

Then It Happened in the Spring . . .

2 Samuel 11:1 *“Then it happened in the spring, 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 sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem.”*

Most folks who know even a little bit about David know two things: David and Goliath; David and Bathsheba. The first made him a national hero. The second showed that he had feet of clay and the depth of deception he sank in order to hide his sin.

Our verse sets the stage for this great tragedy: *“Then it happened in the spring...”* Then is the dark page in David’s life. The “then” will forever change things in his life. We can have a “then” in our lives as well. It is a moment that is with us and changes us, often not for the better. It is the “then” that we wish would go away or that we could rewind and do over. A hasty and rash statement that ruins a friendship. A moment like David which leads to the death of a marriage. The “then it happened” moments change everything.

In the spring is when nations battled. The winter was rainy. It was too hard to travel and the conditions were too rough for war. David is about 50 years old. He has been the king for 20 years. Usually he is off with the troops. This time he stayed home.

Most know the story and the sequence. David on his roof top of his palace, looking at the city below. He sees the beautiful Bathsheba bathing. He doesn’t look away. He doesn’t go into the palace. His looks spread. Lust grows and takes over. He is the king and he can have anything he wants, including Bathsheba. Some have faulted Bathsheba for bathing when she could be spotted. The text doesn’t put any blame on her. What she did seemed innocent.

David sends messengers to find out who she is. That takes time. It is told that she is Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. She is married. She is married to one of David’s mighty men. The fact that she lives close to the palace, within view, indicates that David trusted Uriah. He was a foreigner, a Hittite, but he loved Israel and was out on the battlefield.

David was told that she was a married woman. That didn’t stop him. He is spiraling out of control now. Lust has taken over and he will not stop at anything. He sends for her. That takes time. All through this process, there was plenty of opportunity for reason and faith to stop David.

Some wonder why Bathsheba didn’t refuse to go to David’s home. He was the king. It would be an honor to be invited to the palace. I expect the invitation did not reveal David’s plans and purposes. She went. They had sex. David sends her away. She was just a toy for the king. She was used and no longer needed.

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David got away with it. He coveted his neighbor's wife and he committed adultery. In a strange twist of things Bathsheba sends word to David. Throughout this text, David "sends." He sends Joab to battle. He sends messengers to find out who the bathing beauty is. He sends for Bathsheba. He sends for Uriah. He sends Uriah back to battle. David is in command. He sends, sends, sends. However, in **verse 5**, Bathsheba sends. She sends a message to the king, "I am pregnant." Panic fills David's mind. He must keep this quiet. All his servants must know. Somehow he must hide this.

Consider:

- The consequences of sin are greater than the pleasure of sin. The old adage, "Sin will take you farther than you wanted to go; sin will keep you longer than you wanted to stay; and sin will cost you more than you wanted to pay" is so vivid and true in this story. It is repeated over and over every day. A young person likes the thrill of shopping lifting a CD from a store. They have the money, but they like the rush of trying it. Four steps outside the store they are snagged by security. The police are called. Their parents are called. The fun is no longer fun. They are in big trouble now. The thrill of chugging booze on a college campus changes when trouble catches up. The thrill of cheating on test. The thrill of stealing items from work. The thrill of wrong changes when the consequences catch up. A preacher is fired because of immoral activities. An elder must resign for indiscretions. Reputations ruined. Names tarnished. The consequences are great. The wages of sin is death!
- The sin of David began when his relationship with God started to crumble. A person doesn't go from being very strong, to being very weak just like that. It is a slow, gradual, drifting that takes place. Most don't even notice it. David didn't. Not praying like he did in the Psalms. Not hitting on all cylinders spiritually. Selfishness grows. The same happens to us. We back off our intensity with God. We get a little sloppy in our spiritual life. We become a bit lazy. Less prayers. Less Bible reading. Skip a service here and there. A little looser with our tongue. A little departure with our attitudes. This is when we are ripe for trouble. This is when we are most vulnerable. David's sin was not that he stayed home. His sin was that he did not recognize temptation and stop it. A spiritual David would have seen Bathsheba and walked away. He would have thrown that image out of his mind. A weak David stays and stares. A weak David sends for her. A weak David sins.
- Satan was ready. He recognizes our weakness and provides every opportunity to jump ship and sin. A weak David and a naked Bathsheba was all that Satan needed to trip the king. Satan always provides an opportunity for us to sin. He watches, like that lion, as Peter describes. He waits. He moves closer. He watches. He waits. At the best time, he plunges. Don't you think that Satan has been watching you for a while. He's there. He's waiting. Will it be today, tonight or tomorrow? He can wait. He's patient. He

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waiting for a moment when you are alone. He's waiting for a moment when you are tired, lonely, stressed, bothered, vulnerable and of course, weak. He'll keep watching you. You don't see him, but he sees you. He'll be at work and school today. He'll be in the store today. He'll be at home today. He's there. All it takes is a moment. Satan always provides a time, a reason and an opportunity for us to sin.

God wants us to know this story about David. It is left for us to learn lessons from. We do not have to walk the steps of David. We see him, but now we must see ourselves. - **Roger Shouse**