

We rejoiced in recent weeks to study the first of the writing prophets, Amos, and to see how the LORD provided the green pastures of His Word even in the dark days of the kings of Israel. Compared to the many fallible kings, corrupt priests, and false prophets, how much more excellent is our King Jesus and His rule over our lives. Even the best of these kings, such as the Psalm-singer David, fell so far short. We will be comforted by Christ, the true Shepherd, a Godly King and Faithful Guide.

**Monday: Read Psalm 23:1-3 & 2 Samuel 12:1-20**

**He Restores My Soul**

The reclaiming, restoring and gentle leading of lost and wandering sheep is a truly Divine skill. It is not sinless, cute and pure white lambs that Christ Jesus leads to still waters and green pastures as the Good Shepherd. All through Scripture, the LORD holds out His hands to His people in their sin, urging them to repent and saying to them, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Yet, His paths of righteousness are often spurned by the sheep He loves so much (Psalm 23:3).

Sadly, the Old Testament confirms how hardened the sheep of Israel became in refusing to follow the Shepherd's voice. Even the author of our Psalm 23 knew what it was to wander and to abuse the sheep under his care. Nathan the prophet's parable in 2 Samuel 12 labelled David, "Thou art the man!" He stole another man's prized lamb when he took Bathsheba as his own.

**Meditate and Pray:** Would you pray for your elders to be faithful when they have to confront sin and rescue hurt sheep from abuse? Ask the LORD by His Spirit to convict, to heal, forgive and restore even as He did for David. We need the same level of grace in our churches today!

**Tues/Weds: Read Psalm 23:1-3 & 2 Samuel 12:1-20**

**The Murder of the Lamb**

David's sin of adultery was the highest crime a shepherd of God's people could commit. The LORD had been so generous with this King of Israel: giving him his master Saul's house and retinue, exalting him as king, moving the hearts of God's nation Israel to trust him. They were like willing lambs under his royal rule. Then David took one of those lambs, destroyed her life by taking her from her husband, and then killed her husband as well. Instead of ruling Israel generously and being a faithful shepherd to them, he abused his position of power, coveted Bathsheba, and robbed Uriah the Hittite (a simply, lowly soldier), eventually putting Uriah on the front lines to ensure that he would die to cover up that David had fathered a child by his wife.

All this lies behind the final condemnation of David in his adultery in 2 Samuel 12:7-13:

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will

do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

How stunning that David was spared by the LORD after this terrible sin. The Law required death by stoning for the sin of adultery. God spared this shepherd-king by sending *His own precious Son* to die and thereby restore what He (the Christ) had not stolen. David destroyed his own family (as well as the family of Bathsheba) by his sin – but Christ paid the price by being willingly torn from *His own Heavenly family* and becoming sin on the Cross for David and for us. It was only by the life of that Lamb that David's spiritual standing as justified and forgiven in God's sight could be restored. David's life could only be ransomed by Christ's imputing *His own* righteousness to this sinning king.

Meditate and Pray: May God grant His Spirit's help to recognize the stolen moments of disobedience that can never be recovered. Thank Jesus for continually paying our debt. Sing about the amazing imputation of Christ's righteousness to even those tainted with the darkest sins, using hymn # 463:

1 A debtor to mercy alone, of covenant mercy I sing;  
nor fear, with thy righteousness on, my person and off'ring to bring.  
The terrors of law and of God with me can have nothing to do;  
my Savior's obedience and blood hide all my transgressions from view.

3 My name from the palms of his hands eternity will not erase;  
impressed on his heart it remains, in marks of indelible grace.  
Yes, I to the end shall endure, as sure as the earnest is giv'n;  
more happy, but not more secure, the glorified spirits in heav'n.

**Thurs/Fri: Read Psalm 23:1-3; 2 Samuel 12:1-20 & 1 Peter 1:10-12**

**A Hard and Good God**

All the prophets of the Old Testament learned that the Holy Spirit of prophecy in them was pointing into the future to the coming of Christ (1 Peter 1:10-12). But they also learned by that same Spirit that it was the *sufferings* of this Christ that they were predicting.

It is the same for us in our day as we see the heinousness of our own sin: Only with Christ, the sacrificial Lamb, clearly in view can Nathan the prophet declare that David's sin (and ours) can be taken away:

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David,  
The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. (2 Samuel 12:13)

But oh, what a painful way for David to learn the weight of sin! David the prophet learned what the Holy Spirit in him was revealing when it came to *his own sin*.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied ... inquired what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating *when He predicted the sufferings of Christ* and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. (1 Peter 1:10-12 emphasis added)

How hard and good God is to us about sin. David, that sweet Psalm-singer and prophet, writes his most heartfelt song about his own sin. He grieved the Holy Spirit by his sin (Ephesians 4:30) and then discovered that the Holy Spirit *in him* was prophesying about the pain and sufferings *which his sin would cause* when the sacrificial Lamb Jesus finally came.

Let us marvel at the gracious patience and kindness of the Holy Spirit – willing to live in the breast of David *when it was David who epitomized in his sin the painful rupture that would have to occur in the Triune family in Heaven*. Because of David, the Spirit would grieve with the Father, watching the Son die in our nature. Because of David's sin (and ours) the weight of the guilt of all such sins would fall upon Christ.

In the words of the Puritan John Owen, it was the same Holy Spirit who inspired David's prophecies about Christ and revealed the sufferings of Christ for sin (including his with Bathsheba) who also supported and carried the Son of God to the threshold of the Temple at Calvary.

**Meditate and Pray:** When Christ saw revealed before Him the furnace of Divine justice into which He would enter, He sweated blood to express the true horror of every sin, every theft, every adulterous act, malicious thought, or false word which we, like David, commit.

But because it was “through the Holy Spirit” that He carried our sins away (Hebrews 9:14), we also, like David, can know that the greatest stain of sin can indeed be removed. The world hates such grace and generosity from God. But we rejoice in it in the words of this hymn from our red Trinity hymnal (# 486):

1 God, be merciful to me,  
on thy grace I rest my plea;  
plenteous in compassion thou,  
blot out my transgressions now;  
wash me, make me pure within,  
cleanse, O cleanse me from my sin.

2 My transgressions I confess,  
grief and guilt my soul oppress;  
I have sinned against thy grace  
and provoked thee to thy face;  
I confess thy judgment just,  
speechless, I thy mercy trust.

3 I am evil, born in sin;  
thou desirest truth within.  
thou alone my Savior art,  
teach thy wisdom to my heart;  
make me pure, thy grace bestow,  
wash me whiter than the snow.

4 Broken, humbled to the dust  
by thy wrath and judgment just,  
let my contrite heart rejoice  
and in gladness hear thy voice;  
from my sins O hide thy face,  
blot them out in boundless grace.

5 Gracious God, my heart renew,  
make my spirit right and true;  
cast me not away from thee,  
let thy Spirit dwell in me;  
thy salvation's joy impart,  
steadfast make my willing heart.

6 Sinners then shall learn from me  
and return, O God, to thee;  
Savior, all my guilt remove,  
and my tongue shall sing thy love;  
touch my silent lips, O Lord,  
and my mouth shall praise accord.

**Saturday: Read Psalm 23:1-3 & 2 Samuel 12:10-12****Legacy of Redemption**

As we think of the pain and suffering which came from David's sin, we must realize that David's sin did not just damage his own family and royal legacy. His sin played a role in all the ruptures that came about in the royal houses of Israel, leading eventually to civil war, a divided kingdom, and the seeds of Israel's idolatrous rebellion. Take, for example, his successor and son Solomon – what was the besetting sin of his reign, wise, rich and famous though he was? It was that his heart was “led astray by foreign women.” He gave into the temptation of having a roving eye just as his father had.

**Meditate and Pray:** Lord, may you restore our hearts, not only for our sake but for that of our children and the generation that we have the privilege to influence. Praise You for calling us righteous in Christ (

**Sunday: Read Psalm 23:1-3 & Amos 2:4-5****Paths of Righteousness**

This week's notes on the sin of David were not part of my original plan for these notes. But we ended up focusing on David because we must realize that the LORD's “paths of righteousness” in Psalm 23:3 include the path of the heart-breaking chastisement of His own when they sin. We bring upon ourselves great temporal judgments in this world when we break God's Law. David learned this, and we should tremble too: “LORD, save us from sinning in our old age as David did!

How appropriate, then, for us to end this week with the sins of the house of Judah in Amos 2. This was the royal house of David and the root of Messianic hope in all of Israel. Though the list of Judah's sins in Amos 2:4-5 is shorter than the sins which Amos will go on to highlight in the ten tribes of Israel to the North, the transgression of God's Law always has terrible consequences.

But still we can hear the world argue: Why is breaking the Law of the LORD even mentioned as a sin (Amos 2:4)? Isn't it liberating not to be subject to the God's requirements? Can we not make our own world free from the shackles and demands of the thundering God of Mt Sinai? Well, to whom much is given, much is required. Even more, the fact that this royal tribe was the root family of our Savior, means that sins were particularly aggravating when they arose in this royal house.

**Meditate and Pray:** We have been given so much. May God spare us from sinning against the great outpouring of His grace in our lives. I close with these sober words from our Westminster Confession of Faith:

As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation, so there is no sin so great that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.

But so much depends on the grace of repentance which God alone gives. May God pour our such a humble and contrite spirit upon us – for even the “small sins” of our lives!