

## Message #15

## II Samuel 11:1-27

Adultery is a very serious crime and it is against State Laws and it is against God's law. Eighteen states have criminal laws against adultery. It is a criminal act for someone to engage in sexual activity with another person's mate.

It certainly is against the law in Michigan. The Michigan Penal Code, action 328 that has been on the books since 1931 says this:

"Any person who shall commit adultery shall be guilty of a felony; and when the crime is committed between a married woman and a man who is unmarried, the man shall be guilty of adultery and liable to the same punishment." In this state adultery is a felony and may be punished with a maximum sentence of four years in prison and/or a \$5,000 fine.

In Michigan, the court will only prosecute an adulterer if the innocent spouse files a complaint within one year of the offense.

In Florida, adultery is a misdemeanor and the penalty is up to 60 days in prison and a fine of up to \$500.

Now let's move up the coast from Florida to Maryland, where many of the nation's politicians live. Adultery is considered to be a misdemeanor; the potential fine is \$10.

In Washington D.C., it is a misdemeanor and the punishment is either 180 days in jail or a \$500 fine.

But regardless of state law, adultery is against God's law. And regardless of where you live, the threat of a married person having a sexual relationship with someone other than his or her mate is a very real, sinful possibility.

This is why God in His word clearly forbids a married man or married woman from having any sexual relationship with someone other than his/her mate. Both the O.T. and the N.T. contain God's word against committing adultery. In fact, an adulterer and an adulteress could be taken and stoned to death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24; John 8:1-6). As Charles Spurgeon said, in any context of life "God does not allow His children to sin successfully" (Cited from Warren Wiersbe, *Be Restored*, p. 81).

Now when someone gets involved in committing adultery, the participants typically think this is really going to enhance and excite their lives. People who indulge actually believe this will enrich and increase their passion and pleasure. **What most people don't realize is that adultery will ensnare you and destroy you. Adultery will ruin you. Adultery will bring you down and make you an emotional wreck. It will devastate you and bring you down to deep depression.**

If you ever want to see a classic example of this reality, it is right here in II Samuel 11 from the life of King David. Adultery left him an emotional and spiritual wreck for years. As we will track him you will see the devastation. He doesn't think right. He doesn't act right. He doesn't worship right. It will take years for him to recover stability and spirituality and success.

Let's set the context for this. David was on top of the world politically, militarily and financially. He had it all. He had wealth, success, fame and power. His reputation was worldwide. His name was great. He was God's man and He had God's blessings.

But he was about to throw it all away for sex with another man's wife. He used his power and he abused his power and his authority for one adulterous affair and the consequences were devastating. What we see here is this:

**DAVID COMMITTED A GREAT EVIL SIN AGAINST GOD BY COMMITTING ADULTERY WITH BATHSHEBA, AND THE CONSEQUENCES WERE DISASTROUS FOR HIM AND HIS FAMILY.**

Let me say before we tackle this that when I am in eternity and see David, I will never bring this up. If I have the privilege of meeting him and talking to him, I will ask him about all kinds of things, but I won't ask him about this.

But since we go straight through books of the Bible, we are forced to handle this and apparently God wants this story studied because He inspired it in great and graphic detail in His word. David is a great man of God. He accomplished things for God none of us will ever accomplish. God wants this story told. 1. It shows that even great men sin or have sinned; 2. It is a warning to us all. There are seven main details we want to observe.

**DETAIL #1 – God reveals the actual time of the adultery. 11:1a**

The time when this happened was in the spring. In the winter months of December, January and February, in Jerusalem the average temperatures are mid 50's during the day and mid 40's at night.

However, in the spring the average temperatures are March 61/48; April 70/54; May 77/60. The fact that it is springtime lends itself to being outside more and would explain why someone would be out taking a bath.

**DETAIL #2 – God reveals the military activity of the adultery. 11:1b**

Notice this was a time when “the kings go out to battle.” David didn't go. Through the winter months, David had thought about what those Ammonites had done to his men in humiliating them. They had rejected his kindness and had treated his men shamefully.

David decided to teach the Ammonites a final lesson and attack a main city, Rabbah. Spring would be the best time to go to war because the enemy fields would be full of ripe grain and the weather makes conditions good for warfare.

So David sent Joab with his best servants or best trained military men and they went and fought and destroyed the Ammonites and he stayed in Jerusalem. We may recall that he himself had gone to fight the Syrians (10:17-18), but apparently he felt Joab could easily take care of the remaining Ammonites.

**DETAIL #3** – God reveals what David was doing. **11:2a**

It was a lovely spring evening and David apparently could not sleep so he got up from his bed and went for a walk on the roof of his house or palace. The breezes are cool on top of the roof. There weren't too many houses that could overlook the city, but his was one that could.

Roofs were flat and sturdy, kind of like a patio or deck and sometimes when it was hot, people would actually sleep out on their roof.

**DETAIL #4** – God reveals what David saw. **11:2b**

David's palace was high above the other houses and as David was walking on top of his house, he looked down and saw a beautiful woman taking a bath. The Hebrew text emphasizes that this woman was "very beautiful to look at."

When the Bible uses this language to describe a woman, she is unusually gorgeous. She is the kind of woman that will turn heads (**Rebekah** - Gen. 24:16; 26:7; **Vashti** - Est. 1:11; **Esther** - Est. 2:7). Bathsheba was literally a "bathing beauty."

Houses did not have indoor plumbing so often at night someone would go up on top of their roof to wash or bathe. It was a very private and protected area. There is no hint at all that this woman is acting in a seductive way or that she even knows David is looking at her. But she was a beautiful woman and David was staring at her.

Now when David first saw this beautiful, naked woman taking a bath, you cannot blame him. He was not prowling around as some window peeper looking for this, but obviously the problem was when he saw this, he let his mind and look dwell on it.

As Jesus would later teach, if a man looks on a woman that way, he commits adultery in his heart (Matt. 5:27-28). He took his look to another level. So David did not just see a naked woman bathing and then turn away; he was staring at her and it stirred his passions.

Men, you cannot help it if some scantily clad woman runs in front of your car or across the screen of your TV, but you can help it if you continue to look and gawk at it.

**DETAIL #5** – God reveals what David did. **11:3-4a**

David did three things, he should have never done. It is very clear from these actions that he was focused on this woman:

**Action #1** - He inquired about the identity of the woman. **11:3**

- 1) David learned that the woman's name was Bathsheba.
- 2) He learned she was the daughter of Eliam - the son of Ahithophel, one of David's mighty men and a counselor (23:34), Ahithophel, Bathsheba's grandfather, would end up killing himself (16:23).
- 3) She was the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Uriah was one of David's best soldiers (23:39). He may have been a mercenary soldier from one of the Hittite cities north of Jerusalem. Hittite land was part of the Promised Land (Josh. 1:4). The Israelites were supposed to destroy the Hittites (Deut. 20:17; Josh 3:10).

Now David knew that Uriah was out of town on a military mission.

When David learned these details about Bathsheba, he should have said, well she is off limits. She comes from a good, loyal family and she is married.

David knew that it was against the word and law of God to covet a neighbor's wife (Ex. 20:17). It was against the law of God to commit adultery (Ex. 20:14). In fact, that was a sin/crime that could be punished by death.

**Action #2** - He brought the woman to his house. **11:4a**

Now the Hebrew text says David sent messengers and they "took her." This word "took" means this woman had no say in this. She was forcefully taken. She was not hurt in any way or violently treated, but she did not have the option to make a choice here.

When the text says, "she came to him," it does not imply willingness on her part.

**Action #3** - He lay with her. **11:4b**

It appears as though from the verbs that this sexual act was a purely physical act. "He saw," "he sent," "he took," "he lay." There is no hint that this was a nice romantic interlude. There is no discussion of how much he loves her or any affection at all. It is just a purely physical act. We don't know if there was any conversation at all. The verb put all of the responsibility for this on David, not Bathsheba. The text does not say "they," it says "he."

The only thing we know is that David's lust prompted all of this and we have no idea as to whether or not Bathsheba protested or was even a willing participant.

Many try and put the blame on Bathsheba for taking a bath and then for going to the King's house, but the text puts all the blame on David.

The verse ends that when Bathsheba had purified herself from her uncleanness, she went back home.

What we do know from the last verse in this chapter is what David did was “evil in the sight of the LORD” (v. 27).

**DETAIL #6** – God sovereignly ordains a pregnancy and Bathsheba informs David. **11:5**

Bathsheba became pregnant and she went and told David. The weight is now on David as to what to do. Not only has he committed adultery with another man’s wife, but now she is pregnant with his child.

Bathsheba decided to tell David and not Uriah her husband. We don’t know for sure why. We may suspect that he would know the baby was not his. Perhaps she felt Uriah could become violent. Perhaps she felt David could protect her and do something to help her.

**DETAIL #7** – David tries to cover his sin by using Uriah. **11:6-26**

Instead of David confessing his sin, he decides to cover it. There are four ways David attempted to cover and hide his sin and they didn’t work.

**Attempt #1** - David tried to cover his sin by sending for Uriah and sending him home. **11:6-12**

Uriah had been fighting for David against the Ammonites. When David sent for him there is no hint that anyone thought anything about it. David came up with a plan. He would bring Uriah home from the battlefield and send him home to sleep with his wife and then everyone would think it was Uriah’s baby.

We learn from **verse 7** that Uriah made the 40 mile trip to Jerusalem and came to David and David asked him for a report on how the battle was going (**11:7**). He asked him about Joab and the condition of the army.

Then, in **verse 8**, David tried to send Uriah home, but he did not go home (**11:7-9**). Uriah was a very disciplined and loyal soldier. Uriah slept at the door of the king’s house as some sort of body guard.

When David asked him about why he didn’t go home, Uriah said because people more high ranked than he was were out fighting and he didn’t think it was right for him to be in the comforts of his own home and in bed with his wife (**11:9**).

**Attempt #2** - David tried to cover his sin by getting Uriah drunk. **11:13**

You would think if you are married to this beautiful woman that you would want to go home to see her and be with her. But Uriah didn’t do it.

David decided to try another tactic. He invited Uriah to dine with him and they ate good food and drank good wine. In fact, Uriah was drunk.

We know that Uriah's house was within walking distance of the palace because David had seen Bathsheba at the house. But when Uriah left David, again he did not go home. Uriah took his military mat with him and slept with the other servants.

**Attempt #3** - David tried to cover his sin by having Uriah killed. **11:14-25**

David wrote a letter to Joab and told Uriah to take the note to Joab. The note told Joab to put Uriah on the front lines of the battle where the chances were good he might be killed.

Joab did what David wanted. According to **verse 17**, Joab put Uriah in a place where the best soldiers were fighting and Uriah was killed in action.

According to **verse 18**, Joab sent word to David that Uriah had been killed in the action.

Joab said to the messenger if David wonders why we went so close to the city just tell him Uriah is dead (11:20-21).

So according to **verses 22-24**, the messenger told David all that Joab told him. He said it was a fierce fight and it was near the city and the archers shot at your servants and Uriah is dead.

In **verse 25**, David told the messenger to go back and tell Joab not to worry or be sad, fight and overthrow it.

**Attempt #4** - David tried to cover his sin by marrying Bathsheba. **11:26-27**

Now to the unsuspecting eye, David almost looks heroic here. He steps in and marries Bathsheba and since she was going to have a baby, he would help her and provide for her.

This appeared to the world to be a very gracious thing for David to do.

However, **verse 27** says this whole thing was "evil in the sight of the LORD."

#### **LESSONS:**

- 1. Be very careful when you are no longer working and you have a lot of leisure time.**
- 2. Don't allow your eyes and mind to focus on immoral things.**
- 3. If you sin, confess it and turn from it, don't try to cover it.**
- 4. It will take David years to recover from this, but in God's grace, he will recover.**