God's wrath.

3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, **So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge** (Psalm 51:3-4, emphasis mine).

(5) David did not presume upon God's grace, expecting to be forgiven and to have his life spared. There are those who plan and purpose to sin, believing that God is obligated to forgive them, no matter what. They think that going through some ritual, through repeating some formula, they will then automatically be forgiven, and that life can go on, just as it was. Those who presume upon God's grace in forgiveness confess their sins on the one hand, while planning to repeat them on the other. David confesses his sin against God, and then asks for nothing. He knows what he deserves, and he does not ask to escape it.

In this way, David is like the prodigal son of the New Testament:

17 "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18 'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."' 20 "So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate (Luke 15:17-24).

This son "messed up" completely, and he knew it. He had deserted his family and spent his inheritance. He had no claim to his forsaken sonship. But this son knew his father, and that being his slave was better than being a slave to his heathen employer in that distant country. And so he returned home, confessing his sin and hoping for nothing more than to become a hired servant. The father's response was gracious, for he gave to this young man what he did not deserve. David, like the prodigal, knew he did not deserve God's forgiveness or His blessings, and so he did not even ask. He only confessed his sin.

(6) David's repentance resulted in a renewed joy in the presence and service of God, and a commitment to teach others to turn from sin. From Psalm 51, we know that David prayed for a renewal of his joy in the Lord (51:8, 12). We have every reason to believe that he was granted this request. In addition, David now desired to teach others:

Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You (Psalm 51:13).

David will now be teaching sinners as a repentant sinner. His teaching will seek to turn sinners from their sin. How different this is from the wicked, who seek to entice others to follow them in their sin:

And although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them (Romans 1:32).

I am reminded of Simon Peter, whose denial our Lord foretold, along with these words of hope:

31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, **when once you have turned again**, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31-32).

Peter was cocky, impatient, and impulsive before the cross and before his denial of our Lord. Having failed miserably and received the grace of God, Peter was restored. It was then that Peter's ministry truly began. There is a sense in which God uses our sin to instruct others. This may be as others observe the painful outcome of our sin (Proverbs 19:25), or by observing the restoration and deepened sense of God's grace that is produced in the life of a repentant and restored sinner.

(7) David's divinely wrought repentance produced fruit worthy of repentance. God responded to David's repentance with grace, and thus David responded graciously to those who wronged him and repented. When Absalom rebelled against his father and was about to take over the kingdom, David fled from Jerusalem with those who followed him. As he was leaving the city, a man named Shimei came out to curse David and to throw stones at him (2 Samuel 16:5-8). Abishai wanted to cut off his head, but David would not allow him to do so.

When David returned to Jerusalem, one of those there to meet and welcome him was Shimei, who confessed to David that he had sinned in what he had done earlier (2 Samuel 19:16-20).

Abishai once again wanted to execute Shimei, and this time he had a biblical reason. He called attention to the fact that Shimei had cursed David, the King of Israel. The Law of Moses forbade cursing a ruler of the people (Exodus 22:28). Technically -- or should I say *legally* -- Shimei should have been put to death, but David forgave him and granted him his life. In so doing, David dealt with Shimei in the same gracious manner God had dealt with him. This incident reminds us of the story our Lord told about the unforgiving slave (see Matthew 18:23-35), whose great debt had been forgiven by the king but who refused to forgive the smaller debt of his fellow-slave. Those who have truly experienced God's grace manifest this same grace toward others. The grace David received as a result of his repentance he showed to a "repentant" Shimei.

(8) David's repentance produced enduring fruit: David forsook his sin and did not repeat it. There are those, like Pharaoh and like Saul, who seem to repent, but their repentance is short-lived. It certainly did not take Saul long to take up his efforts to kill David, or Pharaoh to again resist Israel's departure from Egypt. This is because their repentance was not real. Indeed, their repentance was simply the path of least resistance, the way to stop the pain of the moment. Stuart Briscoe differentiates between false repentance and real repentance:

"I remember a friend of mine in England who said something to me long ago. 'Baby repentance is *sorry* for what it has done. Adult repentance is *regretful* for what it is. If I am merely sorry for what I have done. . . I will go out and do it again."

David manifested "adult repentance." He saw his sin for what it was, and he was genuinely regretful. As a result, he did not repeat the sin.

Forgiveness Granted (12:13b)

And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.

What David did not dare to ask for, he received. What a wave of relief must have swept over David as he heard these words from Nathan, "**The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.**" David had condemned himself in his response to Nathan's story of the stolen and slaughtered pet lamb (2 Samuel 12:1-4):

Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die (2 Samuel 12:5).

Legally, of course, the Law of Moses would only have required four-fold restitution from the culprit of Nathan's story (Exodus 22:1). But David should have died, both for his adultery and for the murder of Uriah.

Under the Law of Moses, David had no hope. He was a condemned man. He was a dead man! How, then is it possible for Nathan to tell David that he will not die? You will notice the promise that David will not die follows this statement: "**The LORD also has taken away your sin.**" David's "salvation" from divine condemnation, like ours, did not come from law-keeping, but by grace. And the reason David's sin could be forgiven was because the Lord had taken it away.

This "taking away" of sin is not some magic trick, where God simply takes the sin of David and makes it disappear. It has been "taken away." I believe Nathan's statement can only have been made on the basis of the sure and certain work of Jesus Christ, on the cross of Calvary, centuries later. On the basis of the work of Christ on Calvary, David is forgiven. His sins were borne by our Lord, and thus God's justice was satisfied.

The expression, "**has taken away,**" in verse 13 of the NASB, would be literally rendered, "**caused your sin to pass away,**" as you can see in the marginal note. It is a common verb, often used with the sense of passing through or passing over, such as when the Israelites passed through the Red Sea. Here, the term is causative (Hifil) in the original text, so that the rendering, "**caused to pass over or away,**" is found. Both the New King James Version and the original King James Version render it "**put away.**" I believe the Hebrew word found in our text is twice employed elsewhere in the Bible in a way that closely approximates the sense of the term in our text.

8 Then Abner was very angry over the words of Ish-bosheth and said, "Am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? Today I show kindness to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hands of David; and yet today you charge me with a guilt concerning the woman. 9 "May God do so to Abner, and more also, if as the LORD has sworn to David, I do not accomplish this for him, 10 **to transfer the kingdom** from the house of Saul and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba" (2 Samuel 3:8-10, emphasis mine).

The king took off his signet ring which he **had taken away** from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman (Esther 8:2).

In both these cases above, the same Hebrew term we find in our text is used to describe the “transfer” of something from one person to another. The kingdom of Israel was transferred from Saul to David (2 Samuel 3:8-10). The king's ring, giving a subordinate the authority to act on the king's behalf, was taken from Haman and given to Mordecai. The ring was transferred from one person to another. David's sin was forgiven, and he was assured he would not die because God had transferred his sins. This transfer took place centuries later, when David's “son,” the Lord Jesus Christ, died on the cross of Calvary. David's sins were borne by our Lord, and He paid the penalty for what David had done. David would not die for his sin because Christ was destined to die, bearing the penalty for them.

Nathan speaks of this transfer as though it was a past event. Old Testament prophets often used the past tense to speak of a future event. They did this, it would seem, to emphasize the certainty of the prophesied event. When God promises to do something, it is as we say, “as good as done.” When the prophets spoke of God's future promises, they often did so by employing the past tense. Even centuries before the birth and death of Christ, men were granted forgiveness, based upon this event. David was forgiven because Christ died for his sins on the cross of Calvary. This is the only basis for forgiveness. David rightly confessed that he had sinned against God, and now Nathan assures David that his sin against God has been forgiven by God, through the sacrificial and substitutionary death of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. This has always been the only basis for the forgiveness of sins.

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/12-real-repentance-2-samuel-121-13>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

There is always a temptation when reading a story to put oneself in the shoes of the hero. I would run into a burning building to save a child. I would step in if I saw blatant discrimination in front of me. Of course I would be Nathan, confronting the sins of the powerful. But there is much to be gained by resisting the urge to identify with the hero. And if we're being honest, we are frequently more like David than a hero. We think our sins have passed by without consequence, that maybe even God didn't notice. We squash any gnawing guilt. If no consequences manifest themselves, we must have been forgiven! Let David's story warn us against such attitudes. Our sins have consequences in others' lives. And sins we ignore instead of confess harden our hearts to other sins, making us complicit in the wickedness of others. The tendency to abuse our own influence must constantly be held in check. We must be willing not only to hold others to account but also to listen when Christian brothers and sisters do the same for us. By doing so we will fulfill the words of Christ: “First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye” (Matthew 7:5).

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

Greed - King David committed adultery with Bathsheba. She sent word to David that their sexual encounter produced a child. He took it upon himself to handle the situation by murdering her husband, Uriah. For months, David attempted to cover it all up. However, God revealed David's immoral, murdering activities to the prophet Nathan. God's messenger confronted David concerning his injustice. To ward off the king's defensiveness, Nathan told David the story of a pet lamb. Nathan's story reported the greediness of a wealthy sheep owner. The owner of the household needed meat to prepare a meal for a traveling guest. Rather than taking a lamb from his own large flock, he stole a poor man's only pet lamb and slaughtered it. David was outraged and demanded the death of the rich man. After the lamb story, Nathan delivered the shocking news to David—you are that man! Nathan listed the wealth and blessings God had done and given to David, then pointed out David was the greedy person in the story.

Confession - David confessed before Nathan. He refused to make any more excuses or engage in any other cover up plans. David admitted he had sinned against the Lord. David's confession demonstrates why God called him, not a perfect man, but a man after God's own heart.

Repentance - Injustice can dramatically affect an entire family, community, or nation, ultimately causing harm to innocent people. Like a cancer, it needs to be cut out. Will we submit to the needed surgery?