



DAVID ONE KINGDOM SYMBOL: CROWN



UNDERSTANDING

(for your preparation as a leader)

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DISCUSSION

(to use with your group)

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Goal: That, being inspired by the story of God's covenant with David, all participants would desire to repent and seek out the sacrament of confession.



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UNDERSTANDING

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS PASSAGE?

Read 2 Samuel 7:8–17, 11:1–15, 12:1–7, Psalm 51

CONTEXT

Context in the Story of Salvation: Changes in Leadership

Moses' successor, Joshua, leads the nation of Israel into the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. After Joshua dies, a series of judges, who were military leaders, lead the nation until Samuel anoints a king for the people. God first chooses Saul and then David, his successor, as king over Israel. Through David, God again desires to renew and expand His covenant, calling him to be a great king who will restore Israel.

Context for Our Story Today: God's Covenant with David

In the early stories of David's life, we see great virtue: As a mere shepherd boy, he shows courage and a willingness to sacrifice his life for the kingdom when he meets Goliath. Later, Saul, the king of Israel, seeks to kill David, and yet David responds with respect for the current king. Even at the time of Saul's death, David truly mourns for his predecessor. We know David to be a man of strong virtue, a man after God's own heart.

2 Samuel 7: 8–17

Today, we are going to look at some of the later episodes in David's life. In this chapter, God sends the prophet Nathan to speak to David. His words are a reminder of both David's call and God's promise: "I took you from the pasture...that you should be prince over my people Israel...And I will make for you a great name, like the great ones of the earth...He [David's son] shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam 7:8, 9, 13). Hearing this, David may have been thinking of the second promise made to Abraham, that of a kingly line. God also makes the incredible promise that this kingly line will never be removed; it is an unending dynasty.

CLIMAX: TROUBLE IN THE KINGDOM

2 Samuel 11:1–15

During his reign, David falls into sin. It's a gripping story: All the able men of the city are away at battle, but King David stays home. As king, he should be leading his soldiers. This is the subtle beginning of David's fall: laziness, a failure to do his duty. His idleness seems to grow: One afternoon, he rises from his couch and goes out to the roof of his palace. There, he sees a beautiful woman, Bathsheba, bathing on her roof. He sends for her, and when she comes to him, he sleeps with her and she becomes pregnant.

David hears the news of Bathsheba's pregnancy and tries to cover up his crime: He sends for Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to come back from the battlefield for a few days, hoping that Uriah will have relations with his wife during his visit, and no one will question her pregnancy.

But Uriah is such an upright man that when he comes back to Jerusalem, he sleeps outside David's house, explaining that he cannot justify the

luxury of going home while his fellow soldiers are encamped on the battlefield. The next night, David redoubles his efforts and gets Uriah drunk. Still, Uriah refuses to go home, instead sleeping at David's doorstep.

Finally, David takes drastic and devastating measures. He sends a message to Uriah's commander, Joab, telling him to send Uriah on a suicide mission: Uriah is to be sent to the front lines, where the fighting is heaviest, and then Joab will tell the other soldiers to draw back. Joab follows the order. Uriah is killed in cold blood, and David bears the guilt.

How could a man so full of virtue fall into such disastrous sin? The answer: small steps in the wrong direction. When we find ourselves in the midst of sin, we can wonder, "How did I get here?" Almost always, it began with small steps away from God. The sooner we take responsibility for our sins, the sooner we can repent of them and be healed; conversely, the more we try to cover up our sins, the greater they become.

APPLICATION: REPENTANCE

2 Samuel 12:1-7

The Lord is very displeased: David, whom the Lord had called to be Israel's king and to lead God's children, has abandoned his duty. So God sends the prophet Nathan to deliver a message.

Nathan begins simply by telling the king a story about a beloved lamb stolen from its poor owner and fed to a rich man's guest. The lamb is an intentional symbol. Remember, David grew up as a shepherd, so he could easily place himself in this story. When David hears it, he is enraged: He goes so far as to invoke the Lord's name and say that this

man deserves death.

Then, Nathan delivers the punch: “You are that man” (2 Sam 12:7). You can see the drama of the situation: It is as if David’s own words are now directed toward himself. Nathan tells David that the Lord will not abandon His covenant, but now David’s line will suffer violence, oppression and tragedy.

Psalm 51

As soon as Nathan finishes speaking, David responds, struck to the heart: “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Sam 12:13). He doesn’t try to blame someone else, as many of his forefathers did. When confronted with his sin, he simply admits it. This was the moment that inspired David to write Psalm 51: his cry for God’s mercy and a beautiful example of authentic repentance.

The words of Psalm 51 give us a great starting point for finding the words to repent: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” (Ps 51:1 – 2).

Confession is a great opportunity to admit our guilt and confess our sins to God. In this sacrament, we receive “reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace; reconciliation with the Church; remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins; remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin; peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation; and an increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle” (CCC 1496).

SUMMARY

In the story of David, we see the terrible fall of a good man. God makes His covenant with David, extending it to the entire kingdom. But David begins to neglect his duty and eventually falls into one serious sin after another. The Lord uses the prophet Nathan and a compelling story to reveal to David his own guilt. David responds with authentic and heartfelt repentance. Like David, we too should repent from the heart, taking advantage of the sacrament of confession to draw closer to God. The symbol of the crown is a reminder of David's kingship and how we should repent when we sin.

Note to the leader: This is a good opportunity to recommend the sacrament of confession to your group. As the leader, you may need to teach the participants how to make a good confession. Help them find the right time and place for confession, perhaps even setting up arrangements with a priest. Don't let logistical difficulties prevent them from receiving the sacrament; encourage them and assure them of the incredible benefits of a good confession. Also, lead by example: Share with your group your own need for confession. Be vulnerable and go to confession yourself, especially if you have serious sins to confess.

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR YOUR BIBLE STUDY

2 Samuel 7:8–17, 11:1–15, 12:1–7, Psalm 51

Reminder to the leader of the goal of this chapter: That, being inspired by the story of God’s covenant with David, all participants would desire to repent and seek out the sacrament of confession.

OPENER:

1. Have you ever been caught doing something you shouldn’t have been doing?

(Share aloud with your group)

Today, we are going to read about David. In him, we see a man of virtue with whom God makes His covenant. David receives the amazing promise that his descendants will be an unending line of kings. We will also see David make a series of terrible mistakes — but through them, we will learn how we can respond when we fail.

2. Before we look at David, let’s review where we are in the story. Can anyone name the covenants we have covered so far?

Adam. One Couple. Sabbath.

Noah. One Family. Rainbow.

Abraham. One Tribe. Stars.

Moses. One Nation. Doorpost.

(Share aloud with your group.)

Here's what's happened in our story since last time: Moses' successor, Joshua, leads the nation of Israel into the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. After Joshua dies, a series of judges, who were military leaders, lead the nation until Samuel anoints a king for the people. God first chooses Saul and then David, his successor, as king over Israel. Through David, God again desires to renew and expand His covenant, calling him to be a great king who will restore Israel.

CONTEXT: GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

Read 2 Samuel 7:8 – 17.

3. Here, as the Lord is establishing His next covenant with David, He recounts the works He has done for David and for Israel. What sticks out to you?

Allow the group to discuss.

4. Thinking back to previous chapters and the three promises God made to Abraham, which one is God setting out to fulfill with David?

Answer: To Abraham, God promised: (1) land, (2) a kingdom and (3) worldwide blessing. Here, God is establishing a kingly line, the second promise.

CLIMAX: TROUBLE IN THE KINGDOM

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-15.

5. Could someone give me a recap of what just happened in this story?

Note to the leader: Make sure they cover key details. David was supposed

to go to battle, but stays home instead. David looked at Bathsheba in lust and then acted on this sin. Finally, David tried to conceal his sin by tempting Uriah, and then he ultimately kills him (2 Sam 11). If any details are missed, rather than telling them, try to ask questions about the story to your group. For instance, what should have David been doing when his sin occurs? Or, how does David attempt to conceal his sin?

6. From David's example, what do we learn about how sin works?

Answer: When we are in the wrong place and not living out the role we are supposed to have, it can easily lead us to sin. Also, small sins can lead to bigger sins if we don't repent right away.

7. In light of David's example, have you seen sin work like this in your own life?

Allow the group to discuss.

APPLICATION: REPENTANCE

Read 2 Samuel 12:1-7

8. In this passage, the prophet Nathan confronts David in a powerful way. What does he do, and why was it so effective?

Answer: Nathan tells a story that David would be familiar with to help David recognize the gravity of what he has done. Stories can be powerful because they give us the opportunity to examine our lives from a different perspective.

9. During this "Story of Salvation" study, we have read several stories within Scripture and looked at how they apply to our own lives. What are some stories from this study that have convicted or impacted you the most and why?

Allow the group to discuss.

10. Nathan helps David turn back to God. Do you have anyone in your life who can help you when you are struggling to follow God faithfully?

Allow the group to discuss.

11. After Nathan confronts David, David repents and writes a song in Psalm 51 about his desire to live for God once again. Take a minute to read or pray with Psalm 51 (either 51:1 – 12 or the whole psalm). What stood out to you in these verses?

Allow the group to discuss.

12. Confession is a great opportunity to repent and receive forgiveness. I want to invite each of you to go to confession this week. Is there anything I can do to help you prepare to go to confession?

Allow the group to discuss.

Note to the leader: As the leader, you may need to teach the participants how to make a good confession. Help them find the right time and place for confession, perhaps even setting up arrangements with a priest. Don't let logistical difficulties prevent them from receiving the sacrament; encourage them and assure them of the incredible benefits of a good confession. Also, lead by example: Share with your group your own need for confession. Be vulnerable and go to confession yourself, especially if you have serious sins to confess.

SUMMARY

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