

Learning from the Sins of King David

DARRELL DELANEY

In the annals of ancient history, few narratives are as poignant and morally challenging as the story of David and Bathsheba. Today on *Groundwork*, join us as we delve into this gripping story into our two-part series. We will explore the complexities of David's fall from grace, the consequences of his actions, and ultimately, how his journey can illuminate our own path toward honesty, repentance, and a life that pleases the Lord. Stay with us as we uncover the layers of this narrative and its timeless lessons, next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we are going to do a short, two-part series on David and Bathsheba. We want to talk about the complexities of this story. We know King David is the one who is the one after God's own heart. He is the one who God has chosen as the king. He has unified the northern and southern kingdoms, but he was not perfect. He had some flaws; and we are not going to skate past any of those flaws. We are going to talk about that, and how it applies to our lives.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, where we are in scripture will be 2 Samuel. This episode will focus on 2 Samuel 11, which is the story of the actual sin and the affair with Bathsheba and the coverup; and then, the next program will be on 2 Samuel 12, which then further delves into the fallout...the really terrible consequences once David is at long-last openly confronted with his sin.

So, in this program, 2 Samuel 11 and the story itself of what happened.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, you know, like I was saying earlier, Scott, David has been on a high; he has been doing things right; he has been doing things well. Ever since he was a teenager and slayed Goliath, he has been on the high road of what it means to obey God and the blessings that come with it; and at this point in his life, he seems pretty untouchable. He has got victory over victory. He is the king and he is reigning, but then, the story takes a turn in Chapter 11 in verse 1, where it says:

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But David remained in Jerusalem...why? You know, I have often kind of thought that what you get here, Darrell, is a little bit of a portrait of maybe David being a little bored. He has the whole world now; and yes, rather than go out with the armies, he just kind of stays behind. Years ago, there was...the Pennyroyal Caxton Illustrated Bible came out, and the great illustrator, Barry Moser did two portraits of David in that Bible. The first is David when he slew Goliath...young, cocky, eyes on fire; and then the second was of David around the time of the affair with Bathsheba, where his eyes are a little dimmer. They are kind of downcast. He looks a little bored, you know; he is kind of having a midlife crisis. So, he stays behind; but unfortunately, as we are going to see, his not having gone out to do his duty as the king and fight Israel's battles with them, sets him up for something really quite dreadful.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; so, I mean, his call was to be the king and his call was to lead by example; and because he could have been overconfident...like, I have had victory after victory, I will just send Joab. We are going to win anyway; it doesn't matter...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, complacency could have set in.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; and we all know, Darrell, I think in all of our lives, that can happen, you know; we once had a little more zeal for the Lord; we once had a more robust devotional life; we had a more robust prayer life; but then over time, bit by bit those things kind of start fading away and we are not quite as devout; we are not quite as regular in our devotional life as we used to be; and maybe that also sets us up for something like what happens with David.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; I have seen this happen in different church settings, where there is an event or there is a concert or there is a revival, and it is a flash in the pan for some, and then it doesn't last. So, people start to get a little bit complacent; and David is actually...I feel like he is in that situation in these verses as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And here we read what happens next. So, David stayed in Jerusalem. Now we are in verse 2 of 2 Samuel 11: One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. Then she went back home. ⁵The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

DARRELL DELANEY

So, you know, when we read this story, we are looking at this where he is up on the top. He sees this woman bathing, and he says: Who is that? That should have been the boundary. This is Uriah the Hittite's wife. We should be done talking at that point, but for some reason, he continues to pursue this, knowing now there is a boundary. She is married, and that is adultery. Don't do it. Something continues in his heart to make him want to go there.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Again, if he is having a midlife crisis, if he is feeling a little bit bored...oh, look at that; there is a young woman...here is a beautiful young woman. That could really jazz up my life; that could reignite my spark here a little bit; and he has to have her; and so, he sends for her. And yes, you are right; I mean, Uriah the Hittite I am sure David knew as one of his better soldiers...a loyal soldier. This is *not* his [David's] wife; he is aware of that; and yet, he brings her over to the palace and, you know, there is a lot of speculation... I mean, could she even say no to coming to the palace? Probably not. Could she even say no to his sexual advances? Was she coerced? Some people think she was; but whatever happens, David does it wrong...he just does it wrong; and now, unfortunately for David, it has left a trace. She is pregnant.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; so, it could have been an abuse of power in this situation; and that is a situation that Bathsheba herself probably couldn't have gotten herself out of; and David actually had been the responsible party in that situation if he would have said no and left it alone; but unfortunately, he kept pursuing that; and that happens

sometimes with sin. I mean, it looks enticing; it looks like it could be a fun thing...exciting thing on the front end, but on the back end, there are always consequences.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And, you know, as we are going to be seeing very shortly here in the next part of the program, too, you know, they often say in the world of politics, Darrell, that the coverup is usually worse than the sin itself, right? I mean, you think back to Richard Nixon. If Nixon and his people had just come clean about the burglary at the Watergate Hotel: Yes, we did that. It was a bad thing to do. We admit it; we confess it. Nixon probably would have been fine; but instead, they launched a giant coverup; and it is the coverup...it is the lies we tell to deny what we did...that is actually what gets worse; and that is exactly what is going to happen here as well.

DARRELL DELANEY

It happens with us any time we try to cover up what we have done and take matters into our own hands instead of coming clean before the Lord; and as we go into this next segment, we are going to talk about the implications of that, so stay tuned.

Segment 2

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And we are in the first of just a two-part series. Series don't get much shorter than two, but we are just doing two programs from 2 Samuel 11 and 12 and the tragic story of David's fall and his affair with Bathsheba. We just saw earlier, Darrell, that when he should have been out with his armies, he stayed behind. Why? Was he bored? Was he overconfident? Was he having a midlife crisis? Who knows, but he sees this beautiful woman bathing, and he has, you know, lust for her; he has desire for her; and so, he does what he knows is wrong. He commits adultery with her, but it doesn't end there because she ends up pregnant. So, now David is confronted with a situation that this woman, who lives next door to the palace, whose husband has not been home for a really long time, is pregnant. What do you do?

DARRELL DELANEY

So, in this situation we see David committing this sin. The sin has evidence; and then his poor attempt to try to cover his own tracks; and we see the descending of his character from pride to lust to abuse of power; and he is going to be desperate to do something about it; and we pick up in verse 6 of Chapter 11.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So David sent this word to Joab (that is his commander): "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. ⁷When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. ⁸Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace and a gift from the king was sent after him. ⁹But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?" ¹¹Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house and eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!" ¹²Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening, Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, now David is trying get Uriah to sleep with his wife so that he can cover it up and say: Okay, it must be his baby. She is already pregnant, so he is trying to cover this thing up; but Uriah just won't go along with the plan. He is the only one in this situation that has the integrity to say: Listen, I am supposed to be out here in the middle of the fighting; the team is out here; I should be out here; there is no way I am going to go home and relax and party like we already won when I have a job to do; and so, Uriah refuses to go along with the plan, which puts David in another situation that is complicated.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; I mean, here is the irony. Here is the King of Israel, who is supposed to be the one...as you said earlier, Darrell...he is supposed to be the one who sets the example for all Israel; but instead, it is Uriah who is proving to be the better man here; and I have always kind of thought that the more Uriah proves his fine and outstanding character, the worse David felt about *his* failure of character. I mean, Uriah is so moral, he is so upright and upstanding that it is driving David nuts because it only just shows in starker contrast the very bad thing David has done.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, and it also...I mean, we kind of know where this story is going. It makes it even more tragic to realize that Uriah is trying to the right thing, and he is being unfortunately penalized for doing the right thing by David, who is trying to come up with this scheme to cover up his own mess; and when we try to cover up our own messes, it usually complicates and implicates somebody else. Look at what Jonah did. He went away from the face of God, all the way down to...he is on his way to Tarshish, and look at all the people in the ship who were affected by his disobedience. It is just that we cannot control the implications of what may happen if we are not paying attention to what God wants us to do; and when we are outside of the place he wants us to be, those implications could affect people.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And unfortunately, because plan A to get Uriah to go home and be with his wife long enough to make it appear that that child is Uriah's...Plan A didn't work. So, David moves to Plan B; but Darrell, Plan B is terrible.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; Plan B is worse. Picking up in verse 14, it says: In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. ¹⁵In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." ¹⁶So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. ¹⁷When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Things have gotten much worse. Adultery is terrible; absolutely. David was trying to lie about his adultery and cover it up; that is terrible. But now, he has resorted to murder. I mean, this is an assassination. This is a de facto murder of this good man. This man had just proved himself better than David. So, he has him killed; and that way, you know, as we read in verse 26:

When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. ²⁷After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son.

So, that is how we have ended up. We have an adultery that resulted in a pregnancy that resulted in a campaign to cover it up. That didn't work, and that has now resulted in the death of an innocent man; and now, David has brought her home; and so the baby is his now. No big deal, right? He still has not been exposed for the adultery in the first place. David thinks he has taken care of this.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, you see the degeneration of the steps of sin that start out as a glance and end up as a murder; and it is really interesting how those steps down, down, down; and the fact that he has Uriah carry his own death letter...the insidious part of the sin that is in our hearts that is dark. It is really ugly; it is nothing to be proud of; and so, in this situation, he thinks he got away with it, but then the verse in 2 Samuel 11:27 says: But this thing David had done displeased the Lord.

So, I know that we can kind of fool each other, and we can fool people when we try to do some things that we are not supposed to do; but God, who is always watching and is always knowing, he is the one who we cannot pull the wool over his eyes, Scott.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And the irony is that, of course, in 1 Samuel, when Samuel goes to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to become the next king of Israel after God had rejected Saul, Samuel is really impressed with all these strapping older boys, but no; it is none of them. It is the little guy; it is the young kid; it is David; and then God says to Samuel: Man looks at the outer appearance, but God looks at the heart. He is saying that about David. God can see your heart, too, David. You think you got away with this? You think God is blind? You think he didn't see? Huh-uh; the thing David had done displeased the Lord. I'll say.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; and that is a painful reminder that we are not going to get away with the things that we have tried to do; and that is actually a check for my spirit: How often do I justify small compromises, assuming there are no real consequences because nobody saw it? How often do I try to cover up mistakes instead of confessing them? I realize this story is a way for us to confront these things in our lives...the capacity we have for sin...and not overestimate how powerful it can be in our lives.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And it is an encapsulation of what James writes in the letter of James in the New Testament. James 1:14, 15, where James writes: Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

That is exactly what happens here. This is just all bad momentum on David's part, and it does indeed end up with death...with a murder. And God is watching.

But as we wrap up this first program, we are going to take a step back a little bit and just kind of talk a little bit, Darrell, about things we all need to do in our lives to avoid this very kind of scenario. So, stay tuned for that.

Segment 3

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney, with Scott Hoezee, and you are listening to *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We are looking at the story of David and Bathsheba. We are, in this program, in 2 Samuel Chapter 11, and we have seen the story, that David became complacent; he became bored; he became ungrateful to God. He tries to wake himself up by having an affair with a pretty, younger woman who ends up pregnant; and when he cannot get Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to go home with her so it looks like the baby is his, David arranges to have Uriah killed.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; and the tragedy of this story is a sobering reminder for us to search our own hearts and our own actions so that we don't end up falling into situations that could be a very devastating effect, not just on us, but on the people around us as well, because our goal is to be salt and light and a witness, and when we do these things that are contrary to what God has told us to do, then we are going in the wrong direction. That is why

we are called to ask God to examine our hearts and show us who we are.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Psalm 139:23, 24: Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

We need God to search us; we need to ask God; we need to want to have God to show us where our temptations are—where we could go off the rails like David did in this story; and I think maybe all of this leads to some kind of profound lessons, things we need to apply to our own lives.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; the first thing is that we ought to have opportunities to come clean before God through confession and prayer. You know, later on in this, where you are going to go into the next episode, how he was confronted with this problem and he repented, and we need to be assured that when the Holy Spirit convicts us, we come clean and we repent; and then we can actually do what has been done in Psalm 51, where it says:

¹⁰Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Now, this is what David said before the Holy Spirit comes in to live in the believer. So, I mean, back in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit left when you did something disobedient; but now the Holy Spirit lives in us, and He is the one who convicts us and shows us that we are doing right and wrong; and when he does that, it is our opportunity to come clean, Scott.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And we will look at Psalm 51 again in the next program, after David finally will get confronted with this, and is forced to come clean. Many of our listeners know that at the top of Psalm 51 in what we call a superscription, it suggests that that was the psalm...Psalm 51 was written on the occasion of this whole story of Bathsheba and Uriah and the rest. We actually don't know that that is true. The superscriptions were added much later. They were somebody's guess as to what the occasion of a given psalm may be; but even if David didn't write Psalm 51 in direct connection to this whole sad affair with Bathsheba and Uriah, he could have...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And the sentiments are certainly right. So, yes; we need to have a regular program of confession and prayer that has to be a part of our daily rhythm, and not try to hide things from the God from whom you cannot hide things anyway.

A second idea, I think, Darrell, is something David didn't seem to have, and that is maybe a support system of accountability.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; so, because David is king, who can approach the king and say: Hey listen, I am going to call you on the carpet here; you are wrong. That could cost you your life in the day that David was in. You don't come to the king that way. That could be disrespectful. That could be seen as an attack or something like that; and we will talk about how Nathan the prophet's role will do in the next episode, how important it was for him to get that conviction. I think it is people who are just walking around every day, like you and me, Scott. We need people in our lives who can call us on the carpet and hold us accountable, because the Bible says in Proverbs 27:17:

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You know, it is interesting, we mentioned Richard Nixon earlier in this program, and how the coverup is always worse than the original crime, and that certainly was true of Richard Nixon, but in one of the biographies of Nixon that I read one time, somebody said, you know, one of the tragedies of Richard Nixon is that he really didn't have any friends; and at one point, somebody reflecting back on Nixon's fall from grace and how he had to resign the presidency...the only person ever to do that...if Nixon had had a best friend who could tell him what's what, and confront him with his worst demons, and point out where he was headed off the rails, it might have saved him. A whole lot could have been averted; and so, you know, Darrell, we all need mentors; we all need confidants, or maybe spiritual directors: pastors, friends, a spouse; people who can tell it like it is, and not sugar-coat things, because that kind of accountability can keep us from making the kinds of terrible mistakes and sins that David committed.

DARRELL DELANEY

Accountability is a gift, really, Scott. I mean, if you are humble enough to receive it, it is definitely a gift; and so, not only do people hold us accountable, but when we get number three: align ourselves with God's Word, the Word can also hold us accountable. I have often taught this, that you read the Bible, but then it reads you, because it shows you your heart; it shows you your motives; sharper than any two-edged sword, just like Hebrews 4:12* says; and it is really an opportunity for scripture to teach us how we should be living.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Your Word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path—Psalm 119 (verse 105)—we want that to be true of us at all times. Again, how easy it is to stray from that Word; how easy it is to pass through long stretches of time, sometimes, without picking up the Bible; without really wondering: Hey, is how I am acting at work in line with scripture—in line with what Jesus would tell us to do? Is how I am treating my wife and my kids or my spouse and my kids...am I in plumb...am I lined up with the Bible? The farther we move away from scripture, and using that as sort of the straight ruler by which to measure our lives and see if we are crooked in comparison...the farther we get away from that, the worse things get.

DARRELL DELANEY

And the more susceptible we are to temptations. I think that if we can look at our lives and the parts where we fell off...we did these sins that we are not proud of...it could be a direct correlation to how less amount of Bible...how less amount of accountability...how less amount of transparency and humility I have with my neighbor, with my brother, with my sister. I think that if we understood these three things, then it would strengthen our walk and help put gates up around and protect us. I am not saying that we will never fall into anything ever again...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

But I am saying that as a process if we make these our spiritual practices, then this number of sins will decrease in our lives as the Holy Spirit purifies us.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And you know, the gospels all record for us that Jesus, after his baptism, had forty days of temptation in the wilderness—forty days in the wilderness and then three temptations by the devil himself; and what is interesting is, how does Jesus avoid falling into them? He quotes scripture. He quotes scripture. He is...Jesus is the Word made flesh, so he has an advantage there, but...but the point is, he has marinated his life in scripture; and so that when he is faced with temptations directly from the devil, he is able to avoid them by falling back into God's Word because he is going to live in alignment with God's Word, and we are all called to do that.

DARRELL DELANEY

And because Christ is our example, that is exactly what we are called to do; and as we think about this story of David and Bathsheba, I think it is a sobering reminder of the destructive power of sin; and also the deep need we have for the grace of God; and it also turns into a story of hope; and we thank God that he is able to help us understand that when we come to him in humility, and we ask for accountability in alignment with his Word, he can definitely help us get there.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We do know that grace will have the last word. That is no excuse to sin and say: Well, God will forgive me anyway; but that is the good news, and particularly in the next episode, we are going to see grace will lead the way. God is faithful, even when we are not faithful; and for that we give God our thanks.

Well, thank you for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We hope you will join us again next time as we study the conclusion of the David and Bathsheba story in 2 Samuel 12.

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DARRELL DELANEY

Groundwork is a listener supported program produced by ReFrame Ministries. Visit reframeministries.org for more information and to find resources to encourage your faith. We are your hosts, Darrell Delaney with Scott Hoezee.

***Correction:** The audio of this program misstates the reference for this passage as Hebrews 4:15. The correct reference is Hebrews 4:12.

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