

Pastor Wagenknecht + Pentecost 13 Sermon + August 22, 2021

SIN HAS DIRE CONSEQUENCES

¹³Then 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. ¹⁴But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die.” – 2 Samuel 12:13-14

The apostle Paul called himself the *chief of sinners* because he had persecuted the Christians in Judea and was headed to Syria to do the same thing. But a case can be made for Adam and Eve being *chief of sinners* because they were the first to rebel against God's holy will. Paul knew he was forgiven and deeply appreciated the grace of God, but there was to be much pain and suffering in his years as a missionary. Adam and Eve were forgiven their sin based on the promise of the coming Seed of the Woman, but there were dire consequences: pain, sorrow, sweat, exiled from the Garden and the Tree of Life. Today I will make a case for King David being the *chief of sinners*, and we will see that SIN HAS DIRE CONSEQUENCES.

1. There are heavenly consequences by grace.

The LORD chose David by grace, the youngest of eight brothers, the sons of Jesse. Of David the LORD said, **I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.** By grace God gave David victory over the giant Goliath, by grace he anointed him to be king, by grace he established his throne in Jerusalem, by grace God promised that a Descendant would rule over his kingdom forever -- King David's greater Son -- Jesus Christ. See also 2 Samuel 7:13b-16

Chapter 11 begins: **In the spring when kings go off to war**, David turns lazy, or selfish, and sends out Joab, his commander in chief, but he **stays behind in Jerusalem**. You know the sordid story -- it's the substance of movies -- David sees the beautiful woman, Bathsheba, brings her to his palace, commits adultery, gets her pregnant, and then tries to cover it up by having Uriah, her husband, come home for R&R, but loyal to his troops, he sleeps out on the porch. Then David gives him gifts for his wife to take home, but Uriah is more righteous than David and does not go home to sleep with his wife. Then David invited him to dinner and gets him drunk with the intent that now he would go home to his wife. But again he sleeps on the porch. So David resorts to murder via the war. He writes orders for the General Joab to put Uriah in the heat of battle and then have other soldiers back up so Uriah would be killed (pure premeditated murder), and David has Uriah carry these orders to Joab. Uriah died. David tries to blame Joab for the death. David gets the fruit of his crimes. After a time of mourning David marries Bathsheba, and she bears a son. No surprise that Chapter 11 ends with: **But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.**

After some time, perhaps as much as nine months, the LORD sent the prophet Nathan to David and tells him about a rich man, a poor man, and a little lamb, [perhaps the most poignant parable in the Old Testament]. The rich man had great flocks, but when company came, he took the only lamb, loved like a pet, from the home of a poor man and butchered it instead of one of his own. Since many cases of law were brought to King David for judgment, we can see how David was ready for a proper judgment of guilt on this rich man. **David burned with anger against that man and said to Nathan, “The man who did this deserves to die, because he did such a thing and had no pity.” Nathan told David: “YOU ARE THE MAN!”**

Pastor Nathan goes on: **This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says, “I anointed you king over Israel, I delivered your enemies, I gave you the kingdom, 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? Now the sword will never depart from your house, and calamity will come out of your own household.** 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 the child born to you shall surely die.”

Would you agree that David is *chief of sinners*? Note his laziness, irresponsibility, selfishness, lust, adultery, murder, arrogance, and many attempts at covering it up. In spite of these horrible sins, the LORD forgave him, took away his sins, and actually laid those sins on David’s greater Son, Jesus Christ. By the grace of God, for the sake of Jesus’ suffering and death, for the glory of the LORD of steadfast love and mercy, the heavenly consequences of grace were forgiveness, life, and salvation. **O give thanks unto the LORD for He is good, His mercy endures forever.** – Psalm 106:1

By God’s grace there is heaven through Christ Jesus even for David. But there remain dire consequences in the aftermath of sin.

2. There are earthly consequences of our deeds.

After Nathan had gone home, **the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife had borne David, and he became ill.** Then David began a 7-day fast, with fervent prayer for the child, and slept on the floor. He would not eat; he would not bathe; he would not comb his hair, or put on clean clothes. He prayed fervently for the child’s healing. But Nathan’s words came true. The child died.

When the child died, his servants were afraid to tell him, but David saw them whispering, and assumed the child had died -- even as the LORD had said. Then he got up, washed, put on lotion, changed his clothes, and ate a meal. His servants asked why after the child died -- they would have expected far worse weeping and wailing -- was he acting this way.

David’s answer is one of faith: **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.”**

Do you hear David’s confident faith in the resurrection and eternal life? The child is in heaven and when he dies, he will also go to heaven for the blessed reunion promised him by grace. In the strength of that faith, David would endure some tough times. Here is a list of other dire consequences of David’s sins:

- The sword will not depart from his house; he would be a man of war,
- He would not build the Temple, a House for the LORD
- His own son, Absalom, would rebel against him
- He will flee Jerusalem for his life.

Yet we remember David not as *chief of sinners*, but as the Psalmist, the sweet Gospel singer: **Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him. Put your hope in God, my Savior and my God. Whom have I in heaven but You? And earth has nothing I desire besides you? Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives all your sins. As high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is God’s love for those who revere him.**

We find our own comfort from David’s Psalms. We can understand why Samuel would tell Saul that he was rejected as king by the LORD because of his sins and that God would find another king. **God would choose a man after His own heart.** And we hear the New Testament verdict about David from the Apostle Paul in the synagogue in Antioch: **After removing Saul, God made David king. He testified concerning him: “I have found David son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, he will do everything I want him to do.”** – Acts 13:22 After this long list of his wicked deeds, the bottom line is David was a man after God’s own heart. He did everything God wanted him to do. How can Paul conclude that? David repented; he believed the LORD’s promises; he was justified by faith and not by any of his many good works.

I don't think we should label David "*chief of sinners*." There are many candidates here in church today who could be called that. You are "*chief of sinners*." I realize that I am in that category, too. And we may be suffering the consequences of our sins, but by the grace of God we have the heavenly consequences of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Don't let the dire consequences of your sins rob you of your heavenly gift by grace. Even in the midst of trials trust the grace of God, believe in Jesus as your Savior, let your heart follow the gracious heart of God, and with the Holy Spirit as your guide, do everything God wants you to do. The prophet Nathan is also speaking to you: **The LORD has taken away your sins.** Amen.