

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 7A**

**SECOND SAMUEL
CHAPTER 11**

INTRODUCTION

We come to the turning point in David's life. This chapter describes what was widely known as the David and Bathsheba's affair. This adulterous relationship involved those sent to fetch Bathsheba to the palace, Bathsheba's husband Uriah the Hittite, Joab his army general, Nathan the prophet of God, and David's family. David's sin affected many people negatively especially those closest to him.

Be that as it may, the account also reveals the gracious dealing of the LORD God with one of His children. The incident demonstrated that even the best of God's children can fall into sin. No one must ever be so arrogant as to think that he would never fall into sin.

The incident also provides encouragement to those who think that they are too sinful to merit God's mercy. No sin is too great or heinous to be cleansed by the blood of Christ.

At the same time, it reminds us that God is aware of man's every deed whether good or evil. No one can escape God's judgment. Just because His judgment is not immediate, it does not mean that He is not aware of our sins.

Last but not least, this account emphasizes the devastating effect of

sins and the need to confront, confess and repent before there can be forgiveness and restoration from God.

The chapter is divided as follows: David with Bathsheba (vv.1-5); David with Uriah (vv.6-13); and David with Joab (vv.14-27).

COMMENTARY

David with Bathsheba—11:1-5

David was resting in his palace at a time when kings "go forth to battle". This would imply that it was spring time which was the usual time for kings to go to war due to the conducive climatic conditions. Joab was engaged in a major battle against the Ammonites. David should have been there with his men but Joab was sent instead.

David's kingdom was now firmly established. The people knew him as their king. He had been very successful in all his exploits. There was relative peace and prosperity. He was able to delegate the wars to his army general. The statement "But David tarried still at Jerusalem" suggested that something ominous was about to take place.

One eventide just before sunset, David took a walk (Hebrew, pacing to and fro) on the roof top of his palace. The roof of his palace was higher than all the other houses. From there, he "saw" a woman bathing in an open area in her home. The woman was very beautiful to "look upon". David called his servants and enquired about the woman. One replied in the form of a question: "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? (v.3) The specific mention of the marital status of Bathsheba compounded the sin of David.

Knowing that she was a married woman, David should have “walked away” but he gave in to his lustful thoughts. He ordered that the woman be brought to him and “took her”. After that, she returned home. The text specifically pointed out that she was not in the family way when she came to David—*she was purified from her uncleanness*.¹ Later when Bathsheba realized that she was pregnant, she told David. The steps of David’s sin included: the lust of the eyes (he saw Bathsheba), followed by the lust of the flesh (he took her) and the pride of life (as king he could not be caught and even if he were caught he was answerable to no one)!

The phrase “for she was purified from her uncleanness,” meant that she had just completed her menstrual cycle and had been cleansed according to the Levitical law. Leviticus 15:19 states, “*And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even.*” For a woman who had just been cleansed to then commit such an adulterous act was unconscionable.

As king, David was accustomed to getting whatever he wanted. In the case of Bathsheba, he saw, he looked upon (gazed fixedly), he enquired, he sent and he took her. He should have looked away instead of placing himself in a situation where he would be vulnerable to temptation. Note the

¹ This purification was a ritual cleansing and probably explained what she was doing when David saw her. She had just finished her menstrual period (Leviticus 15:18, 19).

sequential steps leading to sin – first sight, then desire followed by action.²

The text did not dwell on Bathsheba’s feelings except to say that when she discovered she was pregnant, she told David. The intent of the text was to focus on the character of David. David ignored Bathsheba’s feelings and that of her husband who was faithfully serving as a soldier and away fighting for his country. But above all, David had ignored God’s high calling as His anointed.

David with Uriah—11:6-13

In David’s attempt to cover-up his sin with Bathsheba, he committed one foolish act after another. David sent word to Joab to send Uriah the Hittite to him. When Uriah came, David pretended to enquire about Joab, the people and the war. Uriah’s reply was not recorded which suggested that David was not interested in his response at all. It was a ruse on David’s part to cover his sin! He was more interested in concealing his part in Bathsheba’s pregnancy.

He told Uriah to “go down to his house and wash his feet” – go home, rest, relax and be with his wife. In addition, David also gave “a mess” (a royal present) of provisions to him. David’s scheme was to get Uriah to spend a night with his wife, Bathsheba. The idea might not work. David had reddish hair whereas a Hittite had dark coloured hair. In addition, the features of the baby might not be that of Uriah’s but David’s.

Uriah did not go down to his house. Instead he bunked with all the

² In the garden of Eden, Satan tempted Eve in these three ways (Genesis 3:5, 6).

other servants of the king. This frustrated David's plan. David asked Uriah why he did not go home. Uriah's answer showed that he was a faithful and loyal subject of the king. He put the affairs of his country and the people above his own personal interests. He could not bring himself to eat, drink and have any conjugal relationship with his wife while Joab and his fellow soldiers were fighting and living in tents. Uriah was an honourable man.

David tried another scheme. He told Uriah to stay a day longer. He then feasted with Uriah and got him drunk hoping that he would go home and spend the night with his wife. But Uriah again slept with the servants. Uriah was true to his principle: he would not enjoy himself when his fellow compatriots were fighting to defend the kingdom. So, David's attempt to cover his sin of adultery was thwarted. By this time, he was too preoccupied with covering up his sin to care about the moral issue of his actions. His obsession caused him to sink deeper and deeper into sin!

David with Joab—11:14-27

In desperation, David made one last attempt to cover up his sin. He wrote a letter to Joab, and "sent it by the hand of Uriah". It was a death warrant for Uriah. He told Joab to put Uriah in the most dangerous part of the battle so that he would be killed. It was mean and despicable of David to make Uriah carry his own death warrant to Joab.

Joab did not know David's reason for wanting Uriah dead but he obeyed the instructions given. At the same time, he made sure that he protected himself in the eyes of his men. If he

were to send Uriah alone or with some men, they might think that he was not committed to them. So Joab led a group of his soldiers and fought at the most dangerous part of the battle. In the ensuing battle, Uriah and some of the men were killed. David's sin caused them their lives.

Joab then reported the outcome to David through a messenger. He told the messenger that if David were to be angry and asked why they did not take precautions when attacking the city, he should reply that Abimelech was killed by a woman who threw a stone over his head.³ He should also mention that Uriah the Hittite had also died in the battle. This was another attempt by Joab to protect himself. He was an able general. Sending so few of his men to fight in the most dangerous part of the war was foolish and it was indeed so for some of his soldiers were killed unnecessarily. Joab knew that David would want to know whether Uriah was dead. Joab read David well. It happened as Joab thought it would. David must take the blame for putting his men in harm's way. David then told the messenger to convey to Joab "not to let this thing displease thee" because in a war, casualties were inevitable. He then encouraged Joab to strengthen his force and overthrow the enemy (v.25).

Bathsheba was told of the death of her husband. She mourned for her husband. When the period of mourning was over, David took her to be his wife. At last the baby boy was born. All seemed well. It was a happy

³ This is a reference to Judges 9:50-57 where in the siege of Thebez, Abimelech went so close to the wall that a woman was able to kill him by hurling the top part of a millstone on his head.

ending for David. No one knew about his evil deeds or so David thought. Even if some had known (Joab for one would understand the motive for the murder of Uriah), no one would dare to confront the king. Everything seemed to be under control. But what David had done was displeasing to the LORD. It was not over by a long shot.

PRACTICAL VALUE

Sin loves company -- one sin leads to another. This was evident in the case of David. Having committed adultery and under threat of exposure, he covered it by committing another sin. The Word of God had said clearly and simply, "be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).

It is not true that full-time servants such as pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and church planters can effortlessly withstand the temptation to sin. Even David, a man who was chosen and anointed of God, succumbed! Let us all take heed to flee from the temptation to sin.

Uriah was faithful, loyal and true to his principle. Likewise, God calls us to remain true to our beliefs and stand our ground.

AMEN

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

Monday: 2 Samuel 11:1-5; James 1:13-16; 1 Corinthians 10:12

Tuesday: 2 Samuel 11:6-13; Exodus 20:1-17.

Wednesday: 2 Samuel 11:14-27; Leviticus 20:10-14; Psalm 11:1-7.

Thursday: 2 Samuel 11:1-27.

Friday: 2 Samuel 11:1-27

Analysis:

Text	Practical Value
2 Samuel 11:1-5	
2 Samuel 11:6-13	
2 Samuel 11:14-27	

Discussion Questions

1. What triggered David's sin? How did one wrong step lead to another?

2. At what point of David's life did he commit this sin? What does this tell us?

3. How was it that David could see the sin of others but not his own?

4. Who should a sinner be most concerned with when he attempt to cover up his sins -- God or man? Have you received an unsigned poison letter before? Worse still, have you written such letters before? What must you do as a recipient of such a letter? As the culprit?

5. What commandments of God had David broken (at least three)?

6. In what way is chapter 11 important to every Christian?
