

Let No Root of Bitterness Spring Up

Part 2: David

I. Summary of Last Lesson

- a. “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled....” (**Hebrews 12:14**)
- b. Bitterness is a serious sin that can cause us to fall away from God and also infect / defile others.
- c. A weapon of Satan that he has used throughout time to turn people away from God.
- d. We are looking at five examples of individuals in the Scriptures who either had every reason to be bitter about their situation in life and were not, or overcame this temptation.
- e. May we equip ourselves to pull out (chop off) the bitter roots in our hearts if they exist now, or to deal with future temptations.
- f. Last lesson, we looked at the examples of Naomi and Job, who both dealt with significant tragedy (loss of loved ones), as well as Job’s and Paul’s physical suffering, that could have caused them to become bitter toward God and turn away from Him. Instead, God’s power and goodness was displayed.
- g. We discussed Satan as being the “third actor” in this drama of life, and how God allows Satan to do evil, while God is able to bring good out of terrible/challenging life events.
- h. Sometimes God’s wisdom in such situations is beyond us. Like Job, we must simply put our hand over our mouth and say: I will speak no more.
- i. Today, we look at examples of dealing with the temptation of:
 - i. bitterness when others sin against us, and
 - ii. bitterness as a result of sin in our own hearts.

II. David’s Example (Persecution & Personal Sin)

- a. David does not become bitter when unjustly hunted down.
 - i. The Lord’s anointed, but jealous Saul seeks David’s life, hunting David down.

ii. Read **1 Samuel 24:1-23 (1 Kingdoms 24:1-23)**

1. Summary of story

- a. Saul takes 3,000 chosen men (elite soldiers) to hunt down David and his little band
- b. Saul comes across a flock of sheep and a cave. Goes into the cave by himself to “make preparations” (“to relieve himself”)
- c. David and his men are in the cave! Perfect. Saul is a sitting duck. Can you imagine this “great opportunity”?!
- d. His men say: this is the day the Lord promised! Kill him!
- e. David cuts off the corner of his robe... but his “heart was afflicted” because he cut off the robe. (Can’t harm the Lord’s anointed.)
- f. Lets Saul leave. Instead of remaining hidden, he calls out and speaks words of wisdom and humility to Saul.
- g. “My lord, O king!”
- h. I could have killed you, but did not. I am not trying to kill you or take your place as king!
- i. “See and know today, there is no evil or impiety or breach of faith in my hand. I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it.”
- j. Now after whom to you hunt after? A dying dog? Or perhaps a flea?
- k. “Let the Lord be judge and jury, each one in my midst, and each one in your midst.”
- l. “‘Truly this is your voice, O son David.’ And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.... ‘You are more righteous than I, for you repaid me with good, but I repaid you with evil.’”
- m. Saul goes on and asks for mercy!

iii. Lessons from David. How does David get to this wonderful spot?

1. What if David had listened to his men? (Don’t listen to others around us if it does not line up with God’s wisdom!)

2. Great humility toward those who oppose us.
 3. Exercise our faith by our actions. (doesn't kill, also confronts with humility)
 4. God will sort out justice in His timing. Not our job to do this.
 - a. Let God be judge and jury.
 - b. (In the U.S. legal system, the judge determines the law and the judge or jury determine the facts)
- iv. David's "Imprecatory Psalms": God will bring judgment
1. "Imprecatory Psalms" – Psalms that invoke judgment, calamity, or curses, upon one's enemies or those perceived as the enemies of God.
 2. Ray Wenger recently shared in interesting insight: David is reminding God that He is the judge. Asking Him to bring judgment as He promised He would.
 3. Read **Psalm 35 (34):1-13**
 4. David goes to God the judge.
 5. Brings his situation to God. Lays it all out before God, asking for help and deliverance.
 6. David need not retaliate and take matters into his own hands:
 - a. "And let the Angel of the Lord afflict them.... And let the Angel of the Lord pursue them." (vs. 5-6)
 - b. David understands God is quite able to bring about justice.
 - c. This psalm (prayer/song). Reminding God of His role. Like David, we can remind ourselves that this is God's role, to bring judgment.
- v. Read **Romans 12:14-21**
1. Paul is quoting **Proverbs 25**, written by David's son Solomon. Perhaps Solomon learned this lesson from his father David?
 2. God will judge. We must have faith that God will take care of justice. It's His to address, not ours.
 3. This is difficult for me. I struggle with wanting justice now. And if God does not bring it, then I want to "make it happen."

This is my lack of faith in God, His plan, His ability to make things right.

- vi. A major theme in Jesus' teaching: God will bring all into judgment
 - 1. The Rich Man and Lazarus
 - a. Read **Luke 16:1-31**
 - b. The finality of judgment. Nothing can be done. God gives us Jesus' words to direct our lives. That is enough.
 - 2. Parable of the Minas
 - a. Read **Luke 19:11-27**
 - b. A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.
 - c. "Do business till I come (back)"
 - d. But his citizens hated him, sent a delegation after him: we will not have this man reign over us."
 - e. He returns and each is called to account.
 - i. 1 becomes 10, given 10 cities
 - ii. 1 becomes 5, given 5 cities
 - iii. 1 was put in a handkerchief. Still 1.
 - iv. Slays those who did not want to nobleman to reign over them.
 - f. There will be judgment at the end. Justice will be dispensed.
 - 3. Sheep and the Goats. (Read **Matthew 25:31-46**)
 - a. Scene: the Son of Man comes in His glory with all the angels.
 - b. He sits at His throne of glory.
 - c. All nations will be there.
 - d. He will sit as judge and divide them into two camps: sheep and the goats.
 - e. "Come, you blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I

was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.”

- f. “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepare for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.”

4. Read **Matthew 25:1-13**

- a. Point: be prepared! Don’t know when the bridegroom is returning!
- b. See the finality of judgment, all things made clear.
- c. “Lord, Lord, open to us! But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’”
 - i. Desperation of those on the final day.
 - ii. The finality and completeness on that Day.

vii. **Lesson for us:**

- 1. When we are wronged, don’t sweat it. God will take care of it. Rest assured. Not ours to be concerned about. Small stuff. Big stuff.
- 2. This is a basic teaching. If we get it, we will have great peace in the midst of suffering.

b. David does not become bitter (against God) when disciplined for his own sin

i. Consider Cain. Read **Genesis 4:3-8, 13**

- 1. “So Cain was extremely sorrowful, and his countenance fell.... Did you not sin, even though you brought it rightly, but did not divide it rightly?”
- 2. God confronts Cain. (Something about his offering, compared to Abel’s, which was not right/as pleasing to God.)
- 3. Response when confronted?
 - a. Correct response would have been: humility, I am so sorry, I repent!

- b. Not Cain's response. Instead, Cain murders his brother.
 - c. Cain says: "My guilt is too great to be forgiven!" This is simply not true. Cain is deceived.
 - 4. This is a bad example for us to learn from when God reveals our sin!
 - ii. Consider Judas. Read **Matthew 27:3-5**
 - 1. "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." (Realizes what he has done.)
 - 2. Response?
 - a. Hangs himself/commits suicide.
 - b. Gives in to hopelessness, terrible remorse.
 - iii. Contrast with David's response, who commits equally terrible sins: commits adultery and murders a man.
 - 1. Read **2 Samuel 11:1-5 (2 Kingdoms 11:1-5)**
 - a. This is bad. David takes another man's wife, one of his mighty men (Uriah the Hittite) while out fighting for David's kingdom.
 - b. David's response?
 - 2. Read **2 Samuel 11:6-13 (2 Kingdoms 11:6-13)**
 - a. David brings him home to sleep with his wife to cover up pregnancy.
 - b. Uriah will not go to his wife when his fellow soldiers are in battle! "As you soul lives, I will not do this!"
 - c. David brings him in and gets him drunk, perhaps now he will go into his wife. Nope!
 - d. David's response?
 - 3. Read **2 Samuel 11:14-17 (2 Kingdoms 11:14-17)**
 - a. Put Uriah in the most vulnerable position, fiercest part of the battle, and retreat from him, leave him exposed, so he is killed.
 - b. Orders carried out perfectly. Joab carries out the wickedness that David asks of him. Uriah murdered.

4. Read **2 Samuel 11:22-27 (2 Kingdoms 11:22-27)**
 - a. David pretends to be angry. Huge ruse. Knows exactly what happened.
 - b. “Do not let this thing seem evil in your eyes, for the sword sometimes devours in this way and sometimes in that.”
 - c. Then he takes Bathsheba as his wife.
 - d. Terrible sin. Even worse cover up. Lying, deception. Trying to look good, when he had done evil.
 - e. The cover-up is as bad or worse than the crime.

5. Read **2 Samuel 12:1-15 (2 Kingdoms 12:1-15)**
 - a. “And the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to David.”
 - b. Nathan tells a parable of a poor man and his family with a little lamb. They were so close. And a traveler comes and eats this little pet, beloved lamb.
 - c. David is indignant! This man should die!
 - d. “You are the man who did this!”
 - e. David’s response?
 - i. I have sinned against the Lord.
 - ii. David fasts. And we can read his prayer in **Psalm 51 (50)**.
 - iii. Read **Psalm 51:1-21 (50:1-21)**
 - iv. Great brokenness. Takes responsibility for his sin. David is restored to God. Humbled. Contrite. Forgiven.

iv. **Lessons for us:**

1. We need to seek out “Nathans”, whether we have been a Christian for two months or two years! Our sin is deceptive. We don’t see it, but others can help point it out.
2. Let’s be Nathans for each other. We can’t ignore sin in the Church! This takes courage. (Note the difference of Nathan and Joab.) Also, let’s be thoughtful in how we confront, address sin in one another’s lives.

3. Take our sin to God like David in **Psalm 51 (50)**. Confession, humility, and repentance leads to forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace with God.
4. For another example in David's life, read **1 Chronicles 21**, where Satan tempts David (and David gives in) to take a census of God's people, which is evil in God's sight.
 - a. God confronts David's sin and strikes Israel.
 - b. See David's response: his humility, how he takes full responsibility for his sin, and how God responds to David.
5. David is "a man after God's own heart." Not perfect, but humble in his response to his own sin.
6. Compare David's response when confronted with his sin to Cain's and Judas' responses.
7. May we never give in to bitterness, self-pity, or turn away from God when our sin is exposed.