

David's Spiritual Idleness

2Samuel 11:1- 27 (Key verse 1)

*"In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. **But David remained in Jerusalem**"*

David is known as the man after God's own heart. He is close to God and is known by God. He has shown God's kindness to others and was even eager to show kindness to the king of an unbelieving nation. We have seen the heart of God in David and it through his family that our saviour king Jesus will be born. God even promised him that his kingdom will last forever. He was in a wonderful relationship with God that I cannot even mention all his life of faith. However, In today's passage, we learn about how David fell into sin. We want to learn 'why did David fail so miserably?' How can we overcome our lust problem? we want to find out how we can avoid falling into David's problem.

Let us look at verse 1, "In the spring, **at the time when kings go off to war**, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. **But David remained in Jerusalem.**" It was spring time however not only was it spring time, it was also time for kings to march out to war. However, what did David do instead, we see that David remained in Jerusalem. Why did David remain in Jerusalem instead of going to war? In the previous chapter David gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan fought the Arameans, killed seven hundred of Charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. The Arameans got even afraid to help the Ammonites anymore. David was at the forefront of these battles for the glory of God. His victories was because of God who was with Israel. These battles were not juts physical but had spiritual significance. They were spiritual battles because they are concerned about the expansion of God's kingdom. However, verse 1, reveals something fundamentally wrong with David spiritually. It says at a time kings go off to war, David sent Joab out while he remained in Jerusalem. What could have made David remain in Jerusalem? What could have made him not go for war with the armies of God? Either he felt successful over the past victories and wanted some rest and peace of mind or perhaps he was getting old and weary. Either way, David made a compromise by sending Joab instead of himself leading in this battle. This compromise led to other comprises which dug David into a deeper and bigger hole. It is from this very decision, choosing to remain in Jerusalem instead of going to fight that leads David to fall. In other words David became spiritually idle, thinking that he could find rest by remaining in Jerusalem instead of leading the battle with the armies of God.

Let us now see how remaining in Jerusalem begin to cause further problems. Firstly, David's problem of complacency and laziness. Look at verse 2a, "One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace..." David walked around on the roof, walking around shows that David was actually having a free time, even though Israel was fighting a great battle which David was supposed to be leading. This means that David became lazy and instead had a nice free time instead of going to fight. This pleasure seeking spirit brought a difficult temptation upon David. Second problem, lust. While on top of his roof David encountered something, let us look at verse 2b, "...From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful." What David saw brought a bad chain reaction from David. The bible says the woman was very beautiful, and so David could not resist, so he sent and inquired about the woman. He was told that she was Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite [3]. Who is Eliam? in Samuel 23:34b reads "...Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite" Eliam was one of David's mighty thirty seven generals. Bathsheba was a grand daughter of Ahithophel. While Ahithophel was one of David's closest advisers. Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and this Uriah was also one of David's mighty thirty seven generals. So Bathsheba was related to these two mighty general's of David through marriage. We shall see later that though Uriah was a Hittite, he somehow became to have faith in the God of Israel. David had enough reasons to turn way and let go of what he was trying to pursue. Because, firstly she was a married woman and secondly she was related to David's mighty men, in fact Uriah her husband was busy serving king David and Israel through the war.

However, why did David even enquire of her? It is clear that David enquired of her because the woman was very beautiful. Worse part she was bathing probably naked. David must have looked so intensely at her that she could not but resist to inquire about her. David could have just let it go and returned back to his house. However, David lusted after Bathsheba because the only reason he enquired about her was because of what David saw, a very beautiful naked woman. It is said that at this point David had about 7 wives and around 20 concubines. So David has been having this lust problem ever since. However still having many wives and concubines did not resolve his lust problem. So to the unmarried, you should never think that marriage will solve your lust issues. When David continued to watch Bathsheba his lust for her grew all the more, it did not matter how many wives or concubines he had. How could David be in this situation? It was because David was

October 2021

South Africa

seeking rest carnally instead of joining and leading a spiritual battle with Israel, he then could not fight off his lust for Bathsheba. His main problem was not lust but to remain in Jerusalem by being spiritually idle. The bible teaches us that, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." [Eph 6:12]. We are up against a spiritual battle and if we compromise by choosing not to fight but remain in our Jerusalem, then we fall prey to any evil spirit trying to destroy the meaning and purpose God gave us.

Look at verse 4-5, "Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. 5The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant." Now that Bathsheba had just come out of her periods. David probably thought his sin of adultery would not be discovered because it was unlikely that Bathsheba would fall pregnant since she had just come out of her periods. However lo and behold, Bathsheba fell pregnant. David did not only commit sin of adultery but had also caused Bathsheba to sin. This was an opportune time for David to repent of his sinful act and come clean, because how else would it be explained since Bathsheba's husband was at war yet she fell pregnant.

Yet again instead of fighting this spiritually, which is to rely on God, repenting and acknowledging wrong before God, David tries to fight this physically or carnally, by relying on his human strength. He started to think of covering up his sin the best way possible. David thought hard and long and finally came with a plan. **David's first plan, he planned for early return of Uriah.** He asked for Uriah to be brought from the war zone, let us look at verse 8 to see what David said to Uriah, "Then he said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." To wash your feet meant to go and be intimate with your wife. In this way Uriah and the people will think the conceived child is Uriah's. However, Uriah did the unexpected, instead of returning to his home Uriah slept at the door of the palace with all his master's servants [9]. Look at verse 10-11, "**David was told, "Uriah did not go home."** So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?" 11Uriah said to David, "**The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!**" Uriah was concerned about the ark, Israel, Judah, Joab and his soldiers. That the ark was in tents, his master Joab and the soldiers were camped in the open field. He understood that he was in a battle for God, that it was not the time to remain in Jerusalem, while a war was at stake, where the Ark and the people of God were busy in battle. The ark represented the presence of God, he also mentions Israel and Judah that they are staying in tents. So Uriah could not allow himself to be complacent and seek pleasure over a spiritual fight that was before him. Choosing to please the flesh at a time like this could never bring true rest and peace. Even to his very wife whom he had all the right to be intimate with. Uriah even says to David, with strong conviction, "as surely as you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do such a thing!" he was swearing on David's life and David's soul, because he saw David as a servant of God on a mission to bring glory to God and the nation of Israel. Yet David who was forbidden to indulge with a married woman, went ahead to satisfy his sinful lust at a time he was supposed to be fighting with Israel armies. David should have had Uriah's mind-set and determination to fight a spiritual battle.

David also crafted a second attempt to get Uriah to return to his home to his wife. From verse 12-13 we see that David then tried to get Uriah drunk thinking that he will return to his home, however after they had eaten and gotten drunk, Uriah returned to lie down on his cot with his master's servants and did not go home. **This then led David to his second plan to cover up his sin, David planned to have Uriah killed.** Through this plan it is clearly revealed that David did not have the fear of the Lord. Look at verse 14-15, "**In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. 15In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."** David wrote a letter to have Uriah killed and sent the very letter with Uriah. This was just unbelievable, on how David was so eager to cover up his sin. Joab did as David requested however not only did Uriah get killed, some of David's servants were killed in the process [16-17], including Abimelech son of Gideon. The men who died alongside Uriah were mighty men. Such that when Joab sent a messenger to inform David of the details of the battle, Joab believed that David's anger would flare due to the death of the other army soldiers who got close to the enemy wall [18-21]. Joab told his servant that if that was the case, then he was to inform David that Uriah the Hittite also died. When David was told of the battle news, indeed his anger was quenched when he was informed Uriah died in the battle. In this way the death of Uriah justified the death of the other innocent men. David allowed all these things in order to cover up for his sin. Because of his sin, he found it justifiable and acceptable that, not only Uriah be killed but that the other mighty soldiers also die.

October 2021

South Africa

Bathsheba mourned for her husband when she heard of his passing, look at verse 27, "After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord." **This was David's third cover up plan for his sin.** Since now everyone would believe that the son born to David was conceived after their marriage and not through adultery. Though David was able to cover up his wrong before the eyes of the people, the Lord God saw everything and the Lord was displeased with what David had done. David laziness and complacency to fight spiritual battles made him lose godly discernment. He used all means to cover up for his sin as though God was not seeing his actions.

The problem of lust is all around us for both men and women. Internet pornography can be our Bathsheba or walking on the roof. Satan is always on a lookout to discredit God's foundation. Though David was a man after God's own heart, he was not immune to falling into sin. However we learn that this all started because David chose to compromise, instead of going to battle for God he remained in Jerusalem. Instead of joining the battle of faith, he became complacent and lazy. What is our Jerusalem? That place we choose to remain at, when there is a clear call to fight the battle? Naturally it is easier to remain in our Jerusalem because we all want rest and peace. However, as we learned through David, choosing to remain in our Jerusalem results in becoming more restless. Jesus says in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Our true rest is found in Jesus, trying to find rest and peace our own way can only cause more unrest and can be fatal. It will lead us to fall into sin by idolising things or people such that lust becomes our saviour to achieve rest and peace. The consequences of sin can never be fixed, we live with the consequences of sin. Uriah and some of the soldiers who were killed, their lives can never be returned even if God ultimately forgives David. David also has left a godless leadership example for his men, he has weakened their fear of God in their service. Jesus has come to save us from the punishment of sin. However we still live with the consequences of our sin.

We should avoid David's main compromise, instead of avoiding a spiritual battle by remaining in our Jerusalem. By faith, through prayer and meditation on God's word we should struggle to seek true rest and peace from Jesus our Lord. There is nothing in this world that can give us peace and rest, it's all an illusion. Whatever struggle we are facing, issues with family, struggle with studies, fear to make a decision of faith or own personal sin struggles. Let us come to Jesus by faith, let us not look for a Jerusalem in this world but rather come to Jesus by faith. This is how we can fight our battle, because your natural sinful inclination always tempts us to seek for a Jerusalem to remain in. Remember the story of Jacob how he struggled to cross over and meet up with Esau. however he fought a spiritual battle with the angle of God and ultimately was able to cross over by faith. May we not block where God is trying to get us to by remaining in our Jerusalem. Let us study the word of God, meditate on it daily and by prayer present our issues to Jesus. This is how we can fight in the arena of faith. I pray that we may fear God, acknowledge his presence in our lives and come to Jesus daily for true rest and peace.

Secondly, we can go fight by taking Jesus yoke. This means we need to be intentional in taking God's mission of salvation work. Matthew 11:29-30 further says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Jesus yoke means his suffering to save all peoples on earth. It is the suffering that comes from teaching the word of God and struggling to obey his word in our daily lives. When we take Jesus' yoke upon us and participate in his suffering by teaching the word of God, I believe we can find true rest for our souls. We can escape the power of the sin of lust, laziness and spiritual idleness. Jesus says his yoke is easy and his burden light, what David chose was not easy and the burden was heavy in the end. He had committed adultery, killed his mighty men and made a bad spiritual legacy for his generals. I pray that we may take Jesus yoke intentionally, not because we have to, but because it is how we can learn from Jesus, it is how we can experience Jesus gentleness and humble heart practically. O lord help us take your yoke for it is easy and your burden is light.

In conclusion, one thing I realized is that, God's mission and calling is actually for our own good. Remaining In our Jerusalem instead of going out to fight will only bring us unrest after unrest. Because David chose to remain in Jerusalem and do his own thing, instead of fighting a spiritual battle, he found himself locked up in the sin of lust and endless loop of a worsening situation. As we saw this led to him to commit adultery, kill his own men and become bad leader for Joab his army commander. We can escape from committing David's mistakes by firstly, coming to Jesus for true rest and peace. Secondly, by intentionally carrying Jesus yoke by faith. All these require need us to really invest our time in the word of God, in prayer and testimony writing. This is how we can choose not to remain in Jerusalem but fight spiritual battles. I pray that we may not rely on our human strength or abilities but rather repent and come to Jesus and carry his yoke. Let us fear God rather than man, and choose to fight through prayer, repentance and obedience of the word of God. In this way God will truly give us peace and rest. Not only for us, but for others also. Amen.