

Last week if you remember, I described chapter 11 as the darkest chapter in David's life, this week, in coming to chapter 12, we will begin to see the light shine upon David's darkness, not because of anything David does, but because of what God does.

Because God was displeased with what David did in chapter 11, He takes the initiative and sends His prophet Nathan to recover David in chapter 12. And thus, there are some obvious contrasts between chapter 11 and chapter 12. In chapter 11 David is in charge. He is active. He commits adultery, he deceives, lies, and murders. Largely speaking, David is the aggressor, the initiator.

But in chapter 12 God is the Actor and Initiator. Within chapter 12 David is no longer calling the shots. He is no longer in charge. Perhaps I can summarize this contrast this way—in chapter 11 David was the pursuer (as he sought after Bathsheba), whereas in chapter 12 God is the pursuer (as He seeks after David).

Thus, within chapter 12:1-25, there are four steps that lead to David's restoration: he was confronted (vv1-12), converted (v13), chastened (vv14-23), and comforted (vv24-25).

- I. He was Confronted (vv1-12)
- II. He was Converted (v13)
- III. He was Chastened (vv14-23)
- IV. He was Comforted (vv24-25)

I. He was Confronted (vv1-12)

1. David is confronted by God, through Nathan, in two stages—a parable, and then the application of that parable.
2. (1) A parable, v1—"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.'"
3. Nathan goes on to describe each of these men individually—the rich man had plenty sheep whereas the poor man had one lamb.
4. Because the rich man had many sheep, he didn't care about them so much, as there were too many to care for individually.
5. But not so with the poor man, for since he had only one ewe lamb, the lamb served as a beloved pet to him and his children.
6. V3—"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."
7. Then one day, a traveler come to the city and the rich man desired to feed him, but he refused to take from his own sheep, and instead took the poor man's lamb.
8. V5—"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!'"
9. This was the point of the parable—to arouse David to indignation against someone who would act in this way.
10. The next step, as we shall soon see, was to bring David to turn his indignation against himself, the true villain.
11. (2) The application of the parable—beginning with v7, Nathan makes application of the parable to king David.
12. V7—"Then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel'"—he then speaks directly for God all the way through v12.
13. By the phrase "You are the man" is meant, you are the man in the parable! You are the man you said deserves to die!
14. V5—"As the LORD lives the man who has done this shall surely die!" V7—"You are the man!" You deserve to die!

15. The LORD then points out three things to David—David's past blessings, David's recent sins, and David's future troubles.
16. (a) David's past blessings (vv7-8), v7—"Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 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!'"
17. The LORD reminds David of his past blessings—his anointing, deliverance from Saul, and enthronement over all Israel.
18. (b) David's recent sins (v9)—"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."
19. Here the LORD describes David's behavior as "despising the commandment of the LORD," that is, the commandment not to commit adultery and murder.
20. To "despise" is "to think little of"—to treat something with little value or esteem—David despised God's law.
21. This is what sin is—sin is despising God's law—it's treating God's law as if it has no great value or importance.
22. Whenever we sin, we are in essence saying, our desires are more important than the holy commandments of God.
23. (c) David's future troubles (vv10-12), v10—"Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife."
24. Notice, according to v10, to despise God's commandments is the same things as despising God Himself, as you can not separate God from His law.
25. Dale Ralph Davis—"By his adultery and murder David had despised Yahweh's commandments, his word. He treated them as though they didn't matter. To despise Yahweh's word, however, is to despise the One who has given the word; to trample on his commandment is to trample on the Commander."
26. Because David put Uriah to death with a sword, "the sword shall never depart from his house," which is explained in v11
27. V11—"Thus says the LORD: Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun."
28. As we will see, this trouble within David's house is a primary theme of chapters 13-20—all manner of evil befalls his house.
29. Richard Philips—"Four of David's sons would precede him in death—three of them slain by swords used by members of David's own household. His son Absalom, after usurping David's throne, would inflict on him the unspeakable shame of lying with his father's concubines in full view of the entire city, on the very roof which David had spied the bathing Bathsheba."
30. Obs.1—The promise of divine initiative—by this I mean, we learn from David that God will not leave His sinning people alone.
31. Simply put—our Savior will not allow His straying sheep to roam too far from Him, without going after them!
32. He's the Good Shepherd, who leaves the 99 and goes after that one lost sheep until He finds it, Lk.15:5—"And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing."
33. Brethren, while Christian sin, and at times sin greatly, God will not allow them to roam too far from Him, but will eventually retrieve them.
34. And this work of restoration, is similar to His work in salvation, in that, He takes the initiative, and goes after His people.
35. Obs.2—The necessity of personal rebuke—one obvious way, the Lord recovers His erring people, is to send them a Nathan.
36. They may be a preacher, a parent, a spouse, a sibling, or a brother in the church, but they will tell us—"You are the man!"
37. Richard Philips—"The mark of a spiritually lively Christian is not so much that we do not sin but that we welcome God's call to repentance when He shows us our sin."

II. He was Converted (v13)

1. I am using the term "converted" in the broad sense meaning "turned" or "changed"—in this sense, Christians have been converted and need conversion.
2. Christians have been turned and changed, and yet, they have need of being ongoingly turned and changed (as Christians).
3. Let me put it this way—our original conversion (when we became Christians) entailed two things—repentance and faith.
4. And so, Christians always have to repent and believe—not to become Christians, but as Christians who still sin.
5. Thus, we find the same two parts in David's conversion—he repents from his sin and he finds fresh forgiveness in Christ.
6. V13—"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.'"
7. (1) David's repentance—"So David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD'"—although this is a short statement it's full of meaning.
8. In many ways, this is a summary of all that's found in Psalm 32 and 51, and it's a perfect summary of true repentance.
9. "I have sinned"—David doesn't excuse his behavior—he doesn't blame Bathsheba—he doesn't justify himself.
10. He simply acknowledges his sin, and, that his sin was against God—"I have sinned against the LORD"—yes, he sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, Joab, and others.
11. But David realizes that all sin is ultimately against the LORD, as sin, by very definition, is the transgression of God's law.
12. Ps.51:3-4—"For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge."
13. (2) David's forgiveness—David not only confessed and repented from his sin, but he found fresh forgiveness with God.
14. V13—"And Nathan said to David, 'The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die'"—that is, die as the law demanded.
15. Under the law both adulterers and murderers were to put to death by stoning—this is what God's law demanded!
16. Now, it's at this point we are faced with a moral problem—if God's law said David should die how can he live?
17. How can God merely overlook His law and let David off the hook? Doesn't this render God unjust and unfair?
18. Well, the answer lies in the phrase "The LORD also has put away your sin"—the LORD had taken away his sin.
19. The imagery is that God has removed the sin from before Him—He has cast it behind His back—He has removed it as far as the east is from the west.
20. But then the question becomes—How can God remove an offense from Him without becoming an unjust Judge?
21. Well, the answer lies in the word "substitution"—God would punish the sins of David in the person of His Son.
22. Even though David lived 1,000 years before Christ died, his sins (along with all of the OT saints) were charged to Christ's account.
23. It's for this reason that OT saints could be forgiven just as NT saints are forgiven—for the sake of Jesus Christ.
24. OT saints were forgiven as they looked forward to Christ's death, NT saints are forgiven as they look back to His death (but all are forgiven for the sake of Christ).

25. Now, here I want to remind you that the OT death penalty laws, were primary intended to teach that all sin deserves eternal death.
26. It's for this reason that violations of most of the TC were punishable by death, because "the wages of sin is death."
27. This is what all sin deserves—not merely to be stoned to death and hung on a tree but punished in eternal death.
28. Thus, when God said "you shall not die" He ultimately meant—"You shall not eternally die in the lake of fire."
29. This is how, we as NC Christians are to understand this text—because we are justified, we shall never eternally die.
30. Now, as we shall see under the next heading, although David was forgiven, he was still disciplined for his sin.
31. Thus, the question becomes—if God put away David's sin, so that he would die, then why was David disciplined?
32. Was David forgiven or not? Well let me remind of the necessary distinction between judicial and parental forgiveness.
33. Judicially, David was forgiven when he became a Christian—this forgiveness views God as a righteous Judge.
34. This is what God meant when He said, "I have put away your sin"—David's sins, judicially speaking, had been forgiven.
35. But when David actually commits these sins, as a Christian, he must now seek forgiveness, not from the Judge, but from his Father.
36. And thus, our Savior taught His disciples to pray—"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name...forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."
37. It's for this reason, though we shall never experience the eternal consequences for our sins, we shall know temporal consequences.
38. David experienced severe consequences for his, judicially forgiven sins—the sword never departed from his house.
39. For example, let's say I intentionally do 55 through a school zone that's clearly marked with signs that say 25 mph.
40. And let's say, that a young child walks into the street and I injure them, and even worse, let's say the child dies.
41. Well brethren, there will be temporal consequences—if I am a Christian, I shall not die (eternally), as my sin has been put away.
42. But this does not alleviate severe temporal consequences—it's possible I would go to prison for 10 or 15 years.

III. He was Chastened (vv14-23)

1. Verse 14 begins with a rather sober term "however"—"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."
2. V15—"And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill"—notice Bathsheba is described as "Uriah's wife" to underscore the sin.
3. This, obviously, was a very painful blow from God—the newly born son that was born to David would die (v14).
4. And it's very important to notice, that God Himself would kill the child—"And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David."
5. The LORD would kill the child as a chastisement upon David, as a discipline brought upon David for his sins.
6. Now, it's also important to understand that God did this as a loving and wise Father—David was a Christian man.
7. God did not kill the baby because He hated David. No, God killed the baby because He loved David, and needed to chasten him.

8. Prov.3:11-12—"My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction; for whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights."
9. Thus, chastisement, while painful, is beneficial! It's necessary! It's the result of a Father who loves us too much not to correct us.
10. And in fact, this passage teaches us much about the nature of heavenly chastisement as we observe David's response.
11. How did David respond to this chastisement? How did David react to the news that his beloved Son would die?
12. Well, I suggest he responded in two ways—he prayed for mercy (vv16-17), and he submitted to God (vv18-23).
13. (1) He prayed for mercy (vv16-17), v16—"David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground."
14. Now, the question here is—If God told David that the child would die, why would he plead with God for the child?
15. I mean, if God said to David—"Your child shall die"—then why would David plead with God for six days (v18)?
16. Well, we are told in v22—"While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live.'"
17. Thus, David pled to God that He would show him mercy! David realized what he needed was mercy and grace!
18. Ps.51:1—"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies."
19. When we sin (and acknowledge it), there is nothing wrong with asking God to deal with us in mercy and grace.
20. In fact, because we sin all the time, it's proper for us to daily ask God to be merciful and gracious to His needy people.
21. For example, go back to my previous illustration—let's say I seriously injured the child and I am waiting to be sentenced.
22. It's not wrong, in fact, it's in every way right, that we would plead with God to show us mercy in that sentencing.
23. We are not asking God out of a self-righteous spirit—a spirit that denies our guilt and believes we are above the law.
24. No! We have already owned our sins and have humbled ourselves before God—and now we plead for mercy!
25. (2) He submitted to God (vv18-23)—having found out that the child had died, we find his response in verse 20.
26. V20—"So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate."
27. In other words, he humbly and lovingly submitted himself, to the wise and loving discipline of his heavenly Father.
28. V23—"But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."
29. In other words, David submitted to the heavy and painful rod of his Father! This is the end of all loving discipline.
30. Now, let me rather quickly say a few words about v23, and David's statement, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."
31. This phrase has been understood in one of two ways—some understand David to merely refer to the grave—as if he meant—"I shall follow the child into the grave."
32. But others, and I would suggest more rightly understand David, not to refer to the grave but to heaven—"I shall follow the child into heaven."
33. I suggest this is the more likely meaning of this phrase, and that for this reason—it seems as if v23 was a comfort to David.

34. If David merely meant to say, he would follow the child into the grave, I don't know how that would bring comfort.
35. No brethren, I think this text suggests that David believed he would one day see his little infant again in heaven.
36. William Blaikie—"The relationship between David and that little child is ended...But their meeting is not to be in this world...The separation shall be but temporary, and who can conceive the joy of reunion, reunion never to be broken by separation for evermore."
37. This of course does not mean that babies go to heaven because they are innocent, or that they somehow deserve it.
38. Infants are conceived as sinners for the sake their father Adam, but if they go heaven, it's because God forgive them for the sake of Christ.

IV. He was Comforted (vv24-25)

1. Now that David was comforted by God, he comforts his wife, v24—"Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her."
2. We are not told exactly how David comforted Bathsheba, but it seems likely, he comforted her with the same truth he was comforted with (that the child was in heaven).
3. V24—"So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the LORD loved him, and He sent word by the hand of Nathan the prophet."
4. That is God sent word by Nathan to David and Bathsheba, that He loved this child—"So he (David) called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD."
5. Jedidiah literally means "beloved of the LORD"—and so the child was given two names—Solomon was his formal name and Jedidiah a symbolic name.
6. Now, surely brethren, while the birth of a literal son brought great joy to David and Bathsheba, the child is a grand type of the Messiah to come.
7. Solomon means "peaceable" and Jedidiah means "beloved of the LORD" and both of these find their fullest meaning in Christ.
8. Because it was for the sake of Christ to come, God's beloved Son, that David and Bathsheba had peace with God.