**"Grandmothers Of Jesus—Uriah's Wife"** **January 4, 2015**
**2 Samuel 11:1-27**

**SI:** This morning I'm going to finish a sermon series we started before Christmas
on the four grandmothers of Jesus mentioned in his genealogy in Matthew 1.
Out of all the grandmothers could be mentioned, not the ones you would expect.
Tamar—Canaanite woman who got pregnant by father-in-law Judah
Rahab—the Canaanite prostitute who hid the spies.
Ruth—a courageous and faithful woman, but a Moabite.
These are like skeletons in the closet of the Messiah.

But then comes a name in Jesus' genealogy that would make every Jew proud—
King David. David the warrior, the poet. David the man after God's own heart.
You can imagine Jews reading "Jesse was the father of King David"
and nodding their heads in approval. But then there is this next line.
"David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife."

And here is fourth grandmother of Jesus, the woman who had been Uriah's wife.
The mention of that woman immediately brings to mind the most
shameful episode of King David's life and reign—
his adultery with Bathsheba and his premeditated murder of her husband Uriah.
An act that brought trouble and sorrow to David and family for rest of his days.

Why is this grandmother of Jesus mentioned?
The reason she is mentioned is to show that the greatest man in Jesus'
genealogy—King David—didn't deserve to be in genealogy of Messiah.
But by God's grace, David was not cut off, and Jesus Christ proudly
claimed him as one of his ancestors.
Hebrews 2: "Christ is not ashamed to call us brothers."

None of us deserve to be in the family of God.
None of us deserve to be his children. We're all like David.
Even after we become Christians, we think, say, do things that deserve kicked out.
But Christ has forgiven us and is not ashamed to call us brothers.
A new year is dawning.
And perhaps you need a new and fresh assurance of God's forgiveness
and grace as you enter this new year.

**INTRO:** We had a wonderful vacation.
We went to Black Mountain, NC to see my parents and my sister and her family.
While we were there one of my cousins and her husband renewed their wedding vows. It was very day of their 30th anniversary.
So my parents, my sister and her family. My aunt and uncle.
My five cousins and their spouses and children and a few friends, about 40 of us, gathered at the same church, we had the same minister—
and we witnessed those two renew their vows.

Being with all those family members, in that spot, exactly 30 years later,
was a vivid reminder of God's goodness. My sister and I and my five cousins have a total of 18 children. We enjoy each other's company.
We almost all have a common interest in the faith and in the ministry of Christ's kingdom. Most of our children are walking with the Lord.
We've seen God's covenant faithfulness to the generations.

But the thing that made the renewal of their vows so meaningful was the theme of forgiveness and grace that permeated the ceremony.
They've had a rocky marriage, this cousin of mine and her husband—
and it's been him—his words. He's been critical and harsh.
Not just occasionally, but often, and for many years.
He's sucked the joy right out of their marriage and home.

But somehow the Lord got his attention and showed him how terribly wrong and destructive his sin was.
He asked forgiveness and repented and the Lord has forgiven him
and his wife has forgiven him, and his daughters have forgiven him.
Even though those sad years can never be reclaimed,
God's grace is at work in his life and in their marriage—
he's being changed and their love is being renewed.

After the ceremony he spoke briefly to all of us and he said:
I don't deserve to be here. I deserve to have been divorced.
I've talked about grace and forgiveness for many years—he's a pastor—
I've explained it to other people—but I never knew it or experienced it for myself.
But now I have. This ceremony is not just a renewal of our vows,
it is for me it's a tangible affirmation of God's grace and forgiveness of me,

and they way he has used my wife as a channel of his grace.

That's what this passage is about—Your sin and God's grace.
It shows us that even as Christians, even as men of God like David,
even as pastors, our hearts are still capable of terrible things that deserve God divorcing us. But he doesn't. Our Savior Jesus Christ is amazingly gracious.

And for this story to do any good in your life you have to see both sides of it.
You have to see the deceptiveness and destructiveness of sin,
and how it can overwhelm you and ruin things for years.
But those warnings alone don't help.
You have to also see that our God forgives.
It's the experience of his grace that humbles and changes you.

Two points:
1. The power of temptation and sin.
2. The greater power of God's grace.

**MP#1 The power of temptation and sin.**
We have to approach this story with humility.
A wise minister said:
> "Far from justifying a self-righteous attitude towards David, this story must serve to bring us closer to him, and more importantly, closer to his greater Son Jesus Christ, who alone is able to save us from our own foolishness."

This story is intended to show us our own hearts.
Intended to show that even as believer the battle with temptation and indwelling sin is real and cannot be ignored. Just a few points.

**1. Temptations can suddenly overwhelm you, so you have to be ready to flee.**
Can you think of a more innocent time than a late afternoon stroll on your porch?
But David looked down, saw something didn't plan to see, and in a few seconds he was caught in a web of evil that had consequences for the rest of his life.

When David saw Bathsheba bathing, had just a few seconds to decide what to do.
And that is usually all the time that you have to resist temptation—
you have seconds to decide what to do before your resistance overthrown.
Another biblical example of a similar situation—Joseph and Potiphar's wife.
What did he do when she said: Come to bed with me. He ran. Literally ran.

David could have turned around, called out for armor and chariot,
ridden immediately to join army in Ammon where should have been in first place.
But he lingered for how long? 10 seconds?—and that lingering hooked him.

You know how this works. You can be tempted anywhere—even in church.
You see someone or you think about something and immediately
your mind is going off into evil places, start to fondle thoughts that you
would be mortified for other people to see.
It can happen any time—you see something, you hear something, you think
something, you say something and before you know it you are knee deep in it.

Why is temptation so powerful? Indwelling sin. The old nature.
We've been given new hearts and new identities, but the old sinful nature still
there and we have to battle it and not give in to it.
Because it can overpower your will in seconds, even at the most unlikely times.

**2. Your old nature, indwelling sin fights to preserve your righteous reputation.**
As bad as David's adultery with Bathsheba was, it is not hard to understand.
It was a sin of passion. Sexual temptation is a powerful force.
David had a weakness for women. He had many wives and concubines.
So this affair was not completely surprising.
But what is surprising and the thing that ought to scare us and sober us
is how far he went to preserve his reputation.
He became a liar, a schemer, and a murderer.
Let me tell you who Uriah the Hittite was.
There was a group of elite soldiers known as the Thirty (2 Sam 23).
They were David's most trusted men—his bodyguard.

Some of them had been with him since the days before kingdom, on run from Saul.
These men had put their lives on the line for David again and again.
Uriah the Hittite was one of the Thirty.
David was above all a soldier. He was a man's man—life spent in battle with men.
He knew what it meant to live by military code of loyalty to fellow soldiers.
He knew Uriah's loyalty to him.

But David, in order to preserve his righteous reputation in Israel,
first tried to cover Bathsheba's pregnancy by calling Uriah home,
hoping that he would go and sleep with his wife.

When Uriah proved to be a loyal soldier, unwilling to indulge in anything
that his fellow soldiers on the front line were denied, David got him drunk,
hoping that would lower his inhibitions and that he would go to his wife.
As old commentaries say: Uriah was more righteous drunk than David was sober.

So David arranged his murder in a fashion that violated every code of honor.
He actually send Uriah bearing an order to his commander Joab to arrange for
his death on the battlefield. Joab an unsavory character. David worked with him.
All to hide his sin and preserve his reputation.

One pastor put it this way:
"It is a startling paradox that often the sinner's desire for righteous reputation drives him to commit even more aggravated sins . . . most people desire to appear straight and honorable."
Christians fall right into this trap—because we have an overwhelming desire
for a righteous reputation, all of the blessings that come from it,
the peacefulness it brings your life, good thoughts of other people,
we will cover sins with more sins in order to hide the truth.
Usually it is lies, deceitfulness—of course have to be heaped deeper and deeper.
All because of perverted desire for a righteous reputation.
If this was not beyond David—then it is not beyond you.

**3. Indwelling sin resists repentance.**

How long did it take David to come to his senses and repent?
At least nine months—Bathsheba had given birth to the baby.
David might have used the argument Christians sometimes use—
I'll ask forgiveness later.
But then after he sinned, was repentance easy? No, hardest thing in the world.
Was it eventually that David, on his own came to repentance?
No. He had to be exposed by Nathan. Next chapter.

David once called himself a "man of prayer" Psalm 109.
Can you imagine him praying during this time of his life?
Do you think he prayed when sent servants to get Bathsheba?
Do you think he prayed that Uriah would go home and sleep with wife?
Do you think he prayed that plan would work and Uriah would be killed?
Do you think he prayed that God would bless his new marriage to Bathsheba?
Of course not—he ceased to be a man of prayer.
Sin resists repentance and it resists prayer. It hardens hearts against God.
It sometimes takes a violent work of grace to bring a person to his senses.

**4. Indwelling sin can overwhelm any Christian.**

This story is not just about an ordinary man—this was David.
David was a regenerate man, he was a born-again man.
Bible says Lord chose him as king after Saul because man after God's own heart!
David's psalms express his personal walk with Lord.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want."
"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth."

And many of David's psalms express his determination to lead an obedient life.

"Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not swear by what is false.

If David, believer with deep, long walk with Lord could fall, any Christian can.
Your heart is no different from David's. Mine isn't.
There is not Christian who cannot succumb to temptation and fall terribly.
Another quote:

"If we are inclined to any degree of self-confidence in our discipleship to the Lord, we should remember David, forsake our proud self-sufficiency and look, in a spirit of unconditional trust, to the Lord Jesus Christ."

If this vivid picture of the terrible power of temptation and sin grips you,
then you are ready for the next wonderful truth—
the graciousness of God through Jesus Christ.

**MP#2 The greater power of God's grace.**

After all this ugliness, listen again to chapter 12, verse 13.
The prophet Nathan came to David and confronted him.
Remember he first got David to condemn himself by telling him the story of the rich man who stole the poor man's lamb and ate it.
After David got furious and said—Tell me who this rich man is.
He has to pay for his crime four-fold, then Nathan said: David, you are the man.
It was only after that confrontation that David repented. But here's the verse.

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."

In spite of David's sin, months of unrepentance, God forgave him.
God's forgiveness did not mean that there were no consequences for David's sin.
As prophet Nathan had declared—the sword will never depart from your house.
The rest of book of 2 Samuel is about David living under the consequences of sin and discipline of God.

I don't want to say this next part, but if we're going to be true to God's word,
then we have to talk about consequences.
It's painfully clear here and elsewhere in Scripture that God's forgiveness and grace
does not eradicate the historical fact of sins committed or consequences of them.
Sometimes Christians imagine that consequences are inconsistent with God's grace,
and that true forgiveness eradicates consequences.
But that's not what the Bible teaches in example or precept. Psalm 99.
"O Lord our God, you were to Israel a forgiving God, though you punished their misdeeds."

One consequence is that other people sometimes suffer because of our sins.
That's what happened over and over again in David's case, even though forgiven.
You can think of other examples.
If a man gets drunk and drives and kills an innocent person,
he may be completely forgiven by God, but can't bring life back.
Can't undo the devastation he has brought on family of victim.
Even when living under God's grace and forgiveness, a man reaps what he sows.

But as important as it is for you to see that sins have consequences,
much more important that you see the remarkable fact of David's forgiveness.
Consequences for sin aren't surprising. But forgiveness is!
David said, "I have sinned against the Lord."
Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."
It was that simple and that free.
David's sins—his sin of passion, his sin of deception, his sin of premeditated
murder, his months of hard hearted resistance to repentance
were swept away by the Lord's free grace and forgiveness.
That's amazing grace. Great crimes swept away.
Terrible sins no longer held against us.
Forgiven as if we had never sinned or been sinners.
That is the forgiveness that Jesus Christ came to earth to achieve,
through his perfect life and sacrificial death.

This was not just true for David—this same complete forgiveness available to you.
You too can hear these blessed words:
"The Lord has taken away your sins. You are not going to die."
No matter what skeletons you have in your closet,
even past sins that have enduring consequences, hurting you and other people,
even those are completely forgiven through Christ.

That theft or that lie that hurt an innocent person long ago,
That time you brought serious dishonor on Jesus and Christian faith,
That terrible thing you said, cause so much damage, wish could take back—
all forgiven through Jesus Christ.

Your cheating, your lying, your greed, your anger, your hatred, your cowardice—
as you look back over your life, as a Christian, with sensitivity Spirit has given,
you are bound to say—I'm no better than David.
I've done same in word, in thought—only God's grace restrained actions.
But He knows—and He forgives me.

That abortion you had long ago or caused someone to have, you can never forget it.
You remember it every time the issue of abortion raised.
It's forgiven. Swept away by God's amazing grace.
That marriage ruined by something you did or failed to do.
Those years with your children that you wish could have back and do over again.
All those are forgiven, swept away by the grace of God
and no longer held against you.

Great message of this story is not that our sins have consequences.
You don't have to be a Christian to know that.

The great message is that after all that David did—God forgave him.
And God continued to regard him as a beloved son, member of family of God.
And the great message is that Jesus Christ—our perfect, holy, sinless Savior,
was proud to claim King David as one of His ancestors.
You have to have faith to believe that.

And you have to have faith to believe that Jesus Christ is just as proud
to claim you as a member of His family as well,
because He delights in extending forgiveness to repentant sinners.

Are you weighed down by sins in past?
Are you still trying to cover up your reputation?
You have to trust in Jesus Christ, not own record.
He lived the life you should have lived.
You have to repent of your sins, quit defending them, covering them up.

Jesus died the death you should have died for them.

Give yourself to him in faith and repentance,
and you can claim those wonderful words that David heard:
"The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."

What a better time than now. The new year lies ahead.
As the Apostle Paul put it:

> Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,
> I press on toward the goal to win the prize
> for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.