

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA

The Sin of Adultery

By

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2 Samuel 11:1-27

The sin of adultery is a sin that many people consider no sin at all. After all they reason, it's natural to have desire for persons of the opposite sex before marriage and even outside of marriage. In the minds of broad-minded people just about every case of lovemaking can be justified. Before marriage it is because we all have a sex drive. If it wasn't okay then why did God make me this way? After marriage it may be that the marriage is not going well; perhaps the marriage has deteriorated to the point where there is little genuine affection in it anymore. There is no romance. There is no compatibility, no common interests.

But even if the marriage is not suffering any of these things many believe it is just not possible to limit yourself to loving only one person for a lifetime.

When I counsel couples planning to marry I tell them to consider the fact that they can never date another person. Dating different men or women is finished, done, no more once you are married. You can still have a date with your wife or husband. In fact I recommend that couples keep romance in their marriages by having a date at least once a week. But the date is always with the same person, your spouse. Marriage is a lifelong commitment and there is no room for another romance, another love affair in that most intimate of all relationships.

America can be classified in the same way that Christ classified the culture in his day. He labeled it a wicked, sinful and adulterous generation. (Mat 16:4)

In this 21st Century the entertainment industry caters to sex without restrictions. There is no shame attached to premarital, extramarital or homosexual sex in the minds of millions. Marriage is no longer considered sacred, but merely an option that ought not be taken too seriously. Even universities are winking at students having live-in love affairs. That would never have been tolerated forty years ago.

According to *Time* magazine a Florida survey found that 75% of kids had experienced sexual encounters by the time they reach 12th grade, with some 20% of the kids having had six or more sexual partners.

If sexual encounters begin before 75% of kids are out of school and then after graduation affairs are winked at as no big deal why should we be surprised that sexual liaisons occurring even after marriage vows have been spoken will not be regarded as serious offences either.

The sin of adultery is not something new. It has been going on since the fall of Adam. Some even would say that because Christ forgave the woman taken in adultery he has softened the law against adultery, but if you recall the terms of the acquittal in her case it was **Go, and sin no more**. Yes, there is forgiveness for sexual sins but there is no condoning of the sin for anyone, anywhere, anytime.

In all the Bible there is no more conspicuous case of adultery than the case of the adulterous affair between David and Bathsheba. God has seen fit to give us a singular account of his dealings with David on account of this sin.

In this message I want to review with you the fact that God allows temptation and all manner of sin to occur and that it leads to even greater sin, which brings conviction and a stricken conscience that can only be relieved by true and genuine repentance.

Almost everyone has been or will be tempted to commit some form of sexual sin at some time or another. This is so because sex is a basic drive in every normal person. There is nothing wrong with having a sex drive. But it is to be fulfilled in the marriage bed. The Scripture says **4Marriage is to be**

held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Heb. 13:4

God allows the Devil to tempt you and me but God Himself is not the tempter. The apostle James wrote: **13Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 14But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. 16Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.** James 1:13-16

Notice in our scripture today that David's temptation to commit adultery came at a time when he was indulging himself. His army was engaged in a siege at Rabbah, a city of the Ammonites, but David stayed at Jerusalem. No doubt he had told himself that he could direct the Lord's battles from his comfortable palace at Jerusalem.

He was restless, so he went up on the palace roof to take the evening breeze. Remember, David was at the peak of his power. He had been victorious in all of his battles. The Lord had promoted him to be king, head of the nation. He had only just recently defeated the Syrian army and routed their forty thousand horse cavalry. Seven hundred charioteers had fallen before his invincible soldiers. Shoback, commander of the Syrian forces, died in the battle of Helam. Now there was only a mopping up operation. Joab was well able to handle the situation at Rabbah because the Syrian forces had abandoned the war and left the Ammonites to fight alone.

Can't you picture David on that night in the long ago? He was the supreme commander, holding the highest position in the government. His days of running and hiding from King Saul are over. The whole nation is now united under his leadership. Surely he was entitled to a few days of rest and relaxation there in the king's palace. So we read on that fatal night that David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing and she was very beautiful, **³So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" ⁴David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. ⁵The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, "I am pregnant." (2 Sam. 11:3-5 NASB)**

Had Bathsheba been a single woman David might have asked her to become his wife. He already had quite a number of wives and concubines. You would think that he had more than enough female companionship, but a person's sex drive cannot be measured by the number of his wives, as is clearly evidenced in David's case. Being married is no guarantee that lust will quiet itself. As in Nathan's parable it comes as a traveler desiring to have his appetite satisfied with food and drink. It comes sometimes unexpectedly, unannounced, uninvited. And here was David, the man with many flocks and herds, who could have fed this stranger from his own household, but no, he takes a little ewe lamb from the poor man with only one ewe lamb to satisfy his hunger, that man was Uriah the Hittite who was a soldier in his service at the front line at Rabbah and the ewe lamb was Bathsheba.

Please note also that the eye is the gate of sin. Jesus said, **9 "If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell. (Matt. 18:9 NASB)**

Job must have faced this temptation for he said **"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl. Job 31:1 NIV)**

David's high office as king did not place him above the law; rather he was the guardian of the law. The same goes for the leader of any nation, including our own. What happened to David can happen to anyone. Remember, David was a chosen and anointed man of God. But that did not guarantee that he would not be tempted to sin.

David's sin could be said to be aggravated by the fact that he was old enough and wise enough to know better. He was about 50 years old when you would think that sexual lusts would have been tamed and tempered, and as I have already mentioned, he had more than enough wives and concubines to satisfy his sex drive without indulging himself with another man's wife. God tells us that one woman is all any man needs or should have.

In his sin with Bathsheba David not only wronged himself but others. No doubt her monarch overwhelmed Bathsheba, a woman of good reputation. She consented to a sin that perhaps no other person in the world could have tempted her to commit. In addition to that, Uriah was a person of honor and virtue, a man of loyalty and devotion to God and country. Even as David takes Uriah's wife to satisfy his lust Uriah is serving valiantly in the siege at Rabbah.

Once we embark on a course of sin it sets in motion a chain reaction. Any sin that is not repented of quickly and not put away produces more and greater sin, as we see in this instance. The sin of adultery is like a fire that burns and hurts and leaves one maimed and mutilated. As the scripture says in **proverbs**

²⁷ Can a man take fire in his bosom And his clothes not be burned? ²⁸

Or can a man walk on hot coals And his feet not be scorched? ²⁹

So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife; whoever touches her will not go unpunished.

Prov. 6:27-29 (NASB)

See in David's case how what started by merely seeing another person from a distance led to an interest, then a meeting, perhaps a cozy dinner, and then to adultery. It's the oldest story in the world.

Next came word that Bathsheba was pregnant. David sends for Uriah the Hittite to come home on leave. David was sure that Uriah would have relations with his wife while on furlough and that the pregnancy would be due to his visit home. But Uriah surprised him. He was such a committed soldier and patriot that he declined to go to his wife and have relations with her while the armies of Israel were enduring the rigors and hardships of war.

Surely this must have shamed David, to know that one of his brave soldiers considered it improper to even enjoy the comforts of a bed, much less the love of his wife, while others were camped out in tents and exposed to the dangers of war while fighting the Lord's battles when he himself had been lounging around and taking secret and forbidden pleasures with this very same soldier's wife. Uriah was a sacrificing, courageous soldier who showed more nobility than his king, at least in this instance.

But David was not easily daunted from his purpose. The next night he called Uriah to come and eat and drink with him while home on leave and he made sure that Uriah had more than enough to drink, so much so that he got drunk. I am sure he thought that surely his resistance would weaken and he would go home to Bathsheba. But alas, this second attempt failed too. Uriah again did not go home to visit his wife.

David decided to take sterner measures to solve his sin problem. He took his pen in hand and composed a memo to his commander Joab. Listen to the scripture:

¹⁴Now in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. ¹⁵He had written in the letter, saying, "Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him, so that he may be struck down and die." 2 Sam. 11:14-15 (NASB)

You see how adultery prompted cover-up, then even worse -- deceitful treachery. He plans Uriah's murder. It was premeditated murder. And to add insult to injury he actually sends the memo by Uriah's own

hand. Uriah was a helpless victim. The pen of David sealed Uriah's doom. David has taken his wife and now he is taking his life, a man who was totally dedicated to the Lord and devoted to King David. And all because David had spied his wife from his rooftop bathing and had invited her to pay him a visit.

What treachery! What iniquity is this -- to take another man's wife and then recall the man from the front lines where he is fighting for God and country in order to cover up the pregnancy he had brought about in the man's wife, and this under the pretense of a concern for information about how the war was going and how the volunteer army was doing. Then, when he was foiled in his attempt to get Uriah to go to bed with his wife he sets him up as a mark for the enemy, even ordering Joab to leave him stranded in some thick and heavy fighting, thus making sure he will be killed, yet making it appear to be a providential happenstance. And after he gets word that Uriah is dead, that his strategy had worked, he takes Bathsheba to be his own wife so that the child born will be his own son.

Oh what grievous mischief is provoked by the seemingly pleasant sin of adultery? Did Bathsheba think when she lay with King David that she was going to occasion the death of her husband? Did David consider what a wicked course he was embarking on when he cast his eye on Bathsheba bathing herself and desired to have her? No. Perhaps neither of them thought of those things. But that is the way of sin. It looks so desirable, so pleasurable. It seemed so right at the time. Surely no harm could come from a dalliance, a night of romance, a night of pleasure. And who will ever know? Who will be harmed? But soon the serpent is coiled around you and begins to squeeze. What begins as a pleasant interlude, a night of love, becomes a nightmare.

David, unaccustomed to the trail ways of wickedness and the pathways of sin, now finds himself snared in a trap of his own making, and there is no way out for him. The more he struggles the tighter the grip of sin, until finally he murders an innocent man to try and hide his crime. What pangs of conscience he must suffer for this. What dreadful thoughts were his, as he finally sees the hideousness of his evil work.

A man may still his conscience for a time, but it will cry out in due time. The shriek of agony is sure to come when the pain gradually increases. Like a needle pressing in the breast it may not hurt until the pressure gets great enough to puncture the skin and penetrate vital organs within. Even so conscience is quiet enough at first but later it aches and throbs and every passing day the pain intensifies. David wrote:³ **When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away. Through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Psa. 32:3-4 (NASB)**

Guilt is one of the most painful things anyone can experience. It is to the soul what physical pain is to the body. Nathan the Prophet comes to David and tells him the story of the rich man and the poor man. It is recorded in 2nd Samuel chapter 12. I will bring another message on the afflictive providence that came in David's life because of his sin of adultery and murder. We won't have time to adequately deal with it today. We are out of time. But you have heard enough today to show you that the sin of adultery is not only forbidden by God but that it leads to more and greater sin which brings the kind of terrible conviction in one's conscience that David experienced.

May each of us take heed to himself to resist this temptation and to repent even of the sin of lusting after another person in our heart. Jesus said that if we lust for a person in our heart we are guilty of this sin without even touching the person. But there is forgiveness when we repent. There will be repercussions as we shall see in another message, but David did find forgiveness when he repented of his sin. In **Psa. 32:5** David wrote: **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.**

What amazing grace and mercy we find in our Lord Jesus Christ! Have you repented of sin in your life? Come to the Savior today and ask him to forgive you for sins done in your life and you too will find forgiveness.

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