

“The Harvest of Poor Choices” // 2

Samuel 13–21 // *The Life of David* #17¹

Announcement

Well, **praise God for what he’s doing in our prison ministry**. And we’d LOVE for you to consider serving in this area. You can visit our website to learn more and fill out an interest form.

Also, Easter is just a couple of weeks away. Lots of stuff going on, but I want to highlight one in particular: our Week of Prayer, which begins next Monday, April 3. We’re actually going to be praying through the seven last words of Christ--it’s a great way to **get your mind focused in on** what this season means for you, to walk through the prayers of Christ, and also to **pray in Christ’s will on earth**. Let’s approach Easter together as a church in prayer. You can learn more and [sign up for daily prayer prompts](#) on our website.

Introduction

If you’ve got your Bibles, open them to 2 Samuel 13...

As you’re turning there: A few years ago I shared this with our men here at TSC--it’s a list of the **Top 9 All-Time Stupidest Quotes** I’ve

¹ Works Consulted: Tim Chester, *1 Samuel For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God’s Word for You)*, The Good Book Company, September 15, 2014; John Sailhammer. *NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); Beth Moore, “The Unrelenting Sword,” session taught with LifeWay, published in 2010; Kyle Worley, Jen Wilkin, and JT English, “Absalom’s Daddy Issues,” Knowing Faith Podcast, May 2, 2019.

actually heard or read (found some, added my own to it--I think I have shared them with you before, but they are worth repeating):²

9. “Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military value.” **MARSHAL FERDINAND FOCH, FRENCH MILITARY STRATEGIST AND FUTURE WORLD WAR I COMMANDER, IN 1911** *I just feel like that explains so much...*

8. “There is no reason for any individual to have a computer in their home.” **KENNETH OLSEN, PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER OF DIGITAL EQUIPMENT CORPORATION, IN 1977** *(That didn’t age well, as attested to by these small supercomputers you carry around in your pocket!)*

7. “[Television] won’t be able to hold on to any market it captures after the first six months. People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night.” **DARRYL F. ZANUCK, PRESIDENT OF 20TH CENTURY-FOX, IN 1946**

6. “We don’t like their sound. Groups of guitars are on the way out.” **DECCA RECORDS, in a letter explaining why they were REJECTING THE BEATLES, 1962**

5. “For the majority of people, the use of tobacco has a beneficial effect.” **DR. IAN G. MACDONALD (LOS ANGELES SURGEON), AS QUOTED IN NEWSWEEK, NOVEMBER 18, 1969**

4. “This ‘telephone’ has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us.” **WESTERN UNION INTERNAL MEMO, IN 1876**

² From Sean Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, ch. 3

3. “Nothing of importance happened today.” **Journal Entry BY KING GEORGE III OF ENGLAND ON JULY 4, 1776** (Now, I’ve heard the authenticity of this one disputed, but some swear it’s legit)

2. “Everything that can be invented has been invented.” **CHARLES H. DUELL, U.S. COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS in his letter of resignation from the U.S. Patents Office, 1899**

And now, for the stupidest quote of all... (GIVE ME SOME MUSIC!)

1. “My choices affect no one but me.” **THE 21st CENTURY MAN**

Our decisions have massive impact on those around us, and that’s what we’re going to see today in 2 Sam 13–21. David’s sin affected more than just him.

Now, let me give you a little warning: Today’s message is one of those ones that probably needs a lot of emotional padding. It’s about the scars of sin. They are ugly, and they hurt. And I just want to say, as we walk through these scars, that I’m aware that some of you have some deep scars that this passage is going to open up, and I just want you to know, first, that God never opens up a scar without the intention of mending it to completeness. It’s important never to avoid his Word--it’s good even when it’s difficult.

But, I also want to be sensitive to where some of you are with these discussions. If you have a young child in here, you may want to think about taking your children to Summit Kids. This passage does contain an incident of sexual assault; it’s not graphic, but it’s in the narrative. Or maybe you’ve experienced things in your own life, and you’d feel better sitting a little closer to the back so that if it gets too hard you can slip out to the lobby. We understand; we care for you--and so I’m

going to pray, and that will be a good time if you need to make a transition if you need to.

PRAYER

After David’s sin with Bathsheba, Nathan told David, **2 Samuel 12:13**, “*God has put away your sin; you shall not die.*” But then he also said to him these 3 things:

- Vs. 10, “...the sword shall never depart from your house.”
- Vs. 11, “I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun”
- Vs. 14, “The son born to you (from this incident) will die.”

It’s like we often say, ‘You can always be forgiven of sin, but you can’t un-sin.’ Some of you know this deeply, and perhaps painfully--that just because God forgives someone doesn’t mean that the impact of their sin goes away, especially for his or her family. Forgiveness can be real, and genuine, but consequences and pain remain.

In the next 5 chapters we are going to see David’s family turn into a nightmare--the painful outworking of his sins--both the one with Bathsheba as well as others after it. You’re going to see the tragic story of how David’s sins affected LOTS of people besides him--and then the whisper of hope through it all.

First, let me just walk you through these chapters, then we’ll draw some conclusions.

2 Samuel 13: David’s 1st born son, Amnon, the **‘heir to the throne,’ becomes consumed with lust for his half-sister Tamar** (half-sister: David had multiple wives, and Tamar was the daughter of one of his other wives, so Amnon and Tamar have the same dad, David, but different moms, so she’s his half-sister). Amnon lures Tamar to his

bedroom and tries to seduce her; and when that fails, he rapes her. The word “rape” is used. It’s aggressive and violent.

After the incident is over, the text says, **(13:15)** “...and (then) he hated her so that the hate with which he hated her was more intense than the love with which he had loved her.” And he said, **vs 17**, “Put *this woman* out of my presence and bolt the door after her.” (THIS woman)

- Do you remember how objectification was a theme in David’s sin with Bathsheba? When David saw Bathsheba bathing he asked, “Who is *this woman*?” (Same language that Amnon uses here). And the answer that came back was, “This is Bathsheba, the daughter of so and so and the wife of Uriah...” and I pointed out that it’s like the author is trying to reinforce to David that this woman was not just a beautiful body; she has a name; she is someone’s daughter; someone’s wife, maybe somebody’s mother... but David didn’t think of her that way, as a person, with relationships; he thought of her only as an object so satisfy his sexual lust.
- Well, **now we see this sin multiplied in the son**. Tamar is literally just an object to Amnon. She was like a can of Coke. You drink the Coke and throw away the can.

18 So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. **19** And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

21 When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. But that was it. He did nothing. He never reaches out to Tamar. He never confronted Amnon. We don’t know why. Maybe he felt morally compromised, and like he couldn’t intervene. Maybe he was just too distracted with Kingly problems. Maybe he was just a disengaged dad. We don’t know.

But bottom line: you’ve got a dad who is walking around angry but doing nothing, which is not helping anybody. Beth Moore says we have way too many dads walking around angry but doing nothing, which is not the same as acting justly and redemptively.

Well, because of David’s passivity, Absalom, who was Tamar’s full-brother, stepped in to handle things. He says to Tamar, **(vs. 20)**, “Hold your peace, my sister... do not take this to heart.” (Which was, colossally bad advice. I mean, how could she not ‘take this to heart’? And she should not be quiet. In fact, Absalom should be speaking up for her. (How many sex abuse victims have there been who tried to say something only to be told, “Hold your peace, sister; do not take this to heart.”) **But, like many victims, she did what he said**, vs. 20, “So Tamar lived, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom’s house.” The word “desolate” means “stunned” or “devastated.” Tamar was never the same. Her life was shattered.

And then, Absalom starts to plot revenge--but it’s a revenge scheme way more about him than her. He hatches this **2 year scheme** whereby he lures Amnon away from the palace, gets him drunk and then murders him. Be clear: this is not about her--it’s not about her healing or her restoration (if it had been about those things he would have acted differently)--this is about Absalom and his honor.

But Absalom does it (BY THE WAY: getting someone drunk and murdering them... What does that remind you of? Again, David’s sin is being multiplied in the life of his sons.)

Well, after the murder, Absalom flees the country for 3 years, and it turns into a national scandal. That takes us into **2 Samuel 14**: a woman comes in and tells David this story about having two sons who got in an argument when one of them accidentally killed the other one. He had to flee for his life; but then he repented and wanted to come back home but the community wouldn’t let him, and now she has no sons and no heir to take care of her in her old age.

Now, David doesn't realize she's telling one of those stories that is really about him (like the one Nathan had used when he confronted him about Bathsheba--David's not the spiciest Dorito in the bag when it comes to recognizing these setups), and so he says, "My judgment is that this son should be allowed to come back and all should be restored..." The woman then says, "You are the man in this story" and David is like, "Dangit, I fell for it again."

So, David says: "Let's bring Absalom home." And they do. But David refuses to talk to Absalom, he's still so angry. So Absalom doesn't even see his face for 2 more years. That makes 5 years since Absalom has spoken to his dad.

Eventually, 14:31, Absalom sets a field on fire trying to get his dad's attention--literally sets a field on fire, read it--it's the ultimate "kid acting out to get dad's attention" story. David finally agrees to see him and gives him the official ceremonial kiss, a ceremonial restoration of their relationship--but there's no real reconciliation.

And so, **Absalom spends the next 4 years systematically** trying to overthrow his father's throne. Now, a **few things about Absalom.**

- **First: he was** tall and really good looking. The text tells us that he had beautiful, long hair, and his hair alone weighed 5 lbs.³ Archaeologists have uncovered a picture of him. **John Muller: Hair.** (By the way, for those of you who don't know him, that was John Muller, our Capital Hills campus pastor.)
- **Second, the text tells us he was very politically shrewd.** Chapter 15 explains how he would stand outside of his father's palace and whenever people would bring their cases to the king, he'd go up to them and put his arm around them and say, "Wow, you've got a real issue there. Unfortunately dad is too busy to give you justice. *But if I were judge of Israel, though, I would make sure you got justice.*

³ 2 Samuel 14:26

- **The chapter tells us that when people realized** Absalom was the King's son they would **bow down** but then he would pick them up and hug them and say, "Brother, don't bow down to me. We're the same, you and me," which is kind of absurd--it's like the trust fund baby turned politician who tries to convince the working man they are just alike.

And **"So (15:6 says) Absalom stole the hearts of all Israel."** And then, when the time was right, Absalom staged a coup. He mounts a rebellion and drives David out of the palace. **And then, as a show of power,** he sets up a pavilion on the roof and sleeps with some of David's wives, which was intended to be a public humiliation of his dad to let everyone know he had stolen his dad's kingdom.

That's how chapter 15 ends: Absalom has stolen David's house, his kingdom and his wives. And the irony is that Absalom is doing all this from the roof of the palace, the place from which David's original sin began. The sins of the father have multiplied in the son.

Chapter 15 **ends with David in abject failure:** **"But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered."** 15:30 (He's running for his life: barefoot, head covered, weeping: these are symbols of utter defeat; utter humiliation. David has lost everything.)

Eventually, however--jump to chapter 18--the tide turns and David is able to muster enough of his army to take back his kingdom. Absalom and his followers are driven out into the wilderness, and David's army chases after them, and as they do David gives these explicit instructions, **18:5 "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom."**

As Absalom is fleeing through the forest, his horse goes under a heavy brush and his **5 lb hairdo gets tangled up and he is literally left suspended in the air.** David's men quickly surround him, and one of

the guys says, “David said not to hurt him.” But Joab, the commander of the army,⁴ says, “Nonsense. We can’t leave this guy alive; he’ll just do this all again.” And **so he gets 3 javelins (vs. 14) and thrusts them through Absalom’s heart.**

Meanwhile, people are bringing word back to David about the battle and every time David asks them, “But what about Absalom? Is he safe?” Eventually one of the messengers, who knows Absalom has been killed, but can’t bring himself to tell David directly, says, **v 32, “May all the enemies of my lord the king be like that young man” (18:32)**

The next verse **describes one of the most heart-wrenching scenes** of David’s life; indeed, maybe the whole OT. Vs 33: **And the king was shaken and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. Shaken:** the crushing realization of all that has happened comes down on him.

And he said, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! That is the first time, in all these chapters, that David uses the word, “son” for Absalom. But it’s too late. And he says, **“Would I have died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”** *A couple of weeks ago I told you that the repetition of a phrase in Hebrew indicates an intensity of emotion. It’s their version of writing in ALL CAPS. Here David repeats the phrase “my son” 5x, the only thing like it in the entire Old Testament: “my son, my son, my son, my son, my son.”*

And thus **ends the tragic story of David** and his son Absalom.

Here’s what I want us to draw away from this: Three very important things, not just about your life, but three things that will help you understand your WHOLE BIBLE!

1. The sins of the father are multiplied in the children

(I’m going to put a couple of these points in the language of fathers with their children because these stories are about a man and his children--but these principles apply to all our relationships. You’ll notice there are several relational dynamics at work in these stories; brothers with sisters; children back toward their parents; friends toward each other--these principles apply everywhere, even if I put them in the language of fathers and children).

The sins of the father are multiplied in the children. Last year we talked about something called **“The Laws of the Harvest”**--the idea that what you sow multiplies. When you plant something, what comes back is GREATER than the seed you planted. For good or bad. I compared it to **Bermuda grass**--you can’t isolate Bermuda grass in one little section of the yard--left unchecked it will take over your whole yard. (In my old house, my dad pointed out that my neighbor had planted Bermuda grass, and he told me that unless I put up some kind of barrier soon my whole yard would be Bermuda grass, too. I didn’t want Bermuda grass, so I just moved.).

Now we applied it to money (and that’s a very important application: the financial place you’re in today is the result of decisions you made yesterday. Putting God first in your finances today is like a seed you plant that brings a good harvest later. And that’s really important). **BUT! the law of the harvest shows up everywhere in God’s creation,** and it applies especially in regards to the seeds of sin or righteousness that we sow into our lives.

- In fact, **in Galatians 6,** when Paul uses the phrase, **“What a man sows, that will he reap,”** he is talking specifically about sowing sinful habits into our flesh--he says that when we do that, sin grows and grows in us until it takes us over and chokes out spiritual life in us.

⁴ Joab was the one who murdered his rival Abner in act of revenge.

In these chapters, what we're seeing is the principle of sowing and reaping work itself out in David's family. David sows lust and betrayal and murder and it multiplies to much greater degrees in his kids.

"What a man sows, that will he reap." This is part of what is meant when God says in Exodus 34, "I will visit the sins of the parents to the 3rd and 4th generation." He's not saying he'll hold the kids responsible for the sins of the parents, just that they end up suffering for it.

The truth of this principle is illustrated over and over again throughout the Old Testament. Take the Genesis story of Joseph. (I've told you every important theme in the Bible starts in Genesis--the rest of the Bible is just an expansion of the themes introduced in that book..) Joseph's brothers were jealous of him and sold him into slavery. But that sin against Joseph didn't come from nowhere. Joseph, you see, had been the son of Rachel, who had been his daddy Jacob's favorite wife. Jacob showed extensive favoritism to Rachel, and Joseph was Rachel's kid, so the sons of Leah took it out on him. Jacob's sin of favoritism harvested in his sons. (This sort of favoritism and strife, by the way, is one of the *many* problems with polygamy—and why the Bible consistently portrays it negatively.)

So Jacob's sin of favoritism manifested in his sons. But Jacob's sin of favoritism didn't come out of nowhere, either. You see, JACOB'S daddy had played favorites, too. His daddy, Isaac had favored his older brother Esau, because Esau was more to his liking. So Esau always got the extra piece of chicken and the last brownie for dessert; Isaac's eyes lit up when Esau walked in the room and he loved to brag about Esau to his friends. Jacob was the... "other son." **Isaac's sin** multiplied into Jacob, which **multiplied into his sons**, which **resulted in Joseph being betrayed** and sold into slavery and ultimately the entire nation of Israel being enslaved in Egypt. One small sin of favoritism multiplies into the death, destruction and the captivity of the entire nation.

Parents--**the sobering reality is that our sin affects and shapes** our children. They learn and repeat our mistakes, often to even greater degrees.

- **Studies show, for example, that if you neglect your kids;** they likely grow up neglecting theirs. You abuse them; they often abuse theirs. Hurt people hurt people.
- **You are a workaholic;** they grow up with identity issues that manifest in all kinds of toxic ways.
- You are **unfaithful to their mother or father;** they grow up with commitment issues of their own.
- You **fail to be faithful in your giving,** or you nurse a **secret love of money,** they grow up materialistic.
- They **overhear you gossiping about or judging others** in your home; they grow up with a critical and complaining spirit; self-righteous and with problems getting along with others.

It honestly **breaks my heart when I see my idols** replicated in my children. And I see it all the time: things that have always been a little too important to me that start to manifest in them. I don't want to be really specific here—it's not that *I* can't handle it, but I don't want you to see my kids doing something and say, "**Ha, that's your daddy's sin!**" That's not fair to them, so let me talk in general terms.

- **Parents: If you worship the idol of success--**that is, you think that being at the top of your field and making lots of money are required to be happy--your kid absorbs that and they grow up with that pressure of always feeling like they have to be first or best or top of their class to have any worth. You may not ever verbalize it--but look into your heart. If you think that the only way to be happy in life is to be rich and successful, I guarantee you that you're communicating that to your kid in all kinds of ways. You are multiplying that idol into them, and that idolatry multiplies into all kinds of pressure and dysfunction in their lives.
- Or here's one (**and this one might sting**)--if **in your heart you believe that a good marriage is necessary for happiness--**that is, happiness in life, you believe, is not just discovering God's plan

and living it out--no, in your heart you believe there's no way to be happy and be unmarried. You cherish that idol in your heart, and they pick that up, and if in God's sovereignty they end up single or stay single for a long time, they think life has dealt them an unkind blow and God has abandoned them. That's your idol manifested in them. **Parents, be honest**--do you think that God can give someone a full and complete life without their being married? If your answer to that is not an immediate and unqualified yes, then marriage is likely an idol in your life and you are likely multiplying it in your kids and setting them up for heartache.

- Or how about this one: **You think that there's no way anyone could be happy unless they look a certain way.** And so you want your kid to be good-looking and fit--& you're not cruel about it--but it leaks out in little comments you make, little compliments you give, and little remarks you make about others. And it becomes obvious to your kids that you think it's only possible to be happy in life if you look a certain way--and so they absorb that idol and it multiplies into all kinds of dangerous fruits in them.

Your idol is killing them.

- ~~((Can I do one more? You really want your kid to be an athlete because when you grew up those were the popular kids so you put sports ahead of church and your kids absorb that idol and it multiplies in them so that when they go off to college they stop going to church at all. Your idol, your obsession, multiplied into destruction in them.))~~

Do y'all get what I'm saying? Now, let me be clear: Am I **saying that every sin we see** in our kids is our fault? No, of course not. Our kids, especially as they get older, are their own people and they make their own decisions--and thank God sometimes those decisions end up being way better than the ones we made. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. But I am saying that there is a divine order to how God set things up--and stories like David's and Isaac's illustrate that sin works itself out according to "the law of the harvest." Our sin

multiplies. **What a man sows he also reap--in even greater degrees than he sowed it.**

Y'all, listen, sin is serious: DEADLY serious. It's like John Owen, the Puritan, said: You must be killing sin or it will be killing you. At any given moment, one of those two things is happening. And not just you; you and your children and those you influence for generations to come.

That was a little heavy, wasn't it? How about a little good news?

2. You can break the cycle--but how?

It wasn't like David sinned once and all this was inevitable. No, in these chapters we see **multiple points of failure.** And that's actually good news, because there are multiple places they could have broken the cycle—that means there are multiple ways that you can, too.

Amnon failed by objectifying his sister. **Absalom** failed by not dealing with his anger properly, and pursuing revenge that was really more about him than her--BUT when I read this story I find **one particular point of failure** that stands out above the rest that seems to be the lynchpin of the rest. The silence of David at some very key moments. The first was where David, finding out about Tamar's rape, gets mad and does nothing. **Our pastor of counseling, Brad Hambrick, wrote a helpful article** about this event that I found helpful. He said:

David sought no justice for Tamar as Deuteronomy 22:25-27 prescribed--and it was David's obligation as king to see that those divine instructions were followed! Furthermore, based on Absalom's reaction, we are left to believe that David did not even confront Amnon as a father. The most striking feature of this passage is David's indifference. And when, as a king, David did nothing, the people around him found it more difficult to act. Tamar was invisible and ignored. Tragedy followed.

I can't help but wonder what **might have happened had David stepped in and cared for Tamar; pursued justice** on her behalf; brought her into his home instead of her having to live desolate and alone... or comforted Absalom and calmed him down and taught him what godly justice looked like. That might have kept Absalom from going on this murderous rage, which ended with his banishment and then a murderous coup. Or **I wonder what would have happened had David reconciled with Absalom instead of stonewalling him for 5 years. We can't know for sure--but the silence of David is deafening in these chapters.**

The psychologist Larry Crabb has an old book called *The Silence of Adam* in which he makes the case that the original sin goes back, in part, to the silence of Adam, and the failure of men to step up and lead when they should have been a dominant problem throughout human history.

I've pointed this out before, but when God created Adam and Eve, he put Adam in a position of authority, to serve and protect. The Hebrew shows us this in several important ways:

- **God made Adam first and then gave him the responsibility to name Eve.** That was a Hebrew way of communicating his leadership role in the relationship--the Apostle Paul says that in 1 Timothy 2. This doesn't mean that the man is superior in any way, just that he was to take the lead.
- **God gives the commands of the Garden to him,** and he's supposed to relay them to her and lead her in obeying them.
- He's **told to love and protect her like his own body;** to lay his life down for her to prosper her.

Pastor Tony Evans points out that the fall in Gen 3 came, in part, through the total abdication of that leadership role. Gen 3 says that when the snake tempted Eve, Adam was "with" her. Not on the other

side of the garden killin' and grillin' or doing whatever men do. "With" in Hebrew literally means elbow to elbow. He watched as she did it.

- **That** was not just a failure of **spiritual leadership, it was a failure of protection.**⁵ Adam knew God had said that the day they ate of it, they would surely die. So, he was waiting to see if she dropped dead when she ate it before he'd touch it. Only when he sees it doesn't kill her does he himself take it.
- IOW, **Tony Evans says, the original sin didn't begin with an act of commission,** with the taking of the forbidden fruit; the original sin began with an act of omission, with a man failing to step up, lead and protect when he was supposed to.
- And so it makes sense that God's question to man that evening when he came into the Garden looking for them was **Adam, where are you? Gen 3:9 So the Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" "Where were you?"**

Gen 3:9 is the question I want to ask **David** in these chapters: **David, where were you?**

- When Tamar had been abused, *where were you?*
- When Absalom needed his father, *where were you?*
- And it's still God's question to so many of us! **Where are you?**

Our world suffers because we've got a generation of males that never grow up to be men who take up their role as spiritual leaders. **Passive males. Lifelong adolescents. Dudes. Boys who shave.** Some of you ladies may feel like you are married to one of these, or you are dating one. Why do so many women have to take the lead in counseling? Men, when your relationship is in trouble, it should be you leading into the counseling office. Why do so many men sit back and let their wives do all the parenting? After my first book, when I was thinking of writing a second one, my publisher said, "Hey, you're really good at writing to men, but they only buy 15% of Christian books. 85% of Christian books are bought by women." So I'm doing my best to speak

⁵ Larry Crabb, *Men of Courage*, p. 10.

more to women... but it also makes me wonder, why don't men read Christian books?

What would have happened if David had been active in that moment? What if, instead of allowing his power to keep him detached in his palace, he had used his power to pursue justice, to protect, to heal?

You can break the cycle. But you have to act.

But the obvious question is: Why DIDN'T David? And why didn't his sons break the cycle? Why is **humanity stuck** in this perpetual cycle of brokenness and violence? Why does seemingly every king, every leader, every person we look up to, disappoint?

What you have in these chapters are **3 men who act like kings**--but the wrong kinds of kings.

- **David** is the passive king, silent when he should be speaking.
- **Amnon** is the **abusive king**, using his power to pleasure himself rather than serve.
- Then we have **Absalom, the selfish king**, who does everything for himself.

Why can't any of these guys break the cycle? These chapters scream--**we need a new King!** Even the family of David, who has been the best of the best, is hopelessly broken. And that's our last consideration:

3. A new King is coming who will break the cycle

As David flees out of Jerusalem, barefoot, with his head covered--a picture of abject failure, there's a little detail tucked in there you don't want to miss: "But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered." 2 Samuel 15:30

"The ascent of the Mount of Olives" would later be renamed "The Garden of Gethsemane"... and you see, years later another son of David would walk that same path--weeping, sweating great drops of blood.

This future Son of David would also be rejected as King. But unlike David, it was not his own sin that drove him out of Jerusalem; it was ours. And he walked up that same ascent to the Mount of Olives so that he could die for our sin. **Make sure you see this: Jesus walked David's same path of shame** so he could redeem David, put back together his Kingdom.

In this story, David laments, *"Oh my son Absalom, how I would gladly have died instead of you!"* David wanted to die for his son's sins, but he couldn't. Jesus actually could, and did.

And see, that's how you break the chain of sin. Because Jesus has broken the curse of sin, he can inject grace where previously there were only repeating cycles of sin.

I love the line of the old hymn we sing, "He breaks the power of canceled sin!" (On the cross he canceled your sin. He paid your debt. And a lot of Christians have received that part. But he also *breaks* the power of canceled sin." He didn't just die to pay the penalty for our sin; he also rose from the dead to break its power over you. Some of you have experienced the forgiveness of sins but you've never escaped Jesus breaking its power. *He breaks the power of canceled sin*, and sets the prisoner free.

And see, that's good news--**not just for David**; it's also good news for Tamar, too. In this story Tamar seems all-but-forgotten. She is literally forgotten by David. **But see, she wasn't forgotten by Jesus.** Jesus walked up that hill of brokenness and shame and failed kingdoms so he could bring healing to her, too. When he wept, like David, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he was weeping *for Tamar*.

- **Some of you, like Tamar, have been hurt by others' sins.** You've been the recipient of violence... Surely he has borne our griefs and our sorrows--yet he esteemed his smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions. And he was bruised for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was laid on him, *and by his stripes we are healed.*
- Sometimes I hear people talk about **generational curses:** sins in a family's past generations that still manifest in the present. I don't know exactly what I think about all of that, but I do know I can plead the blood of Jesus against any curse or residue of sin and break it immediately.
- **He breaks the power of canceled sin**—he didn't just die to pay its penalty, he died to release us from its power—so he sets the prisoner free! *I am not captive to any sin of the past*--whether mine or someone else's. *His blood can make the foulest clean, his blood availed for me!*
- So, whether you are a David looking to break the cycle in yourself or a Tamar looking to escape the devastating effects of sins committed against you, **Jesus walked up that hill for you.** His cross reconciles your past and his resurrection recreates your future.
- **So, friend, it's time to get up out of that grave** and get on with what God has for your future. As William Carey loved to say, *"The future is as bright as the promises of God."*

One special word before I close: Some of you, as I've walked through this today, identified with Tamar. You were failed by your father or a brother--maybe even abused. And I know that is a deep wound you have to deal with and I'm not trying to trivialize it. But what I will tell you is this: **You can find healing from the wounds of your earthly father in the arms of your heavenly one.** I know it because I've seen it in the lives of countless people at this church. Wounded and broken and shameful pasts, transformed by an encounter with the truly loving Father.

And as I say that, some of you can't even think of God as 'Father,' at least not with any joy, because your earthly dad was so bad, so neglectful, so abusive, or whatever, that you can't hear the word 'father' without thinking of all that he was. Let me give you a perhaps life-changing thought: **Rather than seeing your Heavenly Father through the lens of your earthly one, start to look at your earthly father through the lens of your Heavenly One.** Find your completion in your heavenly Father, and let that will help you come to terms with failures of your earthly one. In fact, with enough time, you might even be able to forgive him.

And are you ready, by his power, to break the cycle of sin? Are you ready to receive healing? Here's the thing. HE CAN do either of those things, but you have to come to him. You have to open yourself up to him. Scripture says that he stands at the door and knocks--he's doing that with some of you right now. Are you ready to let him in?

I'm going to ask our Prayer teams to come again... A time we pray for healing and do business with God. Altar is open. Come and pray. Maybe it's for you. Maybe for someone else. Maybe you need to pray for God to break the cycle of sin in you. Or, you need to pray for healing from past sin. You can pray in your seat, but I guarantee you coming here, kneeling around this altar, talking to one of these men and women will be even more healing. Some of us men need to pray about becoming the spiritual leader in our homes. Men: some of you have abdicated the role of spiritual leader in your home. Now's the time to begin turning that around. This morning why not take the first literal step of leading your family spiritually? Grab your wife's hand and come down to this altar to pray. Collect your entire family and come down to pray. You can just come to one of these prayer folks and let them pray over your family. Let it be a symbol that you're taking up the responsibility from here forward. Let this be your first

act of spiritual leadership. take that step of faith and boldness. Don't go home and let God have to ask, "Where are you?"

Bullpen:

- A duck quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why.
- Thirty-five percent of the people who use personal ads for dating services are argumentative.
- Only 1 person in 2 billion will live to be 116 years or older.
- It's possible to lead a cow upstairs but not downstairs.
- A snail can sleep for three years.
- No word in the English language rhymes with 'month.'
- Americans on average eat about 18 acres of pizza every day.
- It's physically impossible to lick your elbow.
- Before this day is over, almost all of you will have tried to lick your elbow.

But here's the strangest fact of all:

- Most people still think their sin affects nobody but them.

again, we applied that to money--we said, you start to tithe, you start to honor God in your finances and save today, and you likely won't experience a lot of difference today, but you'll reap the harvest of God-blessed finances tomorrow. That's really important.

The harvest is greater than the planting.

1. are reaping today is the fruit of what you sowed yesterday. There were a total of 5 of them, but here were the key 3:
- 2.
3. **The harvest is *greater* than the planting.** The thing about the harvest is that, for good or bad, what you plant comes back to you in much greater quantities than what you put down. Plant a handful of seeds, and they produce plants that can each produce hundreds of seeds which can each produce plants that produce hundreds of more seeds. That's true not just in relation to the crops that you do want, but also to the weeds that you don't want.

4. **The harvest is *later* than the planting.** That's the idea that when you plant something, you don't reap the benefits this year, you reap them next year. What you are experiencing *this season* is the result of decisions you made *last season*. I told you about **our CPC CP, John Muller**, who told me that one of the best practical jokes he played as a kid growing up in Gilbert, SC was to sneak out after his neighbors had aerated and fertilized their yards and throw random seeds out into their yards—corn and watermelons and sunflowers. **He said the hard part was that he and his friends got no immediate gratification from the joke.** The next morning the yard looked the same; but sure enough, 6 months later, his neighbors had watermelons and sunflowers growing in their yards. **The harvest is later than the planting**, which leads to this last really important law:
5. **You can't change this year's harvest, but you can change next year's.** Like I said, the harvest you reap today is the result of choices you made yesterday. And you can't change today. Even if you regret your choices and repent and resolve to do better. But you can change next year's harvest by beginning to plant the right seeds today.

realize that there are a lot relational dynamics here--brothers with sisters; bosses with employees; children back with parents and people with their friends--so, point being, there's plenty in here for all of us, and you can apply any of these things to your life regardless of whether you are married or have kids--however, I do think there are some especially pointed applications in here for fathers and mothers.) I know that, for many of you, this is so obvious that you might even be wondering why I'm saying it. You're saying to yourself, "*Of course* the sins of the parents bear fruit in the kids. I would know it, because *I'm one of those kids!*" You say, "I come from a long line of abusive parents or addicts or broken marriages ... My whole life has been a struggle to overcome these patterns. And, honestly, it terrifies me."

To that group, I want you to hear this: I'm not trying to heap shame on your struggle. In fact, in just a minute we're going to see some *tremendous* hope.

But right now I'm talking to the parents who—I have these conversations every week—just don't see how their choices *today* impact the *next generation*. I'm pleading with you: Wake up!

I know many of you resonate with this because you come from generational cycles just like this, and you desperately want to break them. In just a minute, we're going to talk about some tremendous hope. But I want to say a few words to parents who need to see how your choices today impact the next generation."

In one of **my favorite verses** in the OT, the Lord says to Israel, through Joel: "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten..." (Joel 2:25)

Locusts were divine judgment on sin. These locusts would fly down from the northeast in clouds so thick they obscured the sun.

- Immediately they dig holes in the soil about 4 inches deep and a half-inch wide, depositing more than **100 eggs** in each hole.
 - The way they lay eggs, btw, is pretty creepy—they are neatly formed in cones about one inch long and as thick as a pencil, like something out of the Matrix.
- These holes would be **literally everywhere**—about 70,000 eggs would be concentrated in a single square yard of soil, and these patches covered the ground for miles and miles.
- Within a few weeks, **these young locusts hatched, resembling large ants**. They hadn't formed wings yet, so they hopped along the ground like fleas. They would cover 4- to 600 feet a day, devouring any and all vegetation in their path.
- As they grew, they **developed the ability to jump**, at which point their range got higher and they would scour the trees and vines.

- ~~A few weeks later they'd **develop wings**, and they'd swarm over the areas they had already devoured to destroy any plant with life left in it. PIC 1~~
- ~~The sound of their swarms, they said, was terrifying.~~
- ~~**Within a few days**, there was literally nothing living—plant wise—left. PIC 2. They even eat the bark off the trees, leaving behind a wasteland what looked like a nuclear holocaust.~~
- ~~As they get more desperate for food, they swarm into houses **eating food, clothes, fabric, and wood**.~~
- ~~They are like middle school boys at a pizza party. They leave nothing behind.~~

This is what sin does. As we see with David, it grows and consumes and destroys. But God says, "*I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten.*" God will not only stop the ravaging locusts, he can undo and heal what you have done.

The picture we have in 2 Samuel 15 of David fleeing is one of the most soul-crushing pictures of the Old Testament. David, the long-hoped for King, fleeing the throne in Israel—ultimately, because of his own sins and the sins of his house.

It's not a secret, women take more initiative in just about every one of those now...

- We see women take more **initiative with the marriage relationship**. When a marriage is in crisis; more often than not it is her, not him, trying to drag them to counseling. Men, you should be leading in that.
- Women take more initiative with their kids. A lot of men seem only vaguely aware that they have short little people running around their house. Why are men not leading in the discipleship and discipline of their kids? It's your first assignment.
- Women take more initiative spiritually:

- They volunteer more at church
- They show more initiative in mission (IMB: for going to hard places, women outnumber men 4 to 1)
- Women **show more initiative to grow**: my publisher (you're good at writing to men, but they only buy 15% of Christian books. So I'm doing my best to speak more to women... but it also makes me wonder, why don't men read Christian books?)

Beth Moore says we've got a lot of dads who walk around mad in their houses but doing nothing really to help. Anger at injustice is good and right—and God can use it, especially when it drives us to Christ-honoring action. But just being angry? That's useless. Homes need men who do more than get angry. We need men who are not just angry but act as justice-seekers, protectors, redeemers, and reconcilers. We've got enough kids throwing useless temper tantrums, we don't need dad's doing it too.

~~Stop playing around with sin. Be killing sin or it will be killing you. Many of us have sinful idols and habits and behaviors that we have grown comfortable with because they don't seem to be hurting anybody that bad. It reminds me of when you read some story on the news, "Florida man mauled by pet cougar" and you read the story and find out this guy had a pet cougar named Fluffy and Fluffy "snapped" one day and ripped his face off. And everyone always acts so surprised, "Oh, but Fluffy was always so gentle and sweet." And I read that and I think, "Well, first, a cougar is a cat, and you can't trust cats. But second, it's not rocket science to realize that Fluffy is a predator. And if you keep a pet predator in your house, at some point it's going to manifest and turn on you and eat you. That's its nature.~~

~~Sin's nature is that of a multiplying predator. And you've got to take radical steps to get it out. If your eye offends you, Jesus said, better to cut it out than to let it condemn your whole life to hell.~~

~~6. The harvest is proportional to the planting. The measure of what you plant determines what comes back to you. Plant a little seed; get a little harvest; plant a lot of seed; get a big one.~~

Any one of these men could have broken this cycle, but it's like we're locked into a pattern of selfishness and exploitation. So, that's the question: How can we escape this cycle?

Which leads us to the most important point of these chapters.

4. Giving yourself to the new King breaks the cycle in you

As I said, there are so many points where one of these men could have broken the cycle. But David was passive; Amnon was abusive; Absalom was selfish.

We'll never know for sure, but what we do know is that we see a different kind of leader, a different kind of King, in Jesus. A King who was not passive; a King who used his power to serve and not to exploit.

The writer of Genesis goes on to show that **just about every point of humanity's descent stems from a passive or disengaged man.**

- He utterly failed... it says that the snake came to the woman to tempt her with the forbidden fruit; but what is interesting is

that the **way the Hebrew is written** it shows you that while the snake is tempting the woman the man is standing right there. He's not like, you know, off somewhere doing something important, he's standing there letting her eat of the forbidden fruit... because he is thinking, "**God has said when we eat of it, we will surely die... I wonder if that's true?**" I'll let my wife take a test bite, and see what happens to her." She does, and doesn't die, so then Adam takes a bite.

- Men, we weren't the first ones to eat of the forbidden fruit, but our passivity created the situation.
- That's why when God comes looking for them after the situation, the Bible says, **Genesis 3:9**, that God called out for the man, not the woman, but just to the man, "**Adam, where are you?**" Where are you? In other words, "Where were you?"
 - **Let me tell you how all that should have gone down. It should have been,** "Uhh... excuse, me, Mr. Snake. What you doing talking to my wife, you **slithering Satanic slimebag.**" We ain't eating of the forbidden tree; we are eating of the tree of life." Human history would have been so much different.
 - Men, our 1st sin was not one of **commission, but omission.** The world got screwed up not because we did something bad, but because we did nothing at all. The original sin was an abdication of spiritual leadership.

What I hope to show you from the life of David is that sin does have consequences—painful consequences; but that Jesus has taken the ultimate sting out of those consequences, so that while they are painful, excruciatingly painful, they are not devastating. Jesus was devastated so that the consequences of your sin could be redeemed.

I want to make the painful, sometimes irreversible consequences of sin so real that those of you who are on the brink of sin will be scared

and stop; and at the same time I want to give hope to those of you in the midst of those painful circumstances; to show you that your pain is painful, yes but God's goodness and mercy and grace are greater than your sin; and God can reweave all things in your life, even the consequences of your own sin and stupidity, for His perfect plan and your ultimate good.

I want to show you BOTH SIDES.

Here's where we left David after his sin with Bathsheba (*RECAP*):