

## What's the Message – Lesson 55

We conclude our study of the book of second Samuel, and see many problems in a dysfunctional family.

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Savior. Our prayer today is one attributed to King David, the first verses of Psalm 71: *In thee, O Lord, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame! In thy righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline thy ear to me, and save me . . . for you are my rock and my fortress.* Amen.

Teacher, there is something about our last lesson that has bothered me. We talked about David as being a faithful man of God, and yet he was an adulterer and a murderer. He had two wives at the time he had his affair with Bathsheba, and he planned the death of Uriah so that it would look like a casualty of a war. Saul was rejected by God for acts that seem far less serious than what David did. How can this be?

You are right about the faults of David. He was guilty of all those things, and more. So what's the difference between Saul and David? Although Saul was sorry when he was confronted with proof of his wrongdoing, he exhibited more of a "sorry I was caught" attitude. On the other hand, David's repentance was sincere. After the affair with Bathsheba, David is attributed with writing Psalm 51, which begins with these words: *Have mercy on me, O God . . . according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.* Then, starting with verse 10, we find words that are often included in our Sunday morning service liturgy, words that many of us sing on Sunday mornings:

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

This is the kind of person God can use for His ministry. None of us are perfect, and this definitely applies to our spiritual forefathers. They were just as imperfect as we are, but they knew to turn to God for the strength to overcome their weaknesses.

Thanks for that clarification. As you have said many times, if God can use the imperfect leaders in the Bible, He can certainly use us, too. But, as we shall see, even though God may forgive our sins, the consequences of our behavior may remain for years and generations.

David had many wives, and many children, and that led to a dysfunctional family if there ever was one. An example by David had been established, and it was followed by his sons. First there was the incest rape of Tamar, full sister of Absalom, by Ammon, another son of David. This led to a plot for revenge, that was carried out two years later, and Ammon was murdered on the order of Absalom. To save his own life, Absalom fled from the land of Israel, and stayed away for three years.

Then David was tricked into allowing Absalom to return to Israel, but he was prohibited from coming into the presence of the king. For two years this situation continued, but then the two men were reconciled – or so it seemed. However, Absalom used this grace period to gather strength and many followers, and “stole the hearts of the men of Israel.” Four years later, Absalom believed he had gained enough strength to revolt against his father, and it was David and his inner circle that were now on the run.

This is all recorded in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel chapters 15 through 18, but to make a long story short, in the end it was Absalom who was killed and this revolt was ended. But not the continuing plots over who would succeed David as king. Another son of David, born next after Absalom, felt that he should be the next king. This son was named Adonijah, and in time he set out to have an official ceremony to proclaim his accession to the kingship.

But as we read in the book of first Kings, chapter one, the prophet, Nathan, got wind of this plan, and went to Bathsheba to plot a counter plan so that her son Solomon would actually be the successor of David. At the royal order, Solomon rode on David’s mule to the official anointing ceremony with the blessing of King David, and the attempt of Adonijah to steal the throne was thwarted.

So, with this summary we have reviewed the end of David’s rule as King of Israel. Once again I have to say that it is a fascinating story of intrigue, with plots and counterplots. But what is the importance of all this to us today? What’s the message we can take from this?

As you stated earlier in this lesson, our sin can be forgiven by God, but the consequences of our actions can remain for years. In chapter 12 of second Samuel, the prophet Nathan told David: *Thus says the Lord, behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house . . .* and that is exactly what happened. Just like David, God will indeed forgive our sins, but we may still face some of the unpleasantness that results from our actions. Absalom and Adonijah both sought the kingdom for themselves, counter to the sworn promise David had made to Bathsheba concerning her son, Solomon. Both perished as a result, and Solomon was made king, succeeding David before his death.

There are examples here for us, to guide our lives. Some times we can learn more from the negative examples than from the positive ones. That is, if we see the wisdom in not making the same mistakes these ancient people did. The question is: will we learn?

Next time we will continue our study of the first book of the Kings, and the reign of Solomon.