

# I Have Sinned Against the Lord

Proper 6/4afterPent

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2 Sam. 11:26-12:10, 13-14

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Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Acknowledging sin is distressful. There is no two ways about it. When your conscience cries out that you have offended it, you feel scared, you feel uncertain, and you don't know which way to turn.

It is unfortunate that our consciences are distorted by sin—the *fall* into sin to be a little more precise. Adam and Eve had the Law of God on their hearts and lived by it perfectly before that crafty serpent came. After the slithering deceiver came, humanity no longer recalled the will of God found in the Law. That is why He wrote it out on the stone tablets delivered to Moses. Before justification, and even as we try to live as children being sanctified by the Spirit of God, the Law condemns us. It points out to us those times we have offended God by going against His Law.

Consider once again the account of Adam and Eve's fall. As we do, though, consider how they reacted. Is it how you react when you realize that you've sinned against the Lord?

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, "You shall not eat of any tree of the garden"?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."

Does that sound familiar? Running. Hiding. Not fessing up out of fear of punishment. Covering it up. Such is life after the fall. Just look at our Old Testament text.

## Verse 1

Our text for this morning is one we have heard time and again: David coveting and stealing Bathsheba, and God's response. Perhaps it is because we are so familiar with this account that only the second half is presented. But you know what happened before our text: how David saw Bathsheba one night and desired her. He looked into who she was and found out that she was married to a man named Uriah. Despite her marriage, David lay with her. Then he sent Uriah into battle on the frontlines and had the army pull back so that Uriah would die. "When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. And when the 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."

"(T)he thing that David had done displeased the Lord." Do you think only the Lord knew that what David had done was wrong? More likely, David had felt guilty already once he had lain with Bathsheba. So what does he do? Does he confess and bring the act to the light of God's forgiveness? Does he confess to his fellow Israelite Uriah that he has sinned against him? Does he trust that God can bring good from evil, as God had done for Joseph and his brothers?

How often does it happen that we recede further into darkness when we have sinned, even as Christians? We partake of the fruit of which we have been commanded not to partake, and then we sew fig leaves to clothe our sin, and we run from God our Father.

We run from God our Father. Stop and think about that a minute. (Pause.) How can we call God, the Maker of the Universe. The God who established the Law which requires perfection. How is it we can call this all-powerful God our Father? Of all the people on earth, of all the animals and created beings on the earth, of all the planets in our galaxy, of all the stars in the solar system, why should God consider us pieces of dust, who are but for a moment, and are then gone?

Is it because we are perfect? Certainly not. The Law shows us that this is not the case. Even for just one sin we would have failed to live the perfection that it requires. Even for just going over the speed limit by one mile per hour. Even for one four letter word spoken or thought in frustration. The Law is our Nathan the prophet, given to show us our sin, and our lack of perfection.

### Verse 2

“(T)he Lord sent Nathan to David.” Nathan spoke to him about a rich man and a poor man. The rich man had many sheep, while the poor man had only one. While the rich man cared little for his many flocks, the poor man treated his sheep as a pet for his whole family. When it came time for the rich man to prepare a feast, rather than kill one of his own sheep, he took the poor man’s and had *it* prepared. “Then David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, ‘As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb four fold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.’ Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man!’”

How often does your conscience come to you like your own personal Nathan, saying, “You are the man!” *You* are the one who sinned! And not unlike David, you sinned in spite of the love of God given to you. Nathan said to David on behalf of the Lord God, “I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more.”

Granted, we may not be kings over any nations, but has not God given us all that we need in this body and life? And yet still we sin. We still offend God through our actions and words and thoughts. There is the Law showing us our sin. There is the Law demanding perfection from us. There is the Law, and only the Law. The Law can only condemn. That is its curse.

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” If we try to hide our sins or to cover them over, we only add sin upon sin. Just like Adam and Eve. Just like King David. In a verse not included in our text, Nathan said to David on behalf of the Lord God, “‘For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing (that is, his punishment) before all Israel and before the sun.’” Even though he was a king, David was not above the Law. No one, from our president to any of us, is above, below, or outside the condemnation of the Law. Nevertheless, God is faithful to forgive.

### Verse 3

“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. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child who is born to you shall die.’”

For the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah to come, David's sin was able to be put away, that is, forgiven. Today, your sin is able to be forgiven for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has come. He has taken your sin to the cross and left it there, so that you might have life, and have it abundantly.

But what of David's punishment—that his child would die? This is how the commentary writers put it: "Forgiveness frees us from the eternal consequences and punishments of sin, but not necessarily from temporal consequences and discipline...(and from the Apology, or explanation, of the Augsburg Confession) 'A punishment is also added, but this punishment does not merit the forgiveness of sins. Nor are special punishments always added. In repentance, these two things ought always to exist, namely, contrition and faith (ESV Study Bible, p.503).'"

In other words, from our confessions, the Apologist wrote that "In the first chapter of Mark [v.15] Christ says, 'Repent and believe the gospel.' Where in the first part he denounces sin, in the second part he consoles us and shows us the forgiveness of sins. For 'to believe in the gospel' is not that general faith, which the demons also possess, but it is properly speaking to believe the forgiveness of sins given on account of Christ...Here you also see that these two parts are joined: contrition, when sins are condemned, and faith, when it is said, 'believe the gospel.' We will not argue if someone says that Christ also included the fruits of repentance or the entire new life. It is enough for us that he names these two chief parts: contrition and faith (BoC, pp. 193-194)."

Through your consciences, through the Law, and through His Word, God has revealed to you your sin. In that same Word, God has revealed His faithfulness. He has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay for your sin, not in part, but in whole. Believe the Gospel—not just that there once was a man named Jesus Christ, but that He was and is God and man, that He paid for your sins, and know and believe that your sins are forgiven. In Jesus' Name. Amen.