

Speaking Truth to Power – Nathan and David

Based on 2 Samuel 11 and 12

Characters:

Narrator	Uriah	Messenger	David's Aid
David	Joab	Nathan	

Narrator: David was truly a man of great faith, known as a man after God's own heart. Yet, he also abused power. Let's hear his story as told in 2 Samuel 11 and 12.

Narrator: One night he couldn't get to sleep and went for a stroll on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking her evening bath. He sent to find out who she was and was told that she was Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah. Then David sent for her and when she came he slept with her. Then she returned home. When she found that he had gotten her pregnant she sent a message to inform him.

So, David dispatched a memo to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." When he arrived, David asked him how Joab and the army were getting along and how the war was prospering. Then he told him to go home and relax, and he sent a present to him at his home. But Uriah didn't go there. He stayed that night at the gateway of the palace with the other servants of the king.

When David heard what Uriah had done, he summoned him and asked him,

David: "What's the matter with you? Why didn't you go home to your wife last night after being away for so long?"

Narrator: Uriah replied,

Uriah: "The Ark and the armies and the general and his officers are camping out in open fields, and should I go home to wine and dine and sleep with my wife? I swear that I will never be guilty of acting like that."

David: "Well, stay here tonight, and tomorrow you may return to the army."

Narrator: So, Uriah stayed around the palace. David invited him to dinner and got him drunk; but even so he didn't go home that night, but again he slept at the entry to the palace.

Finally, the next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and gave it to Uriah to deliver. The letter instructed Joab to put Uriah at the front of the hottest part of the battle—and then pull back and leave him there to die! So, Joab assigned Uriah to a spot close to the besieged city where he knew that the enemies' best men were fighting; and Uriah was killed along with several other Israeli soldiers.

When Joab sent a report to David of how the battle was going, he told his messenger,

Joab: "If the king is angry and asks, 'Why did the troops go so close to the city? Didn't they know there would be shooting from the walls? Wasn't Abimelech killed at Thebez by a woman who threw down a millstone on him?'—then tell him, 'Uriah was killed too.'"

Narrator: So, the messenger arrived at Jerusalem and gave the report to David. He said,

Messenger: "The enemy came out against us, and as we chased them back to the city gates, the men on the wall attacked us; and some of our men were killed, and Uriah the Hittite is dead too."

Narrator: David replied,

David: "Well, tell Joab not to be discouraged. The sword kills one as well as another! Fight harder next time, and conquer the city; tell him he is doing well."

Narrator: When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him; then, when the period of mourning was over, David sent for her and brought her to the palace and she became one of his wives; and she gave birth to his son. But the Lord was very displeased with what David had done.

Narrator: The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to tell David this story:

Nathan: "There were two men in a certain city, one very rich, owning many flocks of sheep and herds of goats; and the other very poor, owning nothing but a little lamb he had managed to buy. It was his children's pet, and he fed it from his own plate and let it drink from his own cup; he cuddled it in his arms like a baby daughter. Recently a guest arrived at the home of the rich man. But instead of killing a lamb from his own flocks for food for the traveler, he took the poor man's lamb and roasted it and served it."

Narrator: David was furious.

David: I swear by the living God, any man who would do a thing like that should be put to death; he shall repay four lambs to the poor man for the one he stole and for having no pity."

Narrator: Then Nathan said to David,

Nathan: "*You* are that rich man! The Lord God of Israel says, 'I made you king of Israel and saved you from the power of Saul. I gave you his palace and his wives and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah; and if that had not been enough, I would have given you much, much more. Why, then, have you despised the laws of God and done this horrible deed? For you have murdered Uriah and stolen his wife. Therefore, murder shall be a constant threat in your family from this time on because you have insulted me by taking Uriah's wife. I vow that because of what you have done, I will cause your own household to rebel against you. I will give your wives to another man, and he will go to bed with them in public view. You did it secretly, but I will do this to you openly, in the sight of all Israel.'

David confessed to Nathan,

David: "I have sinned against the Lord,"

Narrator: Then Nathan replied,

Nathan: "Yes, but the Lord has forgiven you, and you won't die for this sin. But you have given great opportunity to the enemies of the Lord to despise and blaspheme him, so your child shall die."

Narrator: Then Nathan returned to his home.

Narrator: Bathsheba's baby was deathly sick. David begged the Lord to spare the child and went without food and lay all night before the Lord on the bare earth. The leaders of the nation pleaded with King David to get up and eat with them, but he refused. Then, on the seventh day, the baby died. David's aides were afraid to tell him.

David's Aid: "He was so broken up about the baby being sick, what will he do to himself when we tell him the child is dead?"

Narrator: But when David saw them whispering, he realized what had happened.

David: "Is the baby dead?"

Narrator: he asked. They replied,

David's Aid: "Yes, he is."

Narrator: Then David got up off the ground, washed himself, brushed his hair, changed his clothes, and went into the Tabernacle and worshiped the Lord. Then he returned to the palace and ate. His aides were amazed.

David's Aid: "We don't understand you. While the baby was still living, you wept and refused to eat; but now that the baby is dead, you have stopped your mourning and are eating again."

David: "I fasted and wept while the child was alive, for I said, 'Perhaps the Lord will be gracious to me and let the child live.' But why should I fast when he is dead? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

Narrator: After Nathan the prophet had come to inform David of God's judgment against him because of his adultery with Bathsheba, and his murder of Uriah, her husband, David knew that he had grievously sinned against God. In the shame and remorse that followed, he wrote this prayer for cleansing and pardon, known as Psalm 51.

David:

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.

² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

⁴ Against you, you alone, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.

⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

⁶ You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing¹ spirit.