

# 2 SAMUEL

IN SEARCH OF A KING PART II



## Sermon 4 – 2 Samuel 11-12 “The woman was very beautiful”

### Introduction

- i. Have you ever held to the opinion that most people are basically good?
  - ii. If everyone *was* basically good, what differences might we expect to see in the world today?
  - iii. OPTIONAL (*remembering of course that ALL questions are!!*) Read Romans 3:9-18 and discuss.
1. **Safe but not safe** – 11:1-5
    - a. Read James 1:14-15 and discuss how you can see the principle described there, at work in David’s situation.
    - b. What *ought* David to have done? (see for example Job 31:1, Numbers 15:39, Matthew 5:28).
    - c. Why is God so restrictive about sexual expression?
    - d. How would you help a Christian couple who are considering sleeping together – living together – prior to marriage? How would you counsel them?
    - e. We live in an over-sexualised society. What steps can we take to keep ourselves safe in the face of temptation? And how can we encourage one another in sexual purity?
    - f. Only one is good – Jesus Christ. You may enjoy reminding some of the following: Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 2:22, 1 John 3:3, Philippians 2:8 and Romans 6:22-23.
    - g. Bathsheba is pregnant. What detail given in the text assures us David is the father. How do you think he may have reacted?
  2. **Deceived and deceiving** – 11:6-27 (See also Jeremiah 17:9)
    - a. On hearing of Bathsheba is pregnant, why didn’t David just come clean – both with Uriah and with God? (Why don’t WE come clean when we see our sin?)
    - b. David thinks this situation is no big deal and sets out to cover his tracks. Why do you think plans A and B failed?
    - c. Why such elaborate scheming for Plan C? (David could have just killed him!)
    - d. How do we typically delude ourselves into thinking that our sin is no big deal?
    - e. The last sentence in the chapter stands out. What did Mark and Ruth point out was a better translation? How did David not see this?
  3. **Confronted and confronting** – 12:1-25
    - a. Ever hurt someone and only found out later? How did you feel? Can you share the story?
    - b. What is so brilliant about Nathan’s use of the story to confront David with his sin?
    - c. Although there will be consequences for David and his family, once David confesses, we read that David’s sin is taken away and he’s not going to die. How is that fair!?
    - d. Read paragraph 1 in day 4 of the reading notes and discuss the ‘fury of grace’.
    - e. David deserved death, but received grace. Read Romans 3:23-24 and 6:23 and discuss how you feel about the reality of God’s grace to you.

*What will be your personal take from this passage or study? Pray for one another that we will not be deluded by sin!*

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**Series:** In search of a King II  
**Passage:** 2 Samuel 11-12  
**Title:** The woman was very beautiful

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1. *We'll have the sermon introduction prior to the Bible reading today*
2. *Going to take a little longer today – if that's OK!*
3. *I must begin with an acknowledgment that I have found John Woodhouse's commentary on these two chapters so full of godly insight and wisdom and that some words in the text that follows are his, word for word.*

## INTRODUCTION

- One of my favourite lines during the fiasco in Canberra this week – from a journalist or commentator was : “if you can't run a coup, you can't run the country!!”
- One of the most difficult lessons for us to learn is that we are not up to the task of running the country... or the world!
- Again and again we hope that a new leader, a new government, political system, economic program, foreign policy or *something* will provide the answers that the nation - the world - needs.
- But we always end up disappointed.
- ...and no matter what you think of Scott Morrison **today**... if you're not **already** disappointed – you **will be** at some point!
- But this leads me to a **related** matter. It amazes me when I regularly hear people say something to the effect of ‘most people are basically **good**, aren't they’.
- Have **you** heard that?
- Its lovely on the one hand that people want to think the **best**... you know that line that comes up in eulogies... ‘they never had a bad word to say about anybody’... I always think ‘**really**’? **Really?** // Maybe it says more about **me** than anyone else – but I just don't buy it! And even if he or she never had a bad **word** to say about any – I bet he – she – **thought** it!
- You see – if it was true that around the globe – ‘most people are basically good’ – then over time – and we've had considerable time – wouldn't **poverty** be wiped **out**? Wouldn't **wars cease**? Wouldn't – by and large – the **jail population** significantly **reduce**?
- If everyone was basically **good** – wouldn't it be the case that **married** people would stay **together**; wouldn't it be the case that **greed** no longer drove the **economy** – and **corruption commissions** have to **close down** for lack of **new cases**??
- If everyone was basically **good**, wouldn't **peace** break out **everywhere**; wouldn't all relationships be basically **harmonious**; wouldn't **kindness** be the mark of all human **interactions**?
- No friends, what we're going to see today, is the reality of what the Apostle Paul points out // **no one is good, not even one**... (Romans 3)
- Not even King **David**... **David** – the man after God's own **heart** – David – the one who has been promised a **dynasty** with an everlasting **Kingdom**... **David** who **danced** before the Lord... David who refrained from killing **Saul** when being chased by him; David who took a **disabled** man from **Saul's family** into his **household** and cared for him... David who **grieved** the death of even his **enemies**... //
- ...no – not even **David** was **good**... //
- This account this morning will **shock** us
- We will be shocked at David's **actions**

- Shocked by God's **forgiveness**
- ...and at the **repercussions**...
- So – here is where we are heading this morning...
  1. **Safe but not safe**
  2. **Deceived and Deceiving**
  3. **Confronted and confronting**

*If you're reading this text now, but have not read the passage, I would suggest that you should open up 2 Samuel 11-12 and take the time to read through carefully.*

- So **first**:

## 1. **SAFE BUT NOT SAFE**

- In the intervening chapters since chapter 7, David has been fighting various battles...
- Chapter 11 opens weirdly **doesn't** it? *In the spring time when kings go off to war..*
- Sounds like the beginning of a new **footy** season or something!!
- Actually it is something like we hear about in Afghanistan... the winter is simply too **harsh** for battle... and we often read that its **war** time again...
- So – here – they are going to **resume** a battle reported in the previous chapter... we don't know whether it was **weather** that had called a halt to proceedings... but the reason is probably not all that significant.
- What **is** significant – and there is a certain emphasis in the original language – *but David... David remained in Jerusalem...*
- now we presume he had done that previously (10:2 and 5 and 7), but this time it's important enough to **mention**.
- David is **safe**! Battles are raging 40-60kms away – but he is **safe** in the walled city that bears his name //
- But there is a **disaster** about to happen – **far greater** than on the battle grounds in which his men are fighting.
- Have a look with me... from v2 : we're told with an extraordinary economy of words - *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, 3 and 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." 4 Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. 5 The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."*
- The king was not safe **after all**!
- The power that brought David down was not an enemy from **outside**... the walls of Jerusalem were no protection in **this** battle.
- ...no – David was not safe from **himself**. This battle was against his own deep **flaws**.
- He **saw** – he **sought** – he **took**
- She was **beautiful**... but there was nothing to suggest she was being **provocative** or **inappropriate** in any way...
- When David **sought** to find out about her – he was told very definitely that she was the wife of **Uriah**... so he knew she belonged to **someone else**... that she was **married**...
- But that did not deter him. He used his royal **authority** to send for her.

- We know what David **ought** to have done... he should have averted his **gaze** and got on with something else (Job 31:1). He should not have continued to foster lustful **thoughts** (Numbers 15:39, Matt 5:28). He ought not to have **coveted** his neighbour's **wife**. He ought not to have **committed adultery!** //
- But David was ruled by his **desires** not by God's **word**.
- since the fall, **nakedness** has never been the same. While once, Adam and Eve were naked and felt **no** shame, after the fall, they cover themselves...
- The **goodness** and **beauty** of sex has been **corrupted** – our desires **distorted**.
- Pleasure has become something to be **taken**, not **given**. //
- **Some** would be asking of this account today – really? - honestly what's the big deal here?
- This is the age of sexual freedom... as long there was **consent** (which there may or not have been in this case).... provided that David did not abuse his power to **coerce** her (perhaps a bit **harder** to believe)... and provided David did not **hurt** here (we simply do not know about that), many would ask today 'what harm was **done?**' //
- Before we finish this morning, we'll see a **great** deal of harm was done – but please note that the world is terribly deceived about '**sexual freedom**'.
- Our sexual natures are a gift from our Creator for the purpose of binding a man and a woman in lifelong marriage and for the birth of children in that context.
- The boundaries that God places on our sexual behaviour are there to protect the wonderful and powerful purpose of sex.
- **True sexual freedom** is when sex is freed from **self-centred lust** and is able to accomplish its **brilliant** (and **unselfish**) **purpose**. ///
- If a great and good man like David can fall morally as spectacularly as **this**, then we must **all** acknowledge the danger we are to **ourselves!**
- If a great and good man like King David can be destroyed by his own weakness, then what hope can there be for **any** of us?
- We are **all** capable of crossing proper moral boundaries for the sake of short-sighted and selfish desires.
- It applies to many aspects of life – but **particularly** in the area of **sexual behaviour**...
- And Jesus confronts us with the challenge that if even we **look** at someone with lustful intent, we have **already** committed adultery... //
- Are you in a sexual relationship **now** outside of marriage?
- It must **stop**...
- Before it is your **undoing!**
- Is there unchecked **lust** in your **heart?** It **must** be **addressed!** //
- Every one basically **good?**
- No – not **one** is righteous – not **one**...
- Except the **Lord Jesus** – who was without sin (Heb 4:15), who committed no sin (1 Peter 2:22), who was pure in every way (1 John 3:3), who was entirely obedient to God (Philippians 2:8)... / and this perfect one... the lamb without a blemish, died in our **place**... – our **Saviour** – without whom we'd be **completely lost** – **Jesus!** ///
- By **him** – by his death and resurrection – we have been set **free** from sin... and have **eternal life** (Romans 6:22) ///
- **Cling** to Jesus... and claim his power to say '**no**' to sin and '**yes**' to **godliness!** //

- We only hear from Bathsheba **once** in this account.
- She sends word to David in v5: **"I am pregnant"**
- And this is why we were given the detail about the fact that her bathing was to purify herself from her monthly uncleanness... because now we know for **sure** that the paternity of the child she is carrying is not in doubt: It can **only** be **David's**.
- What will David **do**? How will he get himself **out** of this **situation**? //
- Well – and this is when we see that David is both:

## 2. DECEIVED AND DECEIVING

- David is in **trouble.. deep** trouble...
- And he's **deceived**... he's **deceived** in thinking this is **no big deal**...
- No **surprise** that he's deceived – for our hearts are **deceitful** above **all things** and desperately **sick** (Jer 17:9)... //
- "I'm pregnant" the message comes.
- David could have **humbled** himself right there and then couldn't he? – "what have I done?" – "I'm so sorry Lord" – "so sorry Bathsheba..." "so sorry Uriah..."
- But he had **always** been quick to devise clever strategies...
- So he has a plan – let's call it **Plan A** – have Uriah sent back from war in the hope that he would go and sleep with Bathsheba and no one will ever know the difference...
- But Uriah's too **good** for that... "why should I go home to the comfort of my home and into the arms of my wife while my **mates** are out fighting **David's wars**?"
- Did Uriah **suspect** something? Had word got **out**? After all – David's **people** had **enquired** about Bathsheba... gone and brought Bathsheba **to** him... someone had brought the message from Bathsheba that she was **pregnant**... people knew... **some** people **knew**!!
- Perhaps Uriah had **heard** and seen **through** David's plans and so was going to make it **hard** for him?
- We don't **know** – and there's nothing to suggest that is the case... but we **are** left **wondering**...! /
- So **plan A has failed**. Time for plan **B**
- Plan B is to get Uriah **drunk**... you see David's heart is **deceived** into thinking there were still better options open to him than **repenting**!
- **Uriah** is a better man **drunk**, than **David** is **sober**...
- ... he still sees himself as a **servant** of **David** and **David** as his **Lord**! He simply will **not** go home to enjoy all of home's pleasures, while his mates – and the ark – are in tents!
- David is **deceiving** and **deceived**.
- He wants to deceive **Uriah** into helping him cover his **tracks** and he remains **deceived** that what he did was **no big deal**. //
- **Beware** brothers and sisters of putting your **consciences** to **sleep**... and seeing **sin** as **no big deal**... when we have done **wrong**, **immediate** acknowledgement and willingness to **bear** the **shame** is a far **wiser** path than a **foolish** attempt at **cover-up** or **self-deception** that will **never** work in the **end** //
- David's heart is **deceitful** and **sick**... and ours is **precisely** the **same**... and the Lord will one day **call you to account**! – as he did **David**... // more of that in a minute...
- Enter **Plan C**

- **Murder.** That's it. If he won't cooperate with my plans – he simply has to **go!**
- And so Uriah returns to the front line, bearing his own death warrant. Vv14-15 - *In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. 15 In 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."*
- I hope you're **horrified.** // The **lustful** glance from a **rooftop** just a few weeks earlier had now led to a **murder plot.**
- It was **successful...** the **deed** was **done...**
- David takes Bathsheba as his wife. Child was born. Nothing to see here! All's well that ends well. //
- Like every parliamentarian who we heard from yesterday – let's now just put all this behind us!! //
- David had **deluded** himself (and did his best to delude **others**) into thinking he had done **nothing** wrong..
- he even tells his commander – look – don't worry yourself about arranging to have Uriah killed – don't lose any sleep over it – **don't see it as evil...**
- But the Lord sees it entirely **differently** – look with me at the only time in ch 11 we hear from or about the Lord – the very last line – *But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.* Now I have no idea why the translators have put it that way – because the Hebrew says – the thing David had done was **evil** in the eyes of the Lord. //
- which brings us finally to...

### 3. CONFRONTED AND CONFRONTING

- Have you ever suddenly been woken up to a reality to which you had been **completely** blind?
- Have you inadvertently **hurt** someone - albeit unintentionally – had absolutely **no idea** – and when you found out about it later, you were **totally mortified?**
- ... or have you one day been confronted by the ugly reality of your **sin** before God... which you had previously **dismissed** or **excused?** And the shame and horror you felt was unbearable? //
- This is what happened for **David...** As **King,** David often had to hear disputes... the prophet Nathan had a story to tell which Nathan thought was simply the next case on the list.
- What an elaborate story – poor man with one little ewe lamb which he and his children loved and treated as a pet. What do we read at the end of v3 - *it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.*
- Then we hear of a rich neighbour who had people coming for lunch... and although he had heaps of sheep or cattle of his own, he actually took the little lamb which belonged to the poor man and prepared **it** for lunch!
- We are **shocked** aren't we! That's **outrageous!** It's **unreasonable** and **unjust** and **unfair..!**
- David is **shocked** too! v5 – *he burned with anger against the man... the man must die!*
- And then come the most powerful four words in the account... confronting... piercing... cutting right through David's delusions... **YOU ARE THE MAN!**
- **You** are that man David... you have plenty – plenty of **wives...** you have all **Israel** at your disposal... if you had wanted more – I would have **given** it to you....
- But you took Bathsheba's **body...** /
- And you took Uriah's **life...** /
- **You are the man!**

- David is confronted and then told of confronting consequences – v10 – *the sword will never depart from your house* – and we’ll see what that means in the coming weeks...
- v11 – you’ll be publicly **shamed** and **humiliated** because someone close to you will sleep with your wives... out in the open...
- v14 – because you’ve shown utter **contempt** for the Lord, the son **born** to you will **die**.
- It just sounds **awful** doesn’t it!?
- How does David **react**?
- v13 – *I have sinned against the Lord...*
- you’ll hear David’s longer reflections if you read Psalm 51... but the word of the Lord had done it’s work... he is completely shattered by the word of God... (Double edged sword!)
- the word of God had penetrated his **dark heart**...
- but if ‘you are the man’ are the most **powerful** words in the account, we are about to hear the most **astounding** words... //
- Nathan again... upon David’s confession v13 – *‘The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die’*.
- **What?** But that’s what he **deserved!** The law was **clear!** //
- But this is **grace** you see... something-for-nothing-when-we-deserve-the-opposite... /
- God’s grace to David started in **v1** by sending Nathan in the first place.
- It **continued** as God made his **fury clear**... God will not allow David to **continue** in his sin... **Grace pursued** David and **would not let him go!**
- You may succeed in **unfaithfulness** **Christian**, but God will come **after** you! /
- The **law** tells us what David deserved – **death**; but **grace** shows us what David **received** – **forgiveness** and the commuting of the death sentence
- God forgives the **guilt** of sin //
- there are still consequences... the child **would die**.
- It is as if the child will die in **David’s place**.
- **Remind** you of **something**?
- **forgiveness** is both **free** and **costly**.
- The **wages** of sin is **death**. But **Christ died for us**.

- 
- **Let me close**... most people are basically **good** aren’t they?
  - **No**.
  - No they’re **not**.
  - ...even God’s appointed **King**... described as a **man** after God’s own **heart** – **fearless** in **battle** – **kind hearted**... **humble**... **keen** for **God’s glory**... // but **deeply flawed**.
  - **Safe** in the **city** – but **not safe** from his own **desires**
  - **Deluded** as to the **reality** and **seriousness** of his sin... and keen to delude **others** as he desperately sought to cover his tracks
  - But finally **confronted** with his sin... he confessed ‘I have sinned against the Lord’ and the Lord took away his **sin**... he **would not die**... //

- I wonder if there are any **here** today... who have found yourself not **safe** from your **own desires** – in fact you've **given in** to them... and then **deluded** yourself and **others** that it's **no big deal**...
- But perhaps this **morning** – you've been **confronted**... sin is **real**... it's **serious**... it **matters**...
- If that is **you**? Drink **deeply** from the **well** of God's **grace**...
- For if like David you **confess** your sin... then God says to **you** today – *your sin is taken away – you will not die*...
- How can it **be**? God's **grace**... something-for-nothing-when-you-deserve-the-opposite...
- **How can it be**? Because Jesus has **died** for you...
- ... so that your sin could be taken away...
- *The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life...* Romans (6:23)