



David & Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11)

What do these road signs mean in Norfolk?



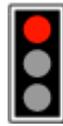
Go if clear



I am turning right (left)



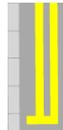
Purely decorative
(no overtaking across this line)



Go if clear (Stop)



Drive at any speed if no cameras
(national speed limit applies)



Purely decorative
(no waiting)

Road signs - why do we ignore them?

- ⇒ we don't think we'll get caught!
- ⇒ we're also selfish - don't care about anyone else
- ⇒ it won't do any harm
- ⇒ everybody's at it.
- ⇒ do things that we know are wrong but we do them anyway

Isn't this true about our lives and our morals anyway? When we do things that are wrong, when we know them to be wrong - what happens?

Our story tonight of David and Bathsheba is a good example of someone doing wrong, thinking that they would never get caught.

David knew what he was doing was wrong and that he was following a human predisposition to follow lusts rather than common sense. It seemed a little piece of

harmless adultery - after all he was king and he could use his position to make sure his wives never found out! But it got worse - she got pregnant. Oh dear, because she was the wife of a prominent member of his army, Uriah the Hittite who was at the front and who would know that she had committed adultery.

So how does he try to get out of it? Not by coming clean but by attempting deception.

▶ Plan A

By calling Uriah back from the front for a period of rest and relaxation with his wife so that when he found out that she was pregnant, he would think it was his child and not suspect adultery. But that didn't work as he refused to go home.

▶ Plan B

So David tried another deception, by getting him so drunk, that when he went home, he wouldn't remember what he had done the night before so he would think that he was the Father. Bathsheba will have been a full partner in this attempted deception as she would have had to tell Uriah a lie about what his behaviour whilst drunk. Unfortunately, he got so drunk, that he crashed out with the servants so that he never got to go home. Witnesses!

▶ Plan C

David's next deed went worse. In being unable to fool Uriah into thinking he was the father of Bathsheba's child - he had him murdered. When he sent instructions (with Uriah - how callous was that!) to Joab to put Uriah in the fiercest part of the battle and then withdraw, Joab knew what that meant. He knew David wanted Uriah dead. David knew he could trust Joab not to spill the beans to anyone as he was fiercely loyal to David. So Uriah died and David married Bathsheba to make it look as though she had a honeymoon baby. But worse, in that same battle, other men needlessly died with Uriah because of David's instruction to put Uriah in a dangerous place. In his instructions to the messenger, Joab knew that David may be displeased that he had made a "tactical error" in putting troops so close to the walls at Rabbah which is why he gave the instruction "and Uriah the Hittite is dead" to confirm that this was to do the dirty deed on Uriah.

What started out as a bit of voyeurism on a spring day turned to adultery, turned to deception and finally turned to murder. Then David married Bathsheba and that was that - or so he thought. He had got away with it - and no-one suspected a thing!

That's the nature of temptation and the nature of sin. We don't think that our activity hurts anybody. But it does. David started by just peeking at a woman bathing but look where it got him. He thought it was OK to commit adultery with her. After all, he was the king - nobody would suspect a thing. Things fell apart when she became pregnant. Here was a scandal in the making and like all good politicians he covered it up. How many times have we seen and heard that one! How often too we have heard of politicians deceiving people? How often has that led to people dying?

What do we learn about sin from this story?

👉 God knows everything we think and do

We live in a world that says it doesn't matter what you do as long as it doesn't hurt anybody. And after all we can all behave like motorists can't we. If nobody sees us, then we get away with it. After all, when was the last time you saw God jump out of the back of a yellow transit with a speed camera?

Besides, if other Christians are at it, then surely it must be OK. If Christian leaders support it, then it must be OK.

Sin is sin. David thought that he had got away with murder - literally. Stupid man! God had seen the whole thing and the prophet Nathan was sent to confront him. So what do we learn as we see God's response to David's deeds?

🕒 God freely forgives sin but we often have to live with the consequences

Let's get this understood and clear. God sees everything and just because God offers forgiveness freely, doesn't mean He tolerated un-repentant sin.

12:1 The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, 3 but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. 4 "Now a traveller came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveller who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him." 5 David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! 6 He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." 7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"

"You are that man!" David repented but the damage was done; he and Bathsheba lost the child and the thing was such a talked-about scandal that it is recorded for posterity. I'm sure whilst David plotted Uriah's downfall, that nearly 3000 years later that Hollywood would be making films about it! David found forgiveness but unfortunately he had to live with the consequences of his sin.

Sin has consequences. Our sin has consequences. We can be forgiven by God and by the person we offend when we have spoken out of place: but how much trust have we lost? I know people who have had their reputations destroyed by a single foolish act and even when they are restored, people don't forget even though our sins and iniquities are remembered no more.

🕒 God can turn our past sins to His advantage when we repent

The most superb thing about God is the way in which He not only does forgive sins but he can turn the consequences of our sin into something positive. The positive thing about this story was that David and Bathsheba's next son was Solomon. Our of David's awful act was produced Israel's wisest king.

Unlike people, God is one that can not only forgive our past but turn us to objects of His glory. Never think that your sin is so bad that you can't face up to it or live with its consequences because we have a God who deals with those situations and turns everything to His glory - but only after we have faced up to our sin and come to a point of repentance and relied on Him to deal with the consequences.

I believe the Lord wants to use this story this evening to take us into deeper repentance. Our sins are rarely like David's - adultery, deception, murder - but even the smallest sin damages our relationship with God. If we want to go on with Him in the way I suggested this morning; if we desire to know more of His presence then we must remove barriers of sin in our lives. Whether that is unforgiveness or whatever else, we need to face up to it and come into repentance this evening and start walking God's way.

Let me read some of Psalm 32(Living Bible)

32:1 What happiness for those whose guilt has been forgiven! What joys when sins are covered over! What relief for those who have confessed their sins and God has cleared their record. 2 3 There was a time when I wouldn't admit what a sinner I was. But my dishonesty made me miserable and filled my days with frustration. 4 All day and all night your hand was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water on a sunny day 5 until I finally admitted all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess them to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. 6 Now I say that each believer should confess his sins to God when he is aware of them, while there is time to be forgiven. Judgement will not touch him if he does. 7 You are my hiding place from every storm of life; you even keep me from getting into trouble! You surround me with songs of victory. 8 I will instruct you (says the Lord) and guide you along the best pathway for your life; I will advise you and watch your progress. 9 Don't be like a senseless horse or mule that has to have a bit in its mouth to keep it in line! 10 Many sorrows come to the wicked, but abiding love surrounds those who trust in the Lord. 11 So rejoice in him, all those who are his, and shout for joy, all those who try to obey him.



Preached by Mark Reid, Swaffham Baptist Church, 22/8/04.
Scripture Quotes NRSV
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