

# *Little By Little*

Sermon by Rev. Dr. Kymm Hockman



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## Scripture Text:

### 2 Samuel 11 New International Version (NIV)

[Passage Link On Bible Gateway](#)

#### David and Bathsheba

<sup>1</sup> In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> 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, <sup>3</sup> 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." <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

<sup>6</sup> So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. <sup>7</sup> When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. <sup>8</sup> Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to [your house](#) and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. <sup>9</sup> But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.

<sup>10</sup> David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?"

<sup>11</sup> Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents,<sup>[a]</sup> and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

<sup>12</sup> Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next.<sup>13</sup> At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

<sup>14</sup> In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah.<sup>15</sup> 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."



## Sermon Text:

We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). Psalm 14:3 says "Everyone is corrupt. No one does good – not even one person!" Now THAT calls for prayer! Please pray with me....

Here's David, one who's been described by God as "a man after God's own heart", committing adultery and eventually murder. David had killed his 10's of thousands, so what's so wrong about killing Uriah the Hittite? It wasn't war that led to David's plot to kill Uriah – it was cover-up. In David's professional life as king and prior to that, we read over and over that David inquired of the Lord. "Should I go up to Judah?" The Lord answered, "Yes, you should." "Will these people turn me over?" "Yes, they will".

As I've been reading through 1&2 Samuel lately I asked myself – what made David a man after God's own heart? My conclusion- He honored God. He inquired of God and followed as he was instructed. He didn't steal the credit from God, but enjoyed the prosperity God provided him. Saul, before David, had the anointing (and eventually the kingdom) taken from him because he added his own twists to what the Lord told him to do. He only obeyed to the extent that it served himself well. He failed to wait for the prophet Samuel to come before going into battle, which was required. Another time he kept plunder for himself and his men, and let a king live when God said to destroy everything and everyone. It's not so much what the specifics were – He did what was best for himself then reasoned that a sacrifice to God would make it all okay. God wants obedience. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

God's man David sinned. What happened? How did David fall? Little by little. I'd say the formula for sin is pretty much the same for anybody. First, pride sneaks in and we put our own interests above God's – perhaps we even fail to ask "what are God's interests in this situation?" Maybe we don't ask because we don't want to know? We'd rather live our lives on our own terms and let God have the role in our lives that we assign to Him. This will not do! Not only is this sin – putting ourselves before God – but it will lead us into trouble.



The consequences of sin are death. How do we let ourselves forget that? We soothe ourselves with thoughts like “God is merciful”, or “Jesus died for my sins”. This is true, but God is still a Holy God. God is a jealous God. Many Christians don’t care much for the God of the Old Testament but love the God of the New. There’s only one God and He doesn’t change. He’s still holy; he’s still jealous, and we are still required to obey him and seek out his will. We are to seek his will FIRST. “Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness. And all these things will be added unto you. Alleluia!” God knows the desires of our hearts. God knows them better than we do. Seek Him first. Inquire of Him first and obey (that’s righteousness). That’s how we get our desires. That’s how we avoid sin. Yes, God is a forgiving God, but this is not a license to do whatever we please. Remember Pharaoh in the Exodus Story? Have you ever been disturbed by the line in Scripture saying that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart? Why would God do that? It doesn’t seem fair. But if we read closely, we see that with the first few plagues, it says that Pharaoh hardened his heart. Eventually, God says, “OK, have it your way” and there’s no longer a way back. Our patterned repeated sinning does have a limit. In the book of Revelation (New Testament God), we also read about plagues and curses. There are three renderings of the 7 curses or plagues. In each list of 7, after each of the first six curses, there’s an opportunity to repent. Most do not, but there’s still the opportunity. But come the 7<sup>th</sup>? There is no longer that option. In 3 different ways we’re told that our opportunity to end our patterns of sin will run out. God’s mercy is unlimited for the repentant – the truly repentant heart. But to repent means not just to be sorry and ask forgiveness, but to turn away and not go back. Yes, Jesus is our hope and there’s always hope if we turn to Jesus and away from sin. We cannot rely on God’s promises without obeying His commands.

Sin is just so painful, I wonder why we’re so darn fond of it. On our own, we’re just too weak to do much about it, really. Let me share from the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans (14-24).

14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature.[a] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it



out. 19 For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

21 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; 23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

You see, trying real hard to live according to some external law, without inquiring of God and really surrendering to his will, we are powerless.... But if we read on, we find the answer. Romans 8 tells us about life in the Spirit – if we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, we conquer sin – no, we’re more than conquerors! The mind of the flesh is death but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace! We need to learn how to suffer just a little. You see the sufferings of this present time (maybe by not getting everything we want immediately when we want them) are not even worth comparing with the glory which shall be revealed to us. Our help is in prayer... we don’t know how to pray, but just seek the spirit – Inquire of God. The bottom line is prayer. David- this man who so often inquired of God, did not in this case.

Let’s get back to this Scripture passage about David for some tips on how we can avoid this downward spiral of sin from which it’s so hard to break free.

**Lesson 1.** Position yourself to avoid sin. “When kings go off to war”... David remained in Jerusalem. David was not where he was supposed to be. It says “He got up from his couch and was pacing on the roof.” He was being a couch potato – a sloth! Idle. Now it’s important to take a Sabbath rest, but this is not what’s described here. David was not working on the job that he should have been. Idleness is the work of the devil, right?

Hard work is important for everyone. We are not designed to be idle. Retirement – it’s not a time to sit on the couch day in and day out, or to pace back and forth. There is meaningful work in which you can engage. Inquire of God – What should I be doing? Position yourself. – Be busy at your work.



David saw a woman bathing. She was quite beautiful. **Lesson 2.** Know your triggers and RUN FROM THEM! A young man - or any man or woman should avoid pornography. We know how addicting that is and how many lives have been ruined by it. RUN. That's an obvious trigger for sin. Block channels from your TV, internet sites. Make it impossible for you to gain access. Because in a weak moment, when you're not busy at what you should be doing...if opportunity presents itself...well? Know your triggers and prevent/remove them from your life. Destroy them utterly. This is what God was instructing the Israelites to do when he told them to destroy whole peoples...God knew they would lead the Israelites away from God to worship other Gods. He wanted the trigger totally removed. I can't have a glass of wine or a beer- it triggers drunkenness for me. I'm an alcoholic. It may not be your trigger. Food. I don't buy certain foods because over indulging is a sin and if certain things are in my house, I'll eat them. Gossip is another common trigger. When it starts, FLEE. Know your triggers.

What about pain meds? That's a common one these days. Ya know, aging means living with some degree of physical pain. It's sad but true. We can't take pain meds to get us through every day pain-free. This is the lie of the opioid epidemic. Find other ways to manage pain. Sometimes improving physical fitness helps; sometimes it's emotional stress or pain so talk to someone. Try Yoga, Physical therapy, talk to a doctor to minimize the pain, but learn to live with a certain level of it. Managable, not pain-free, is the best we can do sometimes. If that's your trigger, be wise.

So lesson 1 – position yourself – be busy doing what you should be doing. Lesson 2 – know your triggers and run from them. And **lesson 3** – Face the natural consequences and let them convict you and make you turn back. Bathsheba got pregnant. That's what happens. David could have dealt with that consequence without stepping deeper into sin and trying to cover it up by murder! Things will only get worse .... Little by little.

I choose not to lie because one lie leads to another and I'm just not smart enough to keep track. When my kids were young and I knew they had done something wrong – I mean I knew it – I wouldn't ASK them if they had done it, because I was inviting them to lie. Why would I want to give my kids an opportunity to lie? I just laid out the consequences for what they had done wrong right away. No lying games to play. It really made their lives



easier in the short and long run. Lying is such a sneaky thing. ...it subtly leads us further and further down a trail of sin and eventually we're so far away from the truth that we're stuck.

When I was little, someone stole my father's fancy cigarette lighter and it was found in my closet. My sister and I shared a room so it could have pointed to either of us. I didn't take it. It became a pretty big deal. One weekend I was staying with my grandmother and I spilled some powder in her bathroom. I cleaned it up the best I could, but when my grandmother noticed it, she asked me if I'd spilled the powder. I should have just said yes – end of the matter, but no, I had to lie. She whipped me until I fessed up...so I did. Then she whipped me saying if I lied about that, I'd probably lied about my dad's lighter too. So to avoid prolonged whipping, I admitted to that too. Who actually took it is still a mystery to this day. Lying is never good. Lies lead us away from God, little by little. Don't cover up, but face the consequences. Repent, before it's too late.

The ultimate sin underlying all sin is pride - putting our own desires above God's will for us. Remember – we are children of the King! We are born for greatness - Maybe not by the world's standards, but greatness in the kingdom of God. Don't throw that away for some simple immediate desire. Sin produces a moment of gratification and an eternity of remorse. I think if any of us could keep the big picture in mind, we'd never trade our salvation and the kingdom of God for some immediate small satisfaction – Similar to Esau trading his life's inheritance for a bowl of soup! The problem is, and David's problem was in today's Scripture story, that we don't inquire of God enough. If we did, when we do, sin becomes less and less of a problem or temptation in our lives. Position yourself – be busy about your work. Run from your triggers and face the consequences, quickly returning to God. If we don't, little by little we lose the kingdom. If we do, little by little we work out our salvation. The little things matter. Life in the Spirit is how we overcome...little by little. It may seem impossible, and alone it is, but with God, it is possible to overcome.

I opened by saying that we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). We often focus on the sinning part of that verse, but what about that glory? What is it that we've fallen short of? What is the "glory" of God? It's not necessarily our salvation...but something very valuable. Let's consult Merriam Webster: great beauty or



splendor, something deserving praise and honor, highly commendable, magnificence, splendor and beauty of heaven, a state of great gratification, height of prosperity or achievement! Wow! We don't want to miss this! 1st chapter of Colossians says "Christ in you, the hope of Glory!" With the Spirit of Christ in us, it's possible for us too, to be people after God's own heart, and enjoy all God's promises. AMEN.

Paul prayed for the Ephesian church – that the Spirit would strengthen them in the struggle. I will close with the same prayer for you...from Ephesians 3:14-21.

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

