

## When the Mighty Fall

[2 Samuel 11:26-12:13](#), [Ephesians 4:1-16](#)

Today's scripture lesson from 2 Samuel is a hard one for us to read and take in. I'm thinking most of us would have been much more comfortable if the scripture writers would have left out the incidences of those who sin against God – particularly the ones whom we hold up as examples of the faithful followers of God. But at times even the mighty fall. I think the big-picture message for us today is that those characters we read about in the Bible were human, and many were prone to sin.

I think before we get to today's scripture we need to go back a little to get a sense of the events that took place. First, David was king and there were certain times that kings were meant to go out and do battle. This sounds very odd to us but wars and conquests were done according to an agrarian schedule. You didn't want your warriors out on the battle fields

when the crops needed to be sown or harvested. So there was a time for battle and for conquest. God had been with David through many such conquests and David and his armies had been successful in re-acquiring most of the land God had promised to Moses.

So it was time to do battle, but David stayed behind. He sent his troops out but did not go and lead them as he had done in the past. At this point, our antennae should be going up – David was clearly not where he was supposed to be. The scripture tells us David was restless – pacing back and forth. He couldn't sleep. Clearly something was out of kilter with him.

At times like these in our own lives we too can fall to temptation. When we are distracted or out-of-sorts, perhaps we too could stray from God's will for our lives. Even the mighty can fall.

The story goes on and David was pacing on his roof. He saw a woman bathing and cannot see beyond his own sin. He cannot hear the guiding voice of God or his own conscience reminding him that he was a married man (several times in fact) and that giving in to lust was a sin. Nothing mattered except to take this woman for his own. Bathsheba was the wife of the Hittite Uriah – a foreigner but one of stature for Uriah fought with David and his armies.

I have heard many condemn Bathsheba for the part she played in corrupting God's servant David. Why was she bathing outside? According to historians that was the custom of the day and as no one was usually pacing around rooftops at night, it was the most private location available. Why did she not refuse to go to David when he sent for her? The fact that David was king and she was the wife of a foreigner basically meant she had

to go when called, or she would die. It was as simple as that.

Many note David's sin with Bathsheba as adultery, but perhaps his actions were more severe than that as I am not sure

Bathsheba was a willing partner to David. Nevertheless, David commits the sin of 'adultery' by taking another man's wife.

For every action we do, there are consequences – some good and some bad. When one enters into an action, one must be prepared to accept the consequences. In this case, Bathsheba soon sent word to David that she was pregnant. This created a huge problem for David. He needed a cover up in order to protect himself from the consequences of his actions. I find it interesting that David seemed completely blinded to his sin. David was held up for us as a model follower of God and an upright king. How could he not see the tangled web he was

weaving as a result of giving in to the temptation of sin? He seemed completely blinded to his sin.

Nevertheless, David arranged for Uriah, Bathsheba's husband to die in battle. In fact, David gave a written message to Uriah to carry to his commanding officer – it was literally Uriah's own death sentence. The commander was told to put Uriah at the head of the fighting and then pull back leaving him to die at the hands of the enemy. With the way clear, David took Bathsheba as his wife and still did not recognize the fact that he had committed now two major sins – 'adultery' and murder.

At this point God reestablished communication with David. It is interesting that God did nothing to stop these events and many would question why. One thing that seems clear is that God has allowed us our own free will. We make choices in our

lives, both good and bad. It was time to remind David of the bad choices he had made and the consequences of those choices. So God sent Nathan to David with a story of a rich man and a poor man and how everything was taken from the poor man by the rich man. He then revealed that David is the rich man in the story. For the first time since David started down his path of sinful acts, David recognized that he has sinned against God.

So what do we make of this story? Should we just ignore it and move on to happier tales of victory and triumph? I think it is important to remember that God forgives us when we sin. Romans 3:23 tells us that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. Sin is ugly and uncomfortable, particularly when it is brought into the light of God. But while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We do not have to remain lost in our sin. God forgives even when we feel we don't deserve forgiveness.

It is also important to remember there are consequences for our sin. David did not get up from confession to God and live a beautiful life from that point on. We can definitely see this event as having devastating repercussions on David's family. This truly marked a turning point in David's career as king, where the rest of his reign was caught in a downward spiral. We too may find ourselves in difficult situations as a result of our sin. Perhaps we have to face someone whom we have wronged and ask for forgiveness. Perhaps we have to own up to the damage we caused or the hurt and pain suffered by others because of our actions.

But I will not leave you with only despair. God prevails in the difficult times. God makes a way when there is no way. God saw to it that the son of David and Bathsheba, although the youngest of David's sons, became king upon David's death.

Solomon ruled with wisdom and power while he followed the will of God. And from this seed we can trace the lineage to Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus our Savior, who came to this world not to condemn the world, but to save it. While we may have consequences to face as a result of our sinful actions, God forgives us and showers us with love from on high. We are God's people, and we have a promise of our heavenly reward and comfort and strength as we face our trials and difficulties in this life.

As we come forward for communion today, perhaps you are in need of forgiveness. The altar rail is always open for prayer. God hears and answers our prayers. We may cry through the night, but joy comes in the morning. I would like to close with a reading from Psalm 51. This was a Psalm written

by David in direct response to his sin committed with  
Bathsheba.

Psalm 51:1-12

Have Mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of my salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Thanks be to God who provides us with a love that is  
beyond our comprehension. There is victory in Jesus, my Savior  
forever. Amen.