

Does It Matter If I'm Faithful?

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I want to preach tonight on this subject from this passage and about this man, Uriah. I want to preach on this thought: does it matter if I'm faithful? Does it matter if I'm faithful? I have Uriah on my mind. I have heard a lot of preaching in the Old Testament and from this passage about David. I've heard a great deal of preaching about David not being where he's supposed to be. I've heard a great deal of preaching about David not being accountable. I've heard a great deal of preaching about David looking where he shouldn't have looked and thinking what he shouldn't have thought and all those messages are true and they are all needful. I believe it's important to be where God would have you to be. I believe it's important to guard your eyes and to guard your thoughts and to be careful what you look at, and there's a lot of preaching that needs to be done about David.

I've heard a great deal of preaching about Bathsheba. I've never understood this business about washing yourself on the roof of your house. It looked like there'd be a better place to do that. It looks like you'd want to have some modesty and do that in private. I may not understand all that's involved in what went on there but it just seems like common sense would say that you ought to cover yourself up and you ought to be careful in your deportment. We need some teaching about that even in our churches today about dressing and covering yourself up and not showing off parts of your body, and all that sort of thing. I say this to you young ladies that are here: if you advertise in a certain way, you're going to get what you advertised for. What you ought to do is live godly and dress modestly and let somebody be interested in you because of the inner man or the inner woman, because of that spiritual person. That's gonna be the best way to go about it.

And there ought to be a lot of preaching about Bathsheba, but I say this to you: there's a man in this story, in this account, that is often overlooked. His name is Uriah. He's part of this account and part of this story and there is a great lesson to be learned from Uriah and it's a lesson about faithfulness, it's a lesson about living for God. It's really a lesson for anyone who's ever felt used, or anyone who's ever been hurt, or anyone who has poured their life out into the work of God and suddenly there's something that happened, maybe it's in your family, maybe it's at your church, maybe it's through your children or your wife or your husband or some Christian brother or sister, and you got your heart broken and you got hurt and you looked at it and you said, "Was it worth it to live for God?" It might have been you were honest with somebody and they were dishonest with you. It

might have been that you were faithful to someone and they were unfaithful to you. It might have been that you were kind to someone and because of it they took advantage of you. It might have been that you gave someone your whole heart and they took it and cut it in little pieces and handed it back to you, and when you was done you looked at it and you thought to yourself, "It was a waste of time to love. It was a waste of time to be kind. It was a waste of time to do good. It was a waste of time to be faithful." I want to help you with that if I can tonight. I want to establish from the word of God and help our hearts and say to you emphatically tonight it does matter whether you're faithful. It does matter whether you live for God. It does matter whether you go on and do what God has told you to do.

I look at this man, Uriah, and I want to say a couple of things about him by way of introduction. First of all, I would say to you if we were to take one word and describe how Uriah lived, it would be this word: faithful. He was a faithful man. "So how do you know, preacher?" Well, let's look at his account in the Bible. I would say to you, first of all, he was a faithful husband, faithful to his wife. David has committed adultery with Bathsheba and there is a child that's been conceived, and so David wants to cover up the sin and so what he does is, he calls for Uriah to come home hoping that Uriah will go home to his wife and when the baby is born, David will say it's Uriah's and the whole thing will be covered. Now that plan did not work and we'll talk about why in a little bit, but here's the point I want to make: David would never have come up with that plan, he would never have considered that plan unless he believed in his heart that Uriah would go home to his wife. There was no question in David's mind that when Uriah came home from the battle, David did not think he'd go out carousing around the town or running around. David believed that he would go home to Bathsheba. So Uriah must have had a testimony as a faithful husband and a family man otherwise David would never have come up with this plan.

Then not only was he faithful to his wife but he was faithful to his king. When this deception did not work, David sat down and wrote a letter. He wrote out Uriah's death warrant. He folded that letter, sealed it with the king's seal, called in Uriah and handed it to him and said, "Take this to Joab." And do you know what Uriah did? He did exactly what he was told. He took the letter to Joab. Now David could not have done that and would not have done that if he had any suspicion that Uriah would open that letter and look at that letter.

By the way, can I just throw this in right here? I was reading a fellow, I can't remember who he was, it might have been S. D. Gordon, he made this statement, he said if you'll read your Bible and look at David and Joab's relationship after this takes place, you'll find out that on many occasions David had an opportunity and he had just cause to bring judgment upon Joab but it seemed like he always let Joab slide, and Mr. Gordon said it was because of the letter. They knew David had committed adultery but how many of them knew that David had ordered the death of Uriah? Joab had the letter and the point Mr. Gordon made was: who has your letter? Somebody does. Somebody knows what you've been up to. Somebody knows. You say, "Well, I've covered it up." No, somebody's got your letter and somebody knows.

David had a faithful man in Uriah, faithful to his wife, faithful to his king, and then faithful to his commander. Now remember what David said in the letter, David said, "Take Uriah, set him at the forefront of the battle where the hottest men, the valiant men are, and retire from him that he may be smitten and die." Now here's my question: how does Joab know where the hottest part of the battle is? How does he know where the valiant men are? He knows it because he is a veteran soldier. This is not Joab's first battle. He's fought many battles. He can walk around that city and tell where the roughest place is, the most dangerous place, and that's where he sends Uriah. But wait a minute, Uriah's not a raw recruit either. Uriah, if Joab knows where the hottest part of the battle is, then Uriah also knows where the hottest part of the battle is and yet Uriah, we don't read about him balking, we don't read about him disobeying orders, we don't read about him saying, "Hey, that's a dangerous spot there." We read about him obeying what Joab says to him. He was faithful to his commander.

Then he was faithful to his God. Why didn't he go home that night? Well, he tells us why back in 2 Samuel 11:10, "And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah," he said unto him, "Camest thou not from thy journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house? And Uriah said unto David," now watch this, "The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing." Uriah said, "I'll tell you why I didn't go home, because the ark." Do you know what the ark represented to every Israelite? The presence of God. And what he's saying is, "I'm not going home to my family while God is out on the battlefield. I love God. I'm faithful to God and if God's out on the battlefield, I'm not gonna go home. I'm gonna live a separated life, sanctified and consecrated unto God." You see, he was faithful. He was a faithful man.

Let me ask you a question: would you be considered faithful? Faithful? A lot of Christians are like a flash in the pan, they're there for a moment and then they're gone. But God puts a great premium on faithfulness.

Now here's the second thing I want you to see. I'm almost to the message. Can you hang on with me just a minute? If I were to use one word to describe how I thought about Uriah, how he lived, it would be the word "faithful," but then I want to use one word to describe how he looked in this story. From a natural viewpoint, from a human standpoint, from just natural logic, no supernatural instruction involved but just natural logic how did he look? He looked like they made a fool of him. The wife that he was faithful to committed adultery against him. The king that he was faithful to not only committed adultery with his wife but then had him murdered. The commander to whom he was faithful sent him to his death. He didn't send him into the battle to help win the battle, he sent him into the battle to die. And then here's this question now: where is God? How come God? Did you ever just hear somebody say this when someone has suffered, "How come God let that happen? How come God didn't stop that? Where is God anyway?" Here is a man who has been a faithful man and it looks like they've made a fool of him.

Now listen to me: somewhere along in your Christian life it's gonna look like you've been made a fool of. Somewhere along in your Christian life serving God someone will wrong you. It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when somebody will hurt you, somebody will let you down and when that happens and your heart is broken, the devil's gonna come by and he's gonna whisper in your ear and he's gonna say, "Boy, aren't you a fool? Look at what you've done. Look at how you've been faithful. Look how you poured your heart out and look where it got you and where's God anyway?" He's gonna say you've been a fool and it really didn't matter that you were faithful.

Well, let's ask the question: does it matter if I'm faithful? Should I go on when my heart's broken? When I've been let down? When I've been used? What should I do? Is it worth it to be faithful? Let me give you three reasons why it's worth it and why it matters whether you're faithful.

1. It matters because of grace. Because of grace. You say, "Preacher, what do you mean grace?" Alright, Uriah the Hittite, the Hittite. That's who Uriah is. He's a Hittite. He's not an Israelite, he's a Hittite. Who are the Hittites? If you go back to Genesis 15, God is making a promise to Abram that his children were going to be in bondage for a certain number of years and then he's gonna bring them out of bondage and he's gonna bring them into a Promised Land, and God says it's the land of, he names several people but the first crowd on the list is the Hittites. He said, "I'm gonna give you the land of the Hittites." He says, "Drive them out." Later on to Moses he said, "Drive them out." He said, "Destroy them all. Don't leave one of them alive." Somebody said, "Why would God do that?" Because a man, a woman, a nation can become joined to their sin until there is no remedy for them. That's why God said to Abram in Genesis 15, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full," he would say, "and they have not yet come to the point where there's no redemption possible but they will get there." And it was supposed to be that way as far as the nation of the Hittites. God said, "Don't leave one of them alive." You see, the Hittites were under the sentence of death. Uriah was born under the sentence of death. I don't know what happened, I don't know when it happened, I don't know if it was his great grandpa or his grandpa or his dad or him, but somewhere along the line there was a family of Hittites that were not judged in that judgment, they were not destroyed, and somewhere along the line they heard about the God of Israel and they said, "We're not gonna serve our heathen gods anymore. We're gonna serve the God of Israel." And when they did, they got grace and they got mercy. The truth of the matter is Uriah shouldn't be in this passage, he shouldn't be in Israel, he shouldn't have been married to Bathsheba, he shouldn't have been fighting for David, he should have been dead, but he had obtained mercy and grace from God and so I'm saying that he's already got better than he ever deserved.

You say, "Well, preacher, I've been wronged." Well, if you're saved, you've still got better than you ever deserve. You ought to be in hell tonight and so should I, but we ought to serve just because of what God's already done for us and he saved our souls and we're never going to hell. We've already enjoyed more than we ever should have enjoyed. People always say, "Well, I read this," oh, I'm trying to figure of a polite way, what's a polite word for idiot? I read this guy wrote this article about Christianity and about how

that Christians, he called it evangelical Christians. I don't know if that's what I am or not. I know I'm born again and I'm on my way to heaven, amen? He said the only reason they're good is so they won't go to hell and he said if not going to hell is the only reason to be good, it's a pretty lame reason to be good. I wouldn't argue with that but I want to tell you, I'm not trying to live right so I won't go to hell, I'm not trying to live right so I'll be accepted of God, I'm trying to live right because I'm not going to hell. I'm trying to live right because I'm saved. I'm trying to live right because God has already accepted me in the Beloved, in Jesus Christ. I'm trying to live right to say thank you for what God has done.

People all the time say, "Well, I'm not serving anymore. I didn't get thanked." Hey, you've got that thing all turned around. We're not serving so we'll get thanked, we're serving to say thanks. You don't sing in the choir so the choir director will say, "Thank you for singing in the choir." You sing in the choir to say thank you to Jesus for saving your soul. You don't read your Bible so someone will say thank you for reading your Bible. You read your Bible to say thank you that you're not lost anymore and you're going to heaven. You don't witness so somebody says thank you. Every time you witness, you're saying, "Thank you, Jesus, for saving my soul." You don't come to church so the preacher will say thank you. You come through those doors thanking God that you're saved and on your way to heaven. We serve as a thank you.

You see, we ought to be faithful whether God ever does anything for us because he's already done so much more for us than we could possibly deserve. He saved us, given us a home in heaven, washed away all our sins, made us part of the Beloved, I'm telling you, preparing a place for us. We'll have to take the rest of our lives and then the rest of our eternity just to say thank you for what God's done.

Do you know why people get out? Do you know why they quit? They forget what God's done for them. They forget how good he has been to them. Uriah has already experienced things that he should not have experienced and you and I, would you just take a moment and think about the things this year that you experienced that you had no right to experience, you never should have enjoyed them. Some folks in this auditorium, you were drunkards and some were dope addicts and some were immoral and some were thieves, who knows what all we were, we are all sinners and we ought to be in jail or in hell but, glory to God, here we are dressed up in the house of God and cleaned up. I remember where Paul said, "And such were some of you." That's what we were but it's not what we are anymore and we ought to just go ahead and serve God and every time we serve him say, "Thank you, Jesus, for what you've done for me!"

You see, Uriah was faithful because of grace and it matters whether you're faithful because of the grace of God. There's another reason it matters. Not only it matters because of grace but it matters because of grief. Grief. You say, "What do you mean, grief?" Well, I'm looking here at Uriah and I'm thinking about what took place in his life. We look at him and we say it was a grievous thing for him to die. Well, can I just say this to you? Dying is not the worst thing that could happen to a Christian. Charles Spurgeon

said this, he said, "For the Christian, death is not the house, death is just the porch that leads into the house." And the Bible talks about an abundant entrance into heaven.

Can you think about Uriah a minute? He's out there fighting the battle. He's just fighting a battle and all of a sudden he's dead and he walks into paradise and they look at him and they say, "Uriah? What are you doing here?" He said, "Well, I'm not sure." "Well, what were you up to?" He said, "Oh, I was doing what I love to do, I was fighting for my king and fighting for my home and fighting for my country and fighting for my God, and I was just doing what I was called to do and what I love to do and here I am in paradise." That's a pretty good way to go, amen?

Wouldn't it be wonderful, wouldn't it be wonderful, preacher, if we're gonna have to go, wouldn't it be wonderful just to go in the pulpit one day. I know a singer, I remember this singer, I remember him but I'm trying to remember his name. Help me, momma. Brother A. T. Humphries. I met him years ago up at the Midwestern Old Fashion Baptist Camp and I'll tell you why I remembered it. I was singing one day and I was hoarse. I'd been preaching and I was trying to sing and he pulled me off to the side and he said, "Brother McBride, let me tell you a secret." I said, "What's that?" He said, "If it hurts you to sing it, it hurts them to hear it." That's kind of how I was introduced to him.

But I remember him singing, he'd lead the singing, he'd get out and he'd say, "We're gonna sing by a let her." He'd just say, "Open up and let her fly." He'd say, "Drop your lower jaw and pump air." And he'd get up and he'd sing and he'd sing, "I sing because there is an empty grave. I sing because there is a power to save." One day A. T. Humphries was standing in the pulpit singing a special and he got done singing and he took a step off the side and went to heaven right there on the platform. Man, if you're going, that's a good way to go. Hallelujah?

I'm just saying here death is not the worst thing that could happen to you and I. Now let's think about Uriah and this grief. There's grief in the world. There's grief that I suffer, that's one thing, but then there's grief that I cause and that's another thing. I want you to think about this. This is a little outline within the outline. Are you listening now? I want you to think about how he left, Uriah, how he left this world. First of all, he left without hearing. He never heard, as far as I could tell, what they'd done. He went home not knowing what they had done.

Now did David hear anything? David heard when they came in and said, "The baby's dead." David heard when they came in and said, "Tamar has been raped by her half-brother, Amnon." David heard when they came in and said, "Absalom has murdered Amnon." David heard when they came in and said, "Absalom's coming to kill you and take the kingdom." You say, "Well, I tell you, Uriah got the short end of the stick." Did he really? He went home with joy in his heart serving his God. David had to hear about all of those things and all that sin and all of that wickedness. I'm gonna tell you the truth: it looks like Uriah got the better end of that deal.

He not only left without hearing but he left without hating. He never had the opportunity to get bitter against David. He never had the opportunity to hate David. Bitterness is an awful thing. It's a terrible thing. That's why Paul said, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." You say, "Well, why didn't God step in?" If he had stepped in and stopped Uriah from dying, then Uriah would have heard what David and Bathsheba had done and there's a possibility he would have had bitterness in his heart and he would have tried to get even with David. But he went home clean. He went home without any hatred.

But how did David live? David lived in a house filled with hatred. After Amon raped Tamar, the Bible said he looked at her and he hated her. And then the Bible said that Absalom would not speak, for two years he didn't speak to his brother. Do you know why? He was plotting his murder. And then Absalom plotted the murder of David. David was surrounded by hatred. I'd say Uriah got the better part of that deal.

He left without hearing, he left without hating, and he left without halting. He did not destroy his testimony. He went home clean. Are you listening now? What about David? What do you think of when you think of David? What does the world think of when they think of David? What did Nathan say about David? He said that God said, "By this you've given great occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme." What did Joab think of David? I'm gonna tell you something, friend, it'd be so much better to be hurt and go home clean than it would be to be filled with bitterness and hate and trying to get even and destroy your testimony before you leave this world. I don't want you to misunderstand me, I'm not looking to die but when I do go, I'd like to go clean and I would like that the grief that's in my life be grief that I have suffered rather than grief that I have caused.

Here's the last thing. Does it matter, does it matter if I'm faithful? It matters because of grace, it matters because of grief, and then it matters because of God. You see, God said, "Moreover it's required of stewards that a man be found faithful." Do you know what God loves more than your talent? Your faithfulness. Do you know what God counts as more important than your ability? Your faithfulness. God wants you to be faithful. Not everybody has the same talent, not everybody has the same ability. I get around this singing here, this crowd, hear you folks sing and I think to myself, "What in the world am I doing here?" But God didn't call me to have great talent, he called me to be faithful. That's what he expects of me. That's what he wants from me. That's what he'll reward me for, being faithful.

Now I'm thinking about Uriah and his faithfulness and I'll just give you this and I'm almost done, I've got a little P.S. to put on the end of it, but I'm almost done. I want you to look in Matthew 1 and you know these verses but let me read them to you anyway. This is the lineage of the Lord Jesus Christ, the genealogy of Christ. These are the earthly relatives of the Son of God and God's gonna go through and give us, one fellow called it a gallery of rogues but I like to call it the hall of fame. I mean, they're related to the Lord anyway. And so he goes through and he gives us these men but we get down to verse 6,

there's a man in this genealogy who humanly speaking and naturally speaking does not belong there because he really is not an earthly relative of the Lord. But in verse 6, "And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias." Wait a minute now. Uriah is not a relative of Christ, not an earthly relative, but here he is in the lineage. I tried to figure out why would God put him there and here's what I used to think, I used to think God put him there because he never forgot about that sin, but then I got reading back in 2 Samuel 11 and I read where Nathan said to David, "God hath put away thy sin," and I figured when God puts away your sin, he don't bring it up anymore. So it's not there, he's not there because of the sin. There's only one reason that he can be there, he's there because of his faithfulness. God said, "I don't ever want you to forget this servant of mine by the name of Uriah that lived a faithful life and went to his death serving me." God said, "I'm never gonna forget him and I don't want you to forget him." I'm telling you, it's important to God that you're faithful.

Alright, now let me put this little postscript on the end and I'll be done. If you study Bible numerology, that every number in the Bible has a meaning, you'll notice that Uriah's name is right next to a number in 2 Samuel 23. Uriah the Hittite, 30 and 7 in all. And I know the number refers to everybody but God didn't have to put Uriah's name last with the number right next to it. So what does 30 represent in the Bible? It represents dedication and especially the dedication to the blood of Christ. What does the number 7 represent? Perfection or completion. So if Uriah's name is right next to the number 37, we would expect that there'd be something about Uriah that would be a perfect example of the dedication of Christ.

So I'm thinking about that one day and I thought about this and you see it, maybe you wouldn't agree with this. Uriah reminds me of Jesus. How come? Well, first of all, because he died to cover the sins of another. Is that not right? His death was to cover up their sin. Do you know why Jesus died? To take care of my sin problem. You see, they killed Uriah so they wouldn't have to pay but, hallelujah, God the Father sent his Son so I wouldn't have to pay. His death and his burial and his resurrection is precious. God washed away my sin and made me free from condemnation.

Then I thought about this: the Bible said of Christ, "he was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before his shearer's is dumb, he opened not his mouth." Wouldn't that fit with Uriah? He never argued. He just went quietly to the place that they had set up for him to die.

Then I thought about this: the Bible tells us that Jesus was forsaken in his death, and that's what Uriah was, forsaken in his death. And we could go on but I think you're getting the point. So here's the point I'm trying to make, now don't miss this. Here's the point I'm trying to make: maybe the reason that the devil comes by when you've been hurt and you've been wronged and your heart is broken and it looks like you've been made a fool of, maybe the reason the devil always comes by right then to say to you, "Oh, you might as well quit. You don't want to serve God now. Where's God? He's let you down." Maybe the reason he does that is because he knows something that we've never realized and that is when our heart is broken and we've been used and we've been made a

fool of, that might be our greatest opportunity in life to let somebody see Jesus in us. It might be the best opportunity we've ever had for a testimony to the goodness of God and the love of God and so the devil says, "Quit!" because he knows you're in a good position right now with your heart broke to let somebody see Jesus in your life.

I'm trying to say to you tonight: it matters whether or not you're faithful. And if you've been wronged and you've been used and you seem like you've been made a fool of, the devil's gonna try and get you to quit but it's the greatest opportunity you'll ever have to let a lost world see Christ in you. So don't quit.

I want you to bow your heads a moment.