

Week 17

April 23 - April 29

2 Samuel 5:14-16; 6:12-19:30; 1 Chronicles 3:5-9; 6:16-48, 50-53; 14:3-7; 15:1-20:3; Psalms 3, 51, 60, 63

The theme for this week is sin. I know it is not very glamorous and not so fun to think about, but it is a reality that we all live with. This week's readings have us right in the heart of David's kingship. We will see him at his highest point and his lowest point during this week.

Some of the topics we will think about are judging, depravity, confession, forgiveness, consequences and death. Because of our broken nature, sin permeates our lives. We live with the impact of sin all around us. I hope that through the devotionals and Bible reading this week, you will have a better handle on how to manage the impact of sin in your life.

April 23rd

2 Samuel 6:12-23; 1 Chronicles 15-16. "Quick Judgments"

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Matthew 7:1-2).

Making judgments about others comes natural to human nature; broken, fallen, sinful human nature that is. While, as Christians, we are not to ignore sin in the lives of our brothers and sisters, this action is always to be done in love (Eph. 4:15), aiming towards repentance (Gal. 6:1), and after proper self-reflection (Matt. 7:3-5).

In today's reading we see David's wife, Michal, make a quick judgment against David on an issue that did not involve sin. Unhappy with how David chose to worship the Lord before the Ark, she condemns David for this action.

These are the types of judgments that scripture teaches are not for us to make. When we pass judgments on others' actions that are not clearly defined as sin by scripture, we are usurping God's role as the righteous judge and ruler over all humanity. Instead of judging, we are to leave room for God to work.

April 24th

2 Samuel 7:1-8:14; 1 Chronicles 17:1-18:13; Psalm 60. "Turtle Syndrome"

"For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12).

In writing Psalm 60, David is crying out to the Lord for help against the enemies that he is battling with. David makes the statement in verse 11 that "all human help is useless."

This statement is especially true for the battle we face as Christians, for as Eph. 6:12 so clearly states, our battle is a spiritual one. In the spiritual battle that all people face, human help is indeed useless because of the turtle syndrome. Turtles are incapable of helping themselves if they are placed on their backs and, without outside help, they will die. We people are the same. Without outside help or someone to intervene, we will die. Fortunately, Jesus intervened and "died once to defeat sin, and now He lives for the glory of God" (Rom. 6:10).

April 25th

2 Samuel 8:15-10:19; 1 Chronicles 6:16-48, 50-53; 18:14-19:19. "Grace for All"

The devotional from April 15th was about how David fulfilled his covenant promise to Jonathan by showing kindness to his son, Mephibosheth. Today, we have been reminded of this act in the reading. As we think about this today, we are going to consider David's treatment of Mephibosheth in light of God's treatment of us.

Mephibosheth had done nothing to deserve the kindness that David showed to him. It was an undeserved gift. Mephibosheth was the benefactor of David's decision to fulfill his commitment to Jonathan.

God is not contractually or morally bound to save anyone. Based on our actions, we are all deserving of His judgment. For our sake, God has chosen to extend grace to all who come to faith in Jesus Christ. "God saved you by His special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it (Ephesians 2:8-9). – D.C.

April 26th

2 Samuel 5:14-16; 11:1-12:25; 1 Chronicles 3:5-9; 14:3-7; 20:1; Psalm 51.
"Confession"

"If we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong" (1 John 1:9).

King David sinned. It wasn't just a simple sin, but a messy one of lust, sexual immorality, deception and murder. It was the kind of thing that anyone would look at and agree was wrong. How is it that a man who did all of this can still be referred to as a man after God's own heart in the New Testament (Acts 13:22)?

Confession.

David was not perfect and neither was Saul. However, the way that each responded to being confronted for their sins was markedly different. Saul was defensive and blaming others, but David responded with a soft heart and quickly confessed.

Practicing regular confession is a key element to a healthy relationship with Christ. How do you respond to the realization that you have erred in some way? Remember David's words in Psalm 51:17, "The sacrifice you want is a broken spirit. A broken and repentant heart, O God, you will not despise."

April 27th

2 Samuel 12:26-14:33; 1 Chronicles 20:2-3. "Real Consequences"

"Don't be deceived, God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" (Galatians 6:7).

David loved the Lord, but he also made his share of mistakes. Even though he was quick to confess his sin, that did not remove the consequences for his sin (2 Samuel 12:14).

Now, from this point on, David's kingship takes a downhill turn especially within his family. As is apparent from today's reading, David was no longer in control of his sons and had failed to instill in them a fear of the Lord. David's mistakes were catching up to him, not just his sin with Bathsheba, but other sins related to fathering and mentoring his sons were having an impact now.

Sin has real consequences. While we cannot blame our sin for everything in life, much of the pain and grief we experience results from our own sinful choices and actions. Are you living with the consequences of past sin? Pray and ask God for strength and wisdom to deal with those consequences appropriately.

April 28th

2 Samuel 15:1-17:14. "Quick to Forgive"

We have all been there. We are at our lowest moment and someone says or does something to make it even worse. This must have been how David felt as he was fleeing Jerusalem and endured the insult from Shimei. How tempting it must have been to let Abishai kill Shimei. However, David exercises self-control and humility in not retaliating against Shimei. Not only did David exercise restraint at this moment, but he practiced forgiveness when Shimei met him at the Jordan River as David returned to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 19:18b-23).

How do you respond when you are wronged? Jesus forgave those who put him on the cross (Luke 23:34). Stephen forgave those who stoned him (Acts 7:60). Scripture teaches us that there is a connection between receiving forgiveness and extending forgiveness (Luke 6:37; Mark 11:25; Matt. 6:15).

So how do you feel about forgiveness? Are you willing to forgive like David and others did? Would you rather take revenge and even the score? Do you trust in God's ability to judge rightly and work it out according to His will when you are wronged?

April 29th

2 Samuel 17:15-19:30; Psalms 3, 63. "Death Results from Sin"

"When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. And though there was no law to break, since it had not yet been given, they all died anyway..." (Romans 5:12-14a).

Absalom's death was tragic and unnecessary. It deeply impacted his father, David, as is obvious from the narrative. Had either David or Absalom made some different choices, this tragedy could have been avoided.

The reality is that this instance of death and pain is representative of human life and history. Death was not a part of God's perfect creation. Rather, death was introduced into the human race as a result of Adam's sin. Death is wrong and this is why we grieve when it happens.

The hope that we have in Christ is because He defeated sin and death through His redemptive work on the cross (Col. 2:13-15).

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General Questions for each day:

Summarize the day's Bible passage in your own words.

What thoughts, actions, attitudes or beliefs are addressed in the passage?

How is the Holy Spirit leading you to apply this passage to your life today?

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Bible Discussion Guide:

How can we balance helping other Christians in their struggle with sin and judging someone inappropriately?

How can we know when our judging of others is overstepping our bounds and moving into God's territory?

Why are we unable to win the battle against sin on our own?

How do you respond to the realization that you have sinned in some way?

Why is regular confession important for Christians?

Why doesn't God remove the consequences of sin when He forgives us for our sin?

Are you living with consequences from past sin? Would you be willing to share your situation with the group?

How do you respond when you are wronged?

Do you find it easy to forgive others? Why or why not?

How is the Christian supposed to deal with death?

Is all death tragic?

What must we do in order to receive God's grace and forgiveness for our sins?