



Studies in the Life of David

Text

Second Samuel 12:1-14

Topic

Nathan tells a story about a poor man's pet ewe lamb in order to expose David's sins of adultery and murder

Title

"Embraceable Ewe"

Introduction

"You're the man," or its slang equivalent, "You 'da man," is a phrase we sometimes use as an expression of praise. It means, "You're the best," or, "You're someone I admire," or "You're someone who can make things happen."

Normally it's something you want to hear said about you.

It was *not* something David wanted to hear said about himself! When his friend and God's servant, Nathan, came to him and said, "You are the man!" it was to expose his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and his ordering the murder of Uriah her husband,.

As I thought about this confrontation I started to see that God was telling Nathan, "**You're** the man who is going to tell David, '**You're the man!**' "

God sent him to David to share His Word with the hope of seeing David repent.

God sends you and I to share His Word with the hope that those who hear will repent! We are His Nathan's today in all the various circumstances in which we find ourselves.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 You Are The Man God Sends As His Messenger, and #2 "You Are The Man," God Says, In His Message.

#1 You Are The Man God Sends As His Messenger

(v1-6)

Jesus spoke of our being sent when He gave what we call The Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20.

Matthew 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them...

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 28:20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

I've understood Jesus command, "Go," to mean *as you are going*. It means as you are going through your life. You don't have to "go" somewhere, as a missionary, because you are already going through life, encountering people to whom God wants you to share. You're His messenger wherever you are.

Let's see what we can glean from Nathan, His messenger to David.

2 Samuel 12:1 Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him...

We see very definitely that Nathan was "sent" by the Lord. There was a timing to it. "Then," it says, which was about a year after the adultery.

Nathan was sensitive to God's leading. Why didn't he rebuke David earlier, assuming he knew? On the other hand, once told to go to David, he did not hesitate.

Some of us rush into things, thinking we are doing the Lord's work. Others wait and wait and wait even after we've heard from the Lord. God takes into account all of our personalities. Our part is to remain sensitive to His leading.

Think about being "sent" to David. This was no easy task. David was a backslidden believer, living in sin, but with the power of a king. The power of life and death which he had already wielded evilly against innocent Uriah to conceal his sin.

When God revealed to Nathan that He was sending him to David it would have been a great comfort to know he was in the Lord's will as His messenger. It did not guarantee the results; but it brought grace to his heart.

It's encouraging, is it not, to realize we've been sent with God's Word. There's no guarantee it will be received by either sinners or saints, but it does give us great comfort to know we are God's messengers.

The genius of God's plan for each of us to "Go" is that we develop relationships with folks. Here's what I mean. Look at Nathan and David. Nathan was more than just a prophet punching a clock for God. He was a friend to David, close to him. One of David's sons is named Nathan (2Samuel 5:14). David informs Nathan of his desire to build a temple (chapter 7). Nathan will name Bathsheba and David's second son (12:25). He will remain loyal to the king and to Solomon when Adonijah seeks to usurp the throne (1Kings 2).

Verse one continues, "And he came to him, and said to him..." We will see that what follows is a masterful parable. In the NASB it is formatted to look like a psalm. In other words, it was a prepared, inspired message.

We are not sent with our own message. We are sent with God's message. It's the Gospel and we need to be true to its content and its character. We don't want to add to it; we don't want to subtract from it.

I must remain convinced that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. I must believe it is sufficient in and of itself and that it needs no propping-up from things godless men think they have discovered in their own research into the human psyche.

2 Samuel 12:1 Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor.

2 Samuel 12:2 The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds.

2 Samuel 12:3 But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him.

2 Samuel 12:4 And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

Two men lived in the same city. One was very rich and the other was very poor. The rich man had flocks and herds. The poor man had but one ewe lamb and it was his household pet. He purchased it and then raised it in his own home. The lamb spent much time in the man's lap and being carried about. It lived inside the house, not outside, being hand fed with food from the table and even drinking from its master's cup.

The rich man had a guest drop in for a visit. As the host he was obligated to provide him with a meal. The rich man decided upon lamb, and yet he was not willing to sacrifice even one lamb from all those he owned. Instead, he took the poor man's lamb, slaughtered and served it to his guest, so as not to suffer any losses personally.

You know what is most interesting about this story? **David was a shepherd!** At least, that's how he had started. And he was a good shepherd. He risked his young life to save sheep from the attacks of lions and bears. He cared for each individual sheep. It's not going too far to suggest David may have had his own "pet lamb" from time-to-time. As king

he was to have the same shepherds-heart for each individual subject he ruled over.

God told a shepherd a sheep-story. He met David right where he was at. We can meet folks where they are at without compromising God's message. In fact, we ought to try to craft our presentation of the Gospel in a way they would find most meaningful.

I mentioned in our last study that Bathsheba was most likely an unwilling participant in the adultery. This parable makes that even clearer. The rich man "took" the ewe lamb. David "took" Bathsheba from the man who loved her and whom she loved.

How would David respond to this injustice done in his kingdom?

2 Samuel 12:5 So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!

2 Samuel 12:6 And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

David pronounced a judgment that went beyond what God's law would have required. When folks act judgmentally we have a tendency to think it's because they are so spiritual. **Yet it may be because they are in sin!** Those who are the most critical, the most judgmental, even the most legalistic, might just be covering their own sin by projecting it upon others.

David was a reader of God's Word, and he was even one of its writers. But here we see that it came to him through the agency of another person, a messenger sent to him.

You and I are to think of ourselves as "sent" out into the world by the Lord with His Word.

#2 “You Are The Man,” God Says, In His Message
(v7-14)

Knowing you are sent ought to produce a boldness when you speak. It certainly did in Nathan.

2 Samuel 12:7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!..."

In sales you're told, "Always be closing!" I certainly do not want to equate the Gospel with a sales pitch, but I do want to emphasize that the Word of God calls for a personal decision when it is taught. God is speaking directly to each and every individual who encounters His Word. We should press for a decision or at least indicate to the person that a decision is being called for.

2 Samuel 12:7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.

2 Samuel 12:8 I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!

2 Samuel 12:9 Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.

Some of us would have been critical of Nathan's initial approach, thinking he was watering-down the message. I mean, after all, comparing adultery and murder to the taking of one lamb seems weak.

God knows the heart. He knows your heart and the hearts of all those you encounter. Better to listen to the Lord and share what He tells you to, when He tells you to.

At some point we must tell the person we are talking to, "You are the man!" You are a sinner with no hope of salvation apart from the Lord. You are deserving of death - eternal 'death,' which is living forever separated from God and alone in darkness and Hell-fire.

If it's a believer we're speaking with, like Nathan confronting David, we must let them know they are backslidden and therefore fruitless in their walk, saved "yet so as through fire" (First Corinthians 3:15).

2 Samuel 12:10 Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

2 Samuel 12:11 Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.

2 Samuel 12:12 For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.' "

These are prophecies that God gave Nathan of things to come. In subsequent chapters we will see them transpire exactly as he said they would.

You and I have been given prophecies of things to come that we can share.

- We know what happens when a person dies. It is appointed for us to die once and after comes judgment. If a person receives Jesus Christ as their Savior, their judgment has been laid upon Him. He bore, on the Cross, the penalty and punishment for sin. For the believer, to be absent from the body at death is to be immediately with the Lord. Not so the nonbeliever. He or she dies without Christ, in sin, and awaits what the Bible calls the second death - eternal damnation.
- We also know the things that are coming, that are about to transpire on the earth, as God completes His plan of redemption. We can speak with confidence about the God of history and prophecy.

Knowing the future is a fantastic evangelistic tool for convincing nonbelievers of their need for salvation.

It is also God's means for reminding believers to remain ready. The blessed hope of seeing Jesus at any moment keeps us focused on holiness so that we will not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

2 Samuel 12:13 So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord..."

Hadn't he sinned against Bathsheba? Against Uriah? Against the nation he served? Yes, of course, but all that stemmed from the root of his sin against God.

God's message isn't that we need reform our behavior. It is that we require a fundamental change from within. We need regeneration, a new heart altogether.

Something we can glean from this is that too often we hype a specific sin, trying to show how evil it is, when God is seeking sinners. God did not downplay David's sexual sin. But through the sheep-story we learn that it was just David's sexual passions, it was his covetousness that was the root of his sin. He had many wives and concubines but coveted another man's wife.

People can come to church and be singled-out for their particular sin when it is symptomatic of a deeper issue. They get the impression God hates them when in fact we are all sinners and God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to save us and set us free.

2 Samuel 12:13 So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

Wow! Just like that, in response to David's confession, his agreeing with God, the Lord "put away" his sin.

How can He do that? David was told a parable about the slaughter of an innocent lamb. **God can "put away" your sins because of the slaughter of His innocent "lamb," Jesus Christ.**

When he saw Jesus, John the Baptist declared, not once but twice, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Jesus was the One whom all the sacrificial lambs prefigured. His mission was to come as God and man to deal with the issue of sin by dying in our place.

Only through faith in Jesus Christ, in His death on your behalf, can you receive the forgiveness of sins and be told “the Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die,” but have everlasting life!

2 Samuel 12:14 However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.”

In addition to the consequences previously listed, the child born to David by Bathsheba would die. We’ll talk more about that when we get there.

For now we are meant to understand that though sins are forgiven, not counted against us, remembered no more, they nevertheless carry consequences.

David’s story is given to us as a warning. If even he, the man after God’s own heart, the psalmist, God’s shepherd-king, could sin in such a manner, than so might I.

At one point in writing about the immense grace of God in forgiving our sin, the apostle Paul anticipates a question and says, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” (Romans 6:1). His immediate answer is, “Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” (v2). To put it in terms of the text, God’s Word can come to me daily and say, “You are the man!” It can convict me of my sin, reveal attitudes as well as actions, the root as well as the fruit of sin.

To put it another way, God’s Word can cleanse me everyday as if it were cleansing water rushing over me. It can just as powerfully declare to me, and to us, “You are the man!” with regard to blessings and rewards and privileges and power that are ours to claim.

You are the man, the woman, God loved with an everlasting love and drew to Himself. Remain in your first love towards Him or, if you’ve left it, return. Then go, sent out by Him, sharing His message with others. Be their prophet-friend the way Nathan was.

Not a believer? Then “Behold the Lamb of God!”