

13. Facing the consequences of our sins

10/21/2004

I was a senior in my junior high school in Seoul, Korea. One day I was walking into the teachers' lounge, out of blue one of the teachers grabbed me by my collar and started to yell at me. He wanted to know why I was coming to the lounge. It was not off limit to the students and I wanted to see my home room teacher, not him. I still don't have any idea why he slapped my cheek. I was barely five feet tall and he looked like a grizzly bear to me at that time. When I told a friend of mine later that evening, he told me that he knew where the teacher lived. So in my stupid mind, I decided to throw a rock at his home. And we did. I stopped with his home. But my rock throwing buddy went on his campaign against the other teachers' homes.

Somehow the words got around to my home room teacher and we got caught. Of course, my mother and father had to face my teacher because of my stupidity. I don't think I need to tell you guys what happened at my home later that day. I have learned something important from my early crime day. 'Choose a good partner in crime.' Just kidding.

If we think about the consequences of our sins, most likely we wouldn't do our sins. But sin has its way to blind us from seeing the warning signs and make us to be deaf to the Holy Spirit's voice in our hearts. It even makes us to get excited about the short lived pleasure and make us to keep our sins secret. Because sin knows that as soon as it is no longer secret, it loses its power.

King David was confronted by the prophet Nathan whom God sent and was told that he would face the consequences of his sins in the previous study. We need to go back a little to refresh the story of this great lesson for all of us.

A. THE START OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SINS

2 Samuel 12:13-14 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. 14 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."

God doesn't only want to deal with David's sin, but also cuts off the source of the problem. Long before his sin with Bathsheba, there were various indications for David's weakness and vulnerability to temptation. He had too many women in his life which was against the law of God.

The adultery with Bathsheba was nothing more than a result of his uncontrolled passion. Now God is having him to see it and never to forget. At the same time, God is teaching us through the example of David.

God's chastisement was meant to correct David, not punish him. It was designed to show him how serious sin is to a holy God and to protect him from future moral failure.

How did David respond to God's discipline? In the same way that he confessed his sin: with humility and trust in God.

B. THE DEATH OF DAVID'S SON

2 Samuel 12:15-17 Then Nathan departed to his house. And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill. 16 David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. 17 So the elders of his house arose and went to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them.

This is hard for many to accept. Sadly, often the innocent are made to suffer because of the sin of the guilty. The one who committed sin often ends up watching agony and suffering of the innocents from sidelines.

When the baby suddenly became ill, David's first response were prayer and fasting. Fasting is an expression of the intensity of a petitioner's concern. It says, "This matter is more important to me than food."

In spite of David's repentance, God's discipline must be administered and it was painful. But rather than running away from God, David ran to Him. In his prayers, he quieted himself before the Lord, pleading for the life of his son. It was a soul-searching time for David, a time to be alone and consider the gravity of his offense. An innocent child was suffering because of him. As long as there was a chance that God might spare the child, David would pray feverishly to that end.

Though Uriah was dead and David was legally married to Bathsheba, the Scripture did not refer to Bathsheba as David's wife here. It is God's way of saying, "Uriah's death and the subsequent marriage doesn't make everything alright."

C. FACING THE CONSEQUENCES

2 Samuel 12:18-20 Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, "Indeed, while the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!" 19 When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." 20 So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and (1) he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then (2) he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate.

In David's case, his grieving began when the child became ill. Once the child was dead, there was nothing he could do but worship the Lord. David left his palace and ascended Mount Moriah to worship at the tabernacle.

Please note the right sequence of the godly priority when the things didn't go the way David wanted. When we don't get what we want from God, we often show our immature attitude to God as if to say, "Since You didn't do what I wanted, I am not gonna play with You anymore." Wow, I bet God is so scared and His knees are knocking and He would plead and beg to us to come back. There is a good Hebrew word for that. "Fat chance."

The ability to worship and honor God in a time of trial or crisis is a wonderful demonstration of spiritual confidence and maturity. That will impress non-believers more than any of our testimonies.

Instead of blaming himself more, he put himself back together and went to worship God. The baby was dead, and he couldn't change that. He could, however, accept

what he had received from God's hand and humbly bow before Him, knowing that God was both merciful and just.

D. CLAIMING GOD'S TRUTHS

2 Samuel 12:21-25 Then his servants said to him, "What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food." 22 And he said, "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?' 23 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." 24 Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the Lord loved him, 25 and He sent word by the hand of Nathan the prophet: So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord.

At the end of his suffering the child went to eternal glory. Though the child died, the chastisement was really upon David and Bathsheba and not upon the child.

In v22 "Who can tell" give us a remarkable insight into the meaning of prayer. As long as there is any possibility of God intervening in a new way, prayer should be continued. If one's hope is in God, then there is never the sense that it is too late until God says, "It is over." God may intervene at the very last moment or even after the time we would think it is over.

Nothing wrong with crying out to God in repentance and ask for His grace and mercy for the sins we have committed, even though we deserve none of it.

However, we must realize that our prayer never changes God's mind. It simply changes our hearts to be aligned with God and to depend on God's sovereignty.

The name 'Jedidiah' means "Beloved of the Lord." The Hebrew name is related to David's name, meaning "Beloved." The divinely sanctioned name, spoken by the prophet of the Lord, was the final symbol of God's forgiveness in the lives of David and Bathsheba.

God chose this son among David's many sons to be heir to the throne and the ancestor of the Messiah to demonstrate the truth that God forgives repentant sinners.

The grace of God is something that's beyond our capacity to really grasp. How gracious is God! In the forgiveness, in the cleansing, in the pardon. The word "justification", means, "just as though we've never done it." God doesn't go on holding grudge against us forever. We pick up the pieces, we say, "I've sinned, God, I'm sorry", and God says, "Okay, let's go from here now."

David was confident that his son would meet him in heaven. He knew his son wouldn't come back in reincarnation. This is an indication that babies and perhaps children who pass from this world to the next will go to heaven.

1 Corinthians 7:14 is an additional promise of assurance that the children of believers are saved, at least until they come to an age of personal accountability. However, we have no similar promise for the children of parents who are not Christians. This is one area I wouldn't mind being wrong in understanding of the Scripture. But I do know that our God is merciful and just. He always does right things and extends His ever-renewing mercy to all of us.

This is the first time the Scripture calls this woman Bathsheba as David's wife. Only now, after the chastisement for sin, is she called Bathsheba his wife. God doesn't negotiate.

E. MOVING ON

2 Samuel 12:26-31 Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the people of Ammon, and took the royal city. 27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, and I have taken the city's water supply. 28 Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city and it be called after my name." 29 So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah, fought against it, and took it. 30 Then he took their king's crown from his head. Its weight was a talent of gold, with precious stones. And it was set on David's head. Also he brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance. 31 And he brought out the people who were in it, and put them to work with saws and iron picks and iron axes, and made them cross over to the brick works. So he did to all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

After the funeral and after mourning his loss with his wife, David found the grace to live again. It takes God's grace to endure the whirlwind, but it also takes God's grace to move on once the storm has calmed.

David is now back out in the battle field where he should have been all along.

The crown weighed a talent of gold which is about 75 lbs. There would be two kind of people who would be dumb enough to wear that heavy crown: A rough tough red neck or a stupid one who asks for a major whiplash.

F. APPLICATIONS

1) Facing the consequence is a lonely experience.

We will never be more alone than when we are in the whirlwind of sin's consequences. Others may want to help, but we alone will experience the depth of our pain.

2) Facing the consequence is a learning experience.

God can use the storm to reveal a side of ourselves that we've never seen before. He can also show us aspects of His character - His justice, His sovereignty, His holiness, and His grace.

3) Facing the consequence is a temporary experience.

We may feel like it will last forever, but it won't. It will end. God's power will see us through.

4) Facing the consequence is a humbling experience.

We will realize that who really is in charge. God is, not us.