

This week I had a nice chuckle when I started reading thru the passage for today. It reminded me of an event during my college days. In my freshman year, I attended Florida Bible College near Orlando. We had a large board where students would pin notes of encouragement to one another. One day I pinned a note to a female friend that quickly got out of hand. I gave the girl 1 Sm. 12:24 – *Only fear the Lord and trust Him for consider what great things he has done for you.* A few hours later, I ran into her in the bookstore where she hit me in the shoulder for the verse I'd given her. Only she had read 2 Sm. 12:24 – *David comforted his wife Bathsheba and went in to lay w/ her.* Certainly not the verse or response that was intended. Nonetheless, there's a lesson to be learned when confronting a person you believe is in the wrong.

Today we're going to investigate the story of when Nathan confronted King David about his multitude of sins that began w/ lusting after Bathsheba. **Read: 2 Sm. 12:1-14**

In case you're just joining us, we're in a series of messages on OT Characters entitled, **IT Matters**. In this series we're looking at those qualities and characteristics that make a difference in life. **IT** involves those attitudes and actions that shape our character and determine our steps.

The story of David and Nathan contains many profound lessons about grace, sin, righteousness, justice, and truth. In David, we're befuddled of how a man after God's own heart can turn and engage in such ungodly actions. In sin, we learn how sly and seductive the tentacles of temptation are. In Nathan we discover the courage and creativity required to confront a brother in sin. Finally, in God, we see just how amazing is His grace and how demanding is His holiness.

Today, while we will touch on each of these areas, our primary focus will be on how Nathan confronted the King and why **IT Matters** we have the courage to confront our brothers and sister should they fall into sinful patterns.

Let's start w/ a little background. As you may be aware, David was a man after God's own heart. The favor of God had been upon him throughout his life. From fighting bears and lions in the wilderness while tending sheep – to fighting Goliath on the battlefield – David was a victorious warrior due to the blessings of God upon him.

After he had become king, when kings should've been off to war, he found himself staring at a woman bathing in the distance. Overtaken by his lust, David summoned the woman to satisfy his desires. Only the woman became pregnant and David was forced to cover his tracks leading to a series of lies and ultimately the murder of her husband – all accomplished in secret – so David thought.

By the time we arrive at **2 Samuel 12**, months have passed since David deviated from God's plan and performed the unthinkable. In all likelihood, David thought he had covered his tracks. He might've convinced himself that he was justified in his actions and that since he hadn't experienced God's discipline that God approved of his action. **What we do know is that he was wrong.**

In talking about the power of secret sin, Spurgeon wrote – You say you can handle your secret sins, that there's no one hurt by them. But you may as well ask the lion to let you put your head into his mouth. You can't regulate his jaws just as can't you regulate sin. Once done, you can't tell when you will be destroyed. You may put your head in and out a great many times; but one of these days it'll be a costly venture.

It was David's secret, and his misunderstanding, that led God to send Nathan to see him and confront him.

I IT Matters – We have a CALLING to Confront

The Lord sent Nathan to David. (1)

sent (*shalach*) used 800x in OT. means to dispatch a man on a mission w/ a specific purpose. It is a directed call.

Nathan wasn't summoned by David but called by God. God took the initiative b/c David had been blinded by sin.

This is the power of sin. It holds the man w/out God captive to his lostness while it stripes the saved man of his intimacy w/ God isolating and convincing him that he's justified in his wayward activity when he's not. ***Sin is the great divider b/w us and God and inhibits our ability to succeed in life.***

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Pr. 28:13

So God in His mercy called and sent Nathan to speak into David's life to turn his heart back to God – for it is God who seeks and pursues us by grace. ***No man, whether he is lost or has been found can overcome sin a part from the initiative of God.*** It is God who draws the lost to salvation and the saved to confession unto repentance.

The fact God loved David so much He sent Nathan should be an encouragement to us all. For the same God still sends out ***Nathan's*** into the world. He sends short and long term missionaries like you and me into the world. He sends pastors and evangelist into churches/congregations. He sends ordinary believers like us into lives of our brothers and sisters to draw them unto Himself.

This calling is both general and specific. The Bible says all believers are a part of the body of Christ and that we have an obligation to help and encourage one another in the pursuit of God and His will. Turn to **Heb. 10:19-25**

Therefore, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God w/ a sincere heart and w/ the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed w/ pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another...

The writer here is encouraging believers to persevere in the faith. He begins w/ their individual responsibility to seek God through the finished work of Christ. Then in vs. 24, he reminds them of the importance of connecting and engaging in the local body of believers to remain strong in the faith.

Last Sunday in our deacons meeting, Doug Barclay shared a video of a baby water buffalo that had gotten separated from the herd during a lion attack. Isolated, this baby was easy prey for the lions. While she fought for her life, not only were lions trying to kill her, but b/c also a croc from the nearby river tried to get in on the action. Honestly, the baby buffalo didn't have a chance – that's until the herd returned. Once the herd came back for her, the pride of lions didn't stand a chance – and the baby was saved.

Folks, we're living in a time when the church gathered has seemingly become an optional experience. And truthfully, there's no shortage of events, opportunities, and reasons to treat the God's family as an appendage to your life. There are any number of distractions and excuses. *And the church hasn't helped in this demise as somewhere along the way too many churches have become organizations focused on programs to entertain instead of being an organism focused on people to help them thrive in Christ.* We've allowed the consumerism/comforts of our culture dictate our engagement in the faith. And the result is devastating, as far too many believers have become isolated affording Satan – the roaring lion to roam and devour.

We've been called to abide w/ one another in community to spur one another along toward love and good deeds. We've been called to do life together to help one another thrive in Christ and experience God's will. Yet this will not happen if we get isolated from the body. It will not happen unless we change our thinking and make participating and serving in the family of God a true priority in our lives.

I'm reminded of our lesson on Achan that we all need people in our lives who care if we're living in obedience to God. We need people who care if we sin or if walk in holiness. It is essential we have human accountability in our spiritual lives. **This is our general calling in the family of faith.**

But there is also a specific call to go to a brother to love him back to intimacy w/ the Father. **And this is where we find Nathan.** Yes, he too had a general call to protect his David's intimacy w/ God. He also had a call to protect the holiness of Israel, but then God called him to go and specifically confront David about his sin.

Can you imagine having to confront the King about his sin? No thanks! In speaking on the text, J. Vernon McGee said, *"In my judgment, Nathan is the bravest man in the Bible. I know of no one who can be compared to him."* When you consider what was asked of him and what was at stake, I agree w/ McGee. Just how much courage does it take to confront a brother in sin? Even more, how much courage does it take to confront the King who is in sin and has the power to extinguish your life? This is what Nathan faced when God called him to go to David.

Now before we look at how Nathan confronted David – let me explain an important truth. **God hasn't called anyone of us to be the SIN POLICE. Our job is to spur one another along not shake each other down.** We shouldn't go looking for sin in the lives of other believers; but neither should we bury our heads in the sand when we see a brother or sister heading in the wrong direction. We have a duty to protect and help each other along the way, but to actually go and confront a brother who is in sin requires a special call of God. And God still makes those calls.

And should God call us to confront, then we need to follow the prescription in **Matthew 18** and **Galatians 6:1-2** in how to appropriately and lovingly redirect a brother to God.

II IT Matters – We have the CREATIVITY to Confront

When he came to him, he said, There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up w/ him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him. (1-4)

Before we jump into this verse I want you to look at **Galatians 6:1-2**. While Paul didn't pen these words for years to come – Nathan apparently already understood this truth.

If someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:1-2

Nathan was no fool. Lead by the H.S., his *modus operandi* was so gentle and clever it drew David's shepherd heart into the parable while it indirectly brought out David's conscience and sense of right and wrong. Nathan followed the prescription of *Galatians 6:1-2*.

A He was WALKING in the Spirit

We know Nathan was walking in the Spirit b/c only a fool would confront an all-powerful king unless he was absolutely certain God had called him to go. We also know he was walking in the Spirit b/c of the parable God gave Nathan to share w/ David. It was masterful.

Let me quickly explain Nathan's parable.

- The Rich Man is a reference to David
- The Poor Man is a reference to Uriah the Hittite
- Flocks and herds are a reference to David's wives
- Little Ewe Lamb is a reference to Bathsheba
- Traveler is a reference to the lust in David's heart

Don't miss the point – Confronting a brother in sin should only be performed by someone walking in the Spirit.

Here's a test to determine if you're *spiritual*. Let's say a person in your Life Group is arrested for a crime – what would be your attitude? “Too bad, so sad.” “If he did the crime, he should do the time.” Or, “Who cares.”

All of these responses would be a sign you aren't full of the H.S. But, if when you hear about it, your heart is broken and you immediately begin to think about how you can minister to the family – that'd be a sign of Spirit-filled living.

B He was GENTLE in his approach

gentleness – is a fruit of the Spirit which requires walking in surrendered intimacy w/ God. It means – *strength under control. It is to have a soft touch w/ a strong hand.*

restore – refers to gently mending a broken bone.

Meaning, we should confront a disgraced believer the same way a physician mends a broken bone – gently but firmly. *Nathan was deliberate yet sensitive in approaching David. He was tenderly re-setting a broken area of David's life.*

C He was HUMBLE before David

I can imagine the scene. Nathan entered into the King's court where he bowed to pay his respect. Next he sought permission to speak to the king about a pressing issue – and David allowed him to deliver a parable. He was so gentle in this process, David suspected the perpetrator was some else other than himself as noted by David's harsh and hasty response. **BTW – interestingly enough, David's response was way over the top and extreme.**

As Nathan spoke, he was anything but self-righteous and smug. I believe he was burdened/broken – even fearful for what might happen to his friend and king should he David have rejected the confrontation of God. I also believe Nathan took no joy in this calling, yet neither did he shy away from his spiritual duty. He creatively delivered the news to David. *And then came the punchline!*

III IT Matters – We have the COURAGE to Confront

David burned w/ anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, b/c he did such a thing and had no pity.” Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master’s house to you, and your master’s wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite w/ the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him w/ the sword of the Ammonites. Now, the sword will never depart from your house, b/c you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’ “This is what the Lord says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you.

Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep w/ your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel. ’” (5-12)

When it's time to deliver the punchline, you can't worry about hurting the person's feelings b/c of what is at stake. If they don't get the message, then there's little chance of them turning back to God. The sensitivity comes in the set up; not in the delivery of the truth. This doesn't mean you're harsh – but that you're clear. This is the great challenge.

IV IT Matters – We have the COMPASSION to Confront

Then David said, “I have sinned against the Lord.” Nathan replied, “The Lord has taken away your sin. You're not going to die. But b/c by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the son born to you will die.” (13-14)

Upon David's realization there was immediate brokenness. And Nathan was there for his friend and King. I imagine he wept w/ David. He felt for David. He was likely even sorry for David b/c he knew that David, despite his repentance, was still going to have to face the consequences of his sin. He knew David was going to reap what he had sown.

When that moment comes and you have been called to be a Nathan to someone – help them to face the reality not just of their actions, but also of the consequences they will face. This will not be easy. It is a terrifying thing to know you're guilty and deserving of the wages of sin. Feel for the person, but also encourage them to face it and not to run from it. Challenge them to own their actions and submit to the discipline. Running from it will only make it worse and blaming God for your justice will only stunt one's faith.

Folks. **IT Matters. IT Matters** we have the courage to confront a brother in sin. **IT Matters** that we walk w/ God so that He can use us to turn a brother back to Him.