



Studies in the Life of David

Text

Second Samuel 11.1-27

Topic

David watches Bathsheba bathing
then summons her to the palace and commits adultery

Title

“She Came In Through His Bathtub Watching”

Introduction

Inigo Montoya says, “He’s dead. He can’t talk.” To which Miracle Max responds, “Whoo-hoo-hoo, look who knows so much. It just so happens that your friend here is only **MOSTLY** dead. There’s a big difference between mostly dead and all dead. Mostly dead is slightly alive. With all dead, well, with all dead there’s usually only one thing you can do.”

“What’s that?”

“Go through his clothes and look for loose change!”

Thus has the phrase “mostly dead” made its way from the cult classic, *The Princess Bride*, into popular culture.

I’m going to suggest that with regard to Bathsheba, **David was “mostly dead.”** He was “mostly dead” to sin when he ought to have been **all** dead to it.

The Bible tells Christians we are to “reckon [ourselves] dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). Earlier in that passage the apostle Paul describes Christians as “crucified,” “dead,” and “buried” with regard to sin. When Jesus died on the Cross, spiritually speaking *we died with Him* with the result that we no longer need to yield ourselves to sinful impulses anymore than a dead man would!

Though dead to sin, we may yet freely choose to let it rule over us. Right after being told to “reckon [ourselves] dead indeed to sin we read in Romans 6:12-13,

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Romans 6:13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin...

It is a choice we make. But it's an either/or choice. Either we are all dead to sin or we are only mostly dead.

David chose badly. I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Get Beyond Being Mostly Dead To Sin, and #2 Get Into Being All Dead To Sin.

#1 Get Beyond Being **Mostly Dead** To Sin (v1-6)

In the Book of Deuteronomy God gave the kings of Israel three directives.

Deuteronomy 17:16 But [the king] shall not multiply horses for himself...

Deuteronomy 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

With regard to “horses,” the idea seems to be that the Lord did not want the king to trust in military equipment but rather to trust in the Lord for victory. David understood this and that's why in chapter eight when David defeated Hadadezer king of Zobah he hamstringed all of the chariot horses he had captured rendering them useless for future battles.

With regard to “silver and gold,” David dedicated much, if not most, of his personal wealth to the building of the future Temple by his son, Solomon. It added up to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Neither power nor possessions were a problem for David. He was dead to their temptation, yielding himself to God.

With regard to “wives” - *that was another thing altogether!*

- Before David was king he was married to Michal, Saul’s daughter.
- While a fugitive from Saul we read that David took Abigail, the widow of Nabal, to be his wife, and that he “also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and so both of them were his wives.”
- After Saul’s death he was made king over the southern kingdom of Judah. He had sons born to him by no less than four additional wives - Maacah, Haggith, Abital, and Eglah (Second Samuel 3:2-5).

That’s a whole lot of wives but David wasn’t done. When David conquered Jerusalem and united the nation we read in Second Samuel 5:13, “And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem...”

David was dead to power and possessions but *not* to his passions. He took a second wife, a third, then he had six, then multiplied many more plus their maids.

He had become so used to feeding his passion for wives that one day he took not just another wife, but another man’s wife.

Two out of three might make you successful elsewhere, but not when it comes to sin. David was therefore only mostly dead to sin and it was his undoing. Let’s watch it unfold.

2 Samuel 11:1 It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

The Holy Spirit indicates that David ought to have been out with the army leading the fight. If he had, he would not have had opportunity to sin.

I'm sure David had a few good reasons for sitting this one out. So can we always think of one reason or another why we cannot be about the business of serving the Lord. Soon it becomes a pattern, a habit, and we act like retired kings who require the luxuries of a palace rather than soldiers happy with rations and camaraderie on the front lines.

2 Samuel 11:2 Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold.

You might sometimes read or hear that Bathsheba shares some blame. That's like blaming a woman when she gets raped. *Nope!* It's all on David.

2 Samuel 11:3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

There was no mistaking that she was a married woman. David's passions were so dominant that he would not even heed a direct warning.

2 Samuel 11:4 Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house.

Ah! Bathsheba was taking a bath for purification under Jewish law. As I understand it, after a woman's menstrual cycle she was required to undergo a ritual bath. She therefore may have been attended by another gal and, since it was the season for kings to be gone to war, there was a reasonable expectation of privacy for her rooftop ritual.

2 Samuel 11:5 And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, "I am with child."

How did things ever get that far? They got that far because David allowed himself the indulgence of just one area in his life that was inappropriate.

His obedience in the area of horses and money didn't cancel-out his disobedience regarding wives.

By the way: It was perfectly normal for kings to have harems. Just not Jewish kings! We want to remain separate from the surrounding culture, especially with regard to our morality.

The passage in Romans we've been citing as our New Testament principle says,

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

David illustrates this in his actions on the rooftop. We know from an earlier passage that David could look out from his palace and see the Tabernacle where God dwelt among the Israelites.

- He could look at the Tabernacle, at God, as it were.
- Or he could look over at a woman bathing, at pornography, as it were.

It was a clear choice he could make to yield his body to God or to sin.

Likewise you and I. Because of what Jesus did on the Cross are dead to sin but we have a clear choice to make in every situation. Will we look to God, as David could have? Or will we look at sin, as David did?

#2 Get Into Being **All Dead To Sin** (v7-27)

In contrast to David is Uriah the Hittite, the honorable husband of Bathsheba.

2 Samuel 11:6 Then David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David.

2 Samuel 11:7 When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered.

David had become an observer. He was content to let others fight.

Get in the fight! Serve the Lord!

2 Samuel 11:8 And David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet."

So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift of food from the king followed him.

2 Samuel 11:9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.

2 Samuel 11:10 So when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"

2 Samuel 11:11 And Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing."

David slept with another man's wife. *Uriah wouldn't even sleep with his own wife!* There was nothing unlawful about it but in this particular situation he felt it would be inappropriate.

Uriah had a ministry-mindset. He represents the attitude that worshipping God, and serving God, are 24/7 activities. Even when I'm not on the front lines, when it's not my turn on the schedule, I am to maintain the mind-set of a servant. After all, I'm all dead to sin, so I am always alive to God and to His promptings.

2 Samuel 11:12 Then David said to Uriah, "Wait here today also, and tomorrow I will let you depart." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next.

2 Samuel 11:13 Now when David called him, he ate and drank before him; and he made him drunk. And at evening he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

Uriah couldn't refuse the food and drink of his king. But he still maintained control of himself. Often we get tripped-up because of things that are lawful for us to partake of. They become dominant and get in the way of our being able to minister to others. Worse yet, we start stumbling others on account of demanding our liberties.

Not Uriah! We ought to follow his example and keep all of our activities in their proper perspective.

2 Samuel 11:14 In the morning it happened that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

2 Samuel 11:15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die."

2 Samuel 11:16 So it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there were valiant men.

2 Samuel 11:17 Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And some of the people of the servants of David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

It's bad enough Uriah was killed. Others were killed along with him. Sin always affects others, not just you.

Uriah could be trusted to carry unopened a letter to his commander that included instructions for his own death. It reminds me of a passage in Second Corinthians 4:7-11 where we read,

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

2 Corinthians 4:8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

2 Corinthians 4:9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed -

2 Corinthians 4:10 **always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus**, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2 Corinthians 4:11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

Just like Uriah we are in a battle. We are to go about like Uriah - carrying our death certificates by reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. We are to obey Him, submit to Him, yield our bodies to Him, considering ourselves dead to sin.

2 Samuel 11:18 Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war,

2 Samuel 11:19 and charged the messenger, saying, "When you have finished telling the matters of the war to the king,

2 Samuel 11:20 if it happens that the king's wrath rises, and he says to you: 'Why did you approach so near to the city when you fought? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall?'

2 Samuel 11:21 Who struck Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Was it not a woman who cast a piece of a millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you go near the wall?' - then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.' "

From the rest and relaxation and indulgence of the palace he'd criticize Joab's tactics when, in fact, it was he who had set everything in motion.

It's easy to criticize, to have a critical spirit. Part of being all dead to sin is to always look first for a log in our own eye before we see the speck in someone else's.

Truth is, sometimes ministry is stymied, it is held back, by armchair servants. They withhold their time and their talent and their money from the Lord, then wonder why things aren't more productive. All the while those in the fight are getting slaughtered.

2 Samuel 11:22 So the messenger went, and came and told David all that Joab had sent by him.

2 Samuel 11:23 And the messenger said to David, "Surely the men prevailed against us and came out to us in the field; then we drove them back as far as the entrance of the gate.

2 Samuel 11:24 The archers shot from the wall at your servants; and some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also."

2 Samuel 11:25 Then David said to the messenger, "Thus you shall say to Joab: 'Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Strengthen your attack against the city, and overthrow it.' So encourage him."

Oh well. Soldiers die in battle. *Never mind David had him murdered and used the battle to cover it.*

2 Samuel 11:26 When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

2 Samuel 11:27 And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

David put on a facade. But of this period in his life David would later write, in Psalm 32:3-4,

Psalms 32:3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long.

Psalms 32:4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.

We might say that since David was 'alive' to sin he was 'dead' toward God. He could not enjoy the fellowship with God for which he was created.

Uriah was dead. **But that's the point!** In one sense he was already 'dead' before he ever came to David. He was dead to sin, all the way dead, and he carried himself in such a way as to inspire others in their serving the Lord. Uriah the Hittite is who we want to be in this story.

"Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:11). "I reckon" is something Jed Clampet might say to Jethro. We take it to mean "I guess," or "I suppose."

In reality the word "reckon" is far more confident and robust. It means *to make a calculation, to rely with confident expectancy, and to take into account.*

When faced with a clear choice to sin or to not sin you are to take into account that your are dead to sin, make a calculation as to the alternatives and the consequences, then rely with confident expectation that God's power is sufficient for you to turn away from it.

God does not command you to **become** "dead indeed to sin" by any means of your own. It isn't something you achieve through discipline. He tells you that you are **already** "dead indeed to sin and alive" to Him, and then He commands you to act appropriately.

God crucified your sin nature on the Cross, rendering it inoperative. Crucifixion is one form of death you cannot accomplish on your own. You cannot crucify yourself! This is why religion, with its rules, rites, and rituals, can never resolve the problem of sin in your life. **Nothing** you can do can crucify sin. God must do it for you on the Cross. Then, through a living,

personal relationship with God through Jesus, you can by faith act on the fact that sin need no longer reign and have dominion over you.

Get beyond being mostly dead to sin. Get into being all dead to sin.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus!

