

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, Wash.
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2 Samuel 11:26 – 12:10,13-15

The Danger of Hidden Sin

- 1. Concealing sin leads to God's anger**
- 2. Confessing sin leads to forgiveness**
- 3. Accepting God's discipline leads to maturity**

**Hymns: 222 – 754 – Distribution: 302, 312
– 616**

All Scripture quotations from the NIV

2 Samuel 11:26-12:10,13-15 –

When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.

The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more.

Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'

Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die." After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill.

When I was a child, one of my favorite games was "Sardines." We used to play it with many of our neighborhood friends. The rules were that one person was the "hider." He or she would find a great hiding place while the rest of the group counted. After the counting was over, the group would scatter to try to find them. When a person would find the hider, they would hide with them wherever they were: behind a parked car, in an evergreen tree, in the garage, wherever. One by one people would find them and hide with them until the last person would discover where they were.

Children love hiding games! Many a mother of a toddler has turned around in the house and had it dawn on her that her little one has hidden again and wants her to find him. Many a teen has had some fun in hiding around the house and scaring one of their siblings.

Unfortunately, as adults, hiding is not always a good thing. Today we see how this is true in the life of King David. We learn from his life: **"The Danger of Hidden Sin."**

- 1. Concealing sin leads to God's anger**
- 2. Confessing sin leads to forgiveness**
- 3. Accepting God's discipline leads to maturity**

1 – We read in 2 Samuel 11, ***"When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his***

wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.” Before we look at how David displeased the Lord, we should look at how good the Lord had been to him. In the previous chapters of 1 and 2 Samuel, God had:

- Chosen David to be the next king when King Saul disobeyed him, and had the prophet Samuel anoint him.
- Given him the victory over the giant Goliath
- Helped him escape from King Saul and his Secret Service when Saul pursued him
- Given him the kingship over Israel and enlarged their territory through military victories
- Told him in 2 Samuel 7: *“When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever... Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me.”*
- Told David later in our text, “I would have given you even more, if your heart had desired it!”

Then came disaster. At the beginning of 2 Samuel 11 David chose not to go off to lead his army into battle, as kings usually did. As he remained at home he walked on his roof in the evening and saw a woman bathing. Lust filled his heart. He sent men to inquire who the woman was. He was told she was the wife of Uriah, one of his soldiers. Against better knowledge, David had the woman brought to him and committed adultery with her. (How different from OT Joseph, who fled from Potiphar’s wife!) Later on, she sent word to David that she was pregnant. What would he do?

He had to hide it! How could he cover up his sin? He summoned Uriah from the battlefield. He gave him an audience with himself to commend him for his service, and then sent him out to go home to his wife. This would cover up the situation! But Uriah had too much honor to go home. He slept at the gate of the palace and later told David that he could not bring himself to sleep at home with his wife when his comrades were sleeping in the field. So David had him brought in again and wine and

dined him. He pushed alcohol on him and got him drunk so he would be in good spirits to go home to his wife. But he didn’t. Uriah showed more honor drunk than David the king had. David decided he had to murder him and take his wife. He sent Uriah back to the battlefield with a secret note for the general. The note instructed the general to put Uriah at the front of the lines and suddenly have everyone around him withdraw so he would be struck down and killed. And so it happened.

Then we come to the words where our text began. Uriah’s wife mourned for her husband, probably for the customary time of seven days. We don’t hear that David mourned for him. In fact, he said to the general, *“Don’t let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another.”* Then David sent and had her brought to him so she would be his wife. To put it in our terms today, can you imagine a woman going through the funeral and committal for her husband and one week later an eager suitor swooping in to proposition her? **What an abuse of power as David concealed his sin! What anger God had that David concealed his sin as he did.**

Thank goodness we don’t do this! Or do we? I remember the time well when I graduated from our seminary and was assigned to be a teacher and dorm supervisor at Northwestern Prep School. It was a terrific time when I could live with many godly young people. I also remember some days when sinful natures reared their ugly heads and sin needed to be dealt with. I can’t remember one time when I had to deal with such a situation – even when someone was caught dead to rights – when words of confession flowed quickly and easily from their lips. “It was my fault,” “I’m so sorry,” and “I was wrong” were replaced by long explanations about how a situation beyond their control made them do what they did.

What about you? What do you say and do with your sin?

- Perhaps you conceal it, thinking it’s concealed before God also. Perhaps you’ve initiated a pretty good cover-up in your day
- Perhaps you’re like a softball player who comes in from the field after making some costly errors and has a “good reason” for each one:
 - ❑ The sun got in my eyes
 - ❑ The wind picked up right when the ball was coming
 - ❑ This glove doesn’t fit right

- ❑ The other outfielder threw me off
- ❑ The uneven grass made me stumble
- And on and on:
 - ❑ God, it's that person's fault
 - ❑ I was caught in the wrong place at the wrong time
 - ❑ The devil tempted me
 - ❑ God shouldn't have made me so I like that sin
 - ❑ IT WASN'T MY FAULT!

Stop it! God knows all about it. And concealing sin angers him.

2 – There is but one thing to do. In the life of David, it took the prophet Nathan to bring him to see it. What a difficult position Nathan was in! He had been a friend of King David, even assisting him on the design of the Temple that a future king was to build. Now the Lord sent him to expose David's sin.

It's ironic that the name Nathan means "gift." Was he a "gift" that God sent to David? He most certainly was! God sent him as a gift for the benefits that would come to David by his confession. After all, that's what God wants. It's reminiscent of the time God came to Adam after the Fall into sin and said, "Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" and the time God came to Cain and said, "Where is your brother Abel?" What does God want? He wants confession!

Therefore, he had Nathan tell a story to David. The story related a rich man with many sheep and cattle and a poor man who had one. The details of Nathan's story truly show how dear the lamb that the poor man had was to him:

- It was his only one
- He raised it
- He shared his food with it and it drank out of his own cup
- It slept in his arms (Literally "on his chest")
- It was "like a daughter" to him!

Then the rich man who had so many animals comes to get that poor man's one lamb who was a member of the family. How does that make you feel? Probably like booing and hissing at the sight of that wretched rich man! That's how David felt. "That man should die!" he said. And then comes one of the

simplest, yet dramatic, sentences of the entire Bible: "*You are the man!*"

Many artists have attempted to paint the scene of Nathan rebuking David. I wonder what the scene looked like. Was he sitting on his throne? Were they in a secluded room? Did he put his face in his hands? Or did a flush come over him as he turned away? Perhaps tears came to his eyes. He says to Nathan, "*I have sinned against the LORD.*" No more hiding. No excuses. No "She was too beautiful," "God made me too human," or "The devil tempted me." Instead, "*I have sinned against the LORD.*"

Then we hear some of the sweetest words that a sinner could hear, as Nathan responds, "*The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.*" How could Nathan say that? Only because of the descendant that God had promised to send through David's line. Only because of the Messiah who would be born of a virgin, suffer under Pontius Pilate, and be crucified, die, and be buried. The Savior would come to pay for David's sin generations later.

How comforting that after David's confession no suspense was held and no penance was required. Only the sweet message of Christ crucified for the sin of the world! Confession leads to forgiveness.

So what sin is hidden in your heart?

- Alcohol abuse?
- Domestic violence by a husband?
- A wicked, persistent attitude by a wife?
- A volatile temper?
- Are you a cheater on your taxes?
- Are you stealing cable?
- Did you "borrow" those supplies permanently?
- Are you embezzling money?
- Have you cheated on your spouse?
- Are you holding a grudge you won't let go of?
- Is internet porn a snare for you?

Do you want relief? John wrote in his first letter, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*" The beauty of confessing our sin is that the message of full and free forgiveness can be

proclaimed to us. No penance needed. No payment required. Only comfort and forgiveness from an awesome God.

3 – This would be a terrific place to end this sermon today, but there's one more point that our reading makes. Nathan said, *"Because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."* After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill.

The Lord in his wisdom chose for David to endure consequences to discipline him. God is not telling David that he is not forgiven. Nathan has already proclaimed God's forgiveness. **God is disciplining David and teaching him the seriousness of his sin in not allowing him to raise this child.** In addition, God reveals that calamity will come out of David's own household later on.

We're not unfamiliar with the concept. A 10-year-old boy might become angry with the neighbor children and decide to throw a large rock through their kitchen window. He may be caught and led by his Christian father to repentance and sincere confession. Forgiveness will be proclaimed. Yet most fathers will decide that their son has to have some consequences for their action and pay to replace the window. This discipline does not mean that they are not forgiven. What it does do is show them the seriousness of their sin and help them mature so they don't do it again.

In David's situation, his son became sick. In the words following our text, David pleads for the life of the child. But on the seventh day, the child died. David would not raise him to manhood.

David's response to this shows he matured in this discipline. Afterwards, he says to his servants, *"While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."* David knew that the child was safe and better off in the arms of the Lord. In maturity, David accepts this.

In our lives there may be consequences that follow our sins. What might God send as discipline?

- Years ago in Wisconsin, a 19-year-old young man decided to "car surf" on the roof of a car. When he was thrown off, he hit his head and spent a month in a coma. A newspaper article said he had to drive to Appleton for three hours of rehabilitation every weekday.

- People who are sexually immoral run the risk of catching sexually transmitted diseases that they have to live with the rest of their lives.

What might you have to endure?

- Emotional distress
- Shame
- Money troubles
- Broken trust
- A lost friend
- A marriage that you irreparably harmed
- Health problems
- Pain

What discipline has the Lord put on you?

And what will your attitude be toward it? Proverbs 3 says, *"Do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."* May David teach us the lesson of accepting the Lord's discipline with maturity and patience.

So today, we learn about hiding. Hiding may be fun and exciting as a youngster, but it's no way to live before God. Hiding sin is shameful and damnable. **May we take the lesson of David's fall and repentance to heart:**

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May God lead us to repentance every day. Then may he send us back to our everyday life rejoicing that forgiveness is ours, eager to serve him with a holy life! Amen.