

¹¹“Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. ¹²‘Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.’”
¹³Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. ¹⁴‘However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die.’”¹⁵·²⁴Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her; and she gave birth to a son, and he named him Solomon. Now the LORD loved him²⁵ and sent word through Nathan the prophet, and he named him Jedidiah for the LORD’S sake.

We say that we live in a land of freedom. One of the main reasons that many of our forefathers came here was for freedom of religion. Back in the 1800’s Lutherans were being forced to worship with the Calvinists in Germany, so they came to America in order to worship as they wanted; not how the government told them they had to worship. They came for freedom.

With freedom comes responsibility. Think of the use of alcohol. Just because it is legal for a 21 year old person to drink alcohol - it still takes responsibility to drink it without getting drunk. Alcohol can enslave people. God does not say to you, “feel free to get drunk.” He says that drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God. Freedom has its limits. Even if He won’t stop you from getting drunk, He also won’t stop you from getting arrested or having a hangover.

Americans have lost sight of this. Freedom now means to let me do what I want to do when I want to do it - and you have no right to judge me - nor does anyone else. The only right you don’t have is to judge - and if you judge then you have broken the law of freedom and you are an outlaw. We can see this happening in our society and legislature. Yet you are not immune to this thinking either. Many of you have turned a blind ear to God’s judgments on premarital sex. You have ignored God’s law when it comes to the Sabbath Day and drunkenness. You don’t like hearing about “sin” or “judgment” or “hell” in church. You would probably rather be encouraged to do the right thing with positive examples and stories. You are not immune from this “freedom” by a long shot.

We don’t like to be “threatened” or feel “threatened.” There are plenty of stories in the Bible of threats that God has made along with consequences that God Himself brought about after His people thought He wasn’t watching or that He didn’t really care. We can’t forget this. The Old Testament lesson for today makes it clear.

David may have thought, “Now that I’m king - I can do what I want.” God said to him, “**I gave your master’s house to you, and your master’s wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more.**” (2 Sa 12:8) He treated David with a silver spoon - much like we’ve been treated in America. But there were some things that David COULDN’T have - and David knew that very clearly. “**Thou shalt not commit adultery.**” The Sixth Commandment was clear. “**Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife.**” No. Absolutely not. Off limits. David knew it. Even when he

asked his servant who Bathsheba was, the servant didn't just say - "Oh, that's Bathsheba." He said, "Isn't that URIAH'S WIFE?"

But David must have talked himself into it. Who knows what he said to himself? "I'm the king. I can have what I want when I want it. I'm the Lord's anointed after all. She needs a companion since Uriah has been gone for so many months. We're both grown adults. Nobody will get hurt."

He couldn't have been more wrong. God was furious with what David had done.

11 "This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.' " (2 Sa 12:11-12)

Years later David's own son Absalom tried to usurp the throne of David. He chased his own father from the throne and David had to run, but he left ten concubines behind to take care of the palace. (2 Samuel 20:3) Ahithophel - Bathsheba's grandfather - told Absalom to pitch a tent on top of the palace and one by one sleep with all ten of these women. It was his way of saying to Israel, "Now I'm the man of the house!" David's sin started from the top of his roof - and that's where the consequences of it ended up - and David had no control over it.

Listen to the way God described His judgment. "**I am going to bring calamity on you. I will take your wives. I will do this thing in broad daylight.**" He personified it as if He himself were doing it to David and causing it to happen. Now, God didn't force Absalom to do these things. But He knew what Absalom's own selfish and proud behavior would do - and He knew what evil advice would come from Ahithophel - and He let evil reign that day. It shows us that God is not afraid to allow evil to happen as a judgment and a consequence of evil.

If you allow sin behind closed doors and say nothing of it; if you try to cover it up; if you try to make excuses for it; sooner or later God may throw it right out in the open for all to see. Think about how many people have been exposed for having child pornography over the years. There are consequences - shameful ones at that - and you have no control over it. If illicit sex is no longer shameful to us as a country and we want to proudly do whatever we want to do out in the open, it makes us wonder what God may be rolling up His sleeves to do in order to bring us to repentance. It might become very scary for us, our children, and grandchildren.

We can't really control all of what happens at Washington or America. But you can control what happens in your life and in your house. Are there things that you are making excuses for - things that you think you are getting away with behind closed doors? Are you or your children committing sins that you are afraid of being exposed? Are you covering up for it? Making excuses for your children's behavior? "Everyone is doing it. Kids will be kids." Pointing the finger at other people - complaining about he is getting away with this and she is getting away with that. Make all the excuses you want. God is not dumb. He knows. Even if there is no more shame in our society, it doesn't mean that there won't still be consequences. David's life is living proof of it.

But we need to remember that God wasn't doing this just to embarrass David. He wanted David and the Israelites to repent. That's what he wants from all of us. Sad to say, our sinful nature needs to be threatened and it needs to be shamed. Otherwise none of us will run to God in faith. Who of us will run to the cross - run to the Supper - if we have nothing to fear and nothing to be ashamed of? If we think we have nothing to hide?

David did repent. "**I have sinned against the LORD.**" Read his Psalms. He was filled with shame. He didn't make excuses for what he had done. He didn't blame Bathsheba for washing herself in a seductive way. He didn't stomp his feet and say, "That's not fair!" He confessed his sin. And how quickly did Nathan tell him, "**The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.**" (2 Sa 12:13) He would not have to pay for his sins. The Messiah would do that. The Messiah has done that on the cross. How quickly Nathan spoke those words! It seems as if he couldn't wait to say them; he wanted nothing more than to say them. He spoke of forgiveness as it was already done - for God knew from time and eternity what Christ would do on the cross.

This is what God wants of all of us. He wants our shame to lead us to cling to His shame - to see how humiliated God's Son was on the cross - for us. To see Him spat upon and mocked - all to pay for our sins - so that we wouldn't have to be exposed to the horrors and shame of hell through the ages and ages of eternity. He wants us to be eager with forgiveness too; to want to give it; for Christ died for us too; He wants to see us saved. He isn't looking for reasons to send us to hell, because Jesus already went through hell for us. He wants to save you by Christ's forgiveness.

If David was forgiven, why did David's son have to die then? David had committed this sin for all to see. He was a public figure; the king of Israel. The people who were looking to point the finger at God would have said to themselves, "David got away with murder and adultery. God didn't care. If David was a man after God's own heart, then God must love adultery and murder." They would have been emboldened to sin; much like Americans are when our politicians and companies make public declarations that they will accept and promote immoral behavior. The people throw off restraint and say, "It must be fine!"

This was a tough consequence for David. He loved this child. It brought him to his knees. He didn't eat for days. He prayed for mercy. He begged for the life of the child, but God said "no. The child must die." Yet notice that in David's confession. David said, "**I will go to him, but he cannot come to me.**" David believed that God did not damn his child. His child would have been circumcised. His child was still God's child under a curse of death but not damnation; just as we all are. David seemed to confess his faith here - that he would see his son in heaven again. So when he found out his son died, he got up, shaved, and ate. He accepted the consequences of his sin. He trusted in God even after God put his son to death. He trusted in God that he would see his son alive again after death.

You see this response at other times in the Bible. Samuel - as a young boy - had received a vision from God telling him that Eli's sons would be put to death. When Eli asked Samuel what God told him, Samuel was afraid to say - he had to tell him that God was going to condemn his children. But it is interesting how Eli responded. He simply said to Samuel, "**He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes.**" (1 Sa 3:18) The Apostle Paul was not bitter as he wrote to Timothy from prison; even though he was suffering for preaching the Gospel. He was thankful for the forgiveness and life that he had received through faith in Jesus

Christ. What ultimate faith - to trust that God knows what He is doing - even when He allows your son to die or you to rot in prison!

But isn't that what the Gospel is? God allowed and even ordained for His Son to be arrested, whipped, mocked and die. Even though Jesus begged for some other way, the answer was "no." He not only watched Him die but even put Jesus through hell on the cross. The atheists look at this as divine child abuse. They consider our faith to be crazy to believe in such a God who allows such evil as rape and murder to exist. Yet when we see Christ crucified standing bloody and naked on the cross we see mercy and forgiveness. We see a God who has not abandoned us; but has become us. We don't see an angry and embittered Jesus, but a willing Lamb who was full of forgiveness for those who had crucified Him; full of joy over what His death was doing for us. The Holy Spirit enables us to see all that God allows to happen to us; even the most evil of things; to work out for our good. Think of how the congregation in South Carolina responded to the racial slaughter that happened. They were filled with love and forgiveness. That's not human! That's from God Himself.

Life wasn't over for David and Bathsheba at the death of his son. David continued to be king. He also continued to take care of Bathsheba as his wife. After all of these consequences, God mercifully allowed them to start over and have another child; a child by the name of Solomon - otherwise known as Jedidiah - loved by the LORD. Later on in his life he handed the rule over to Solomon in his old age just prior to his death.

And so life will go on in America. Things will get worse before they get better. The accusations will get worse and so will the consequences. This shouldn't surprise us, for Jesus predicted it. But we don't have to fear this, for God is in control. Whatever consequences He allows will be for our spiritual and eternal good. David didn't quit living. Paul didn't quit hoping or writing. Neither should we.

What we can do is to be faithful as children, workers, husbands and wife. We can do our work well and faithfully. We can raise our children in the training and instruction of the Lord. We can pray for each other and for our country and her leaders. We can obey the government as much as possible when it comes to godly laws, and passively disobey where we have no choice. We can pray God for the strength to be faithful to guard His Word and not succumb to pressure. We can entrust ourselves and our country to the Living God who wants all men to be saved and died for them to be saved; and know that we are in good hands; no matter what He allows to come. We can do all this in the freedom of knowing that we our sins are forgiven; awaiting the ultimate freedom that death gives as we are brought to eternal life in Christ; awaiting the Final Resurrection.

We say that we live in a land of freedom. This freedom is being abused by America - as many of our people are choosing to be enslaved by the freedom to sin. Yet in spite of all of this freedom is not dead. It is not dependent on the Constitution or the Supreme Court. It comes through faith in Christ, who sets you free from fear and shame and guilt; to cling to His promise of forgiveness and life eternal through His death and resurrection. Let freedom ring - in Christ alone. Amen.