

## AN UNGUARDED HOUR

2 Samuel 11

**Intro:** If I were asked to name one of the most tragic incidents in all of Scripture, I think I would have to say, *the sin of David with Bathsheba*. And actually it was doubly tragic because it led also to the murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah the Hittite -- and David was directly responsible for both of these sins. Neither one had to be. What made two bad events even worse was Uriah's relationship with David. In 2 Sam. 23:39 Uriah is listed as one of King David's guard, and in 1 Chron. 11:41 he is listed among the valiant men in David's army. In addition, the title "the Hittite" which is attached to his name tells us that he was not a Jew, but a Gentile. Even when David called Uriah home to let him go home to his wife, Uriah refused to do that because, as he said, David's other men were "encamped in the open fields" because that was the time when "kings go forth to battle." So Uriah was a very, very faithful man, completely devoted to King David. And yet when all of David's plans to get Uriah to go home, David ordered Joab to put Uriah in the hottest part of the battle so that he would be killed. David even told Joab to pull his other men away from Uriah so that Joab would be left with the enemy who would kill him. And this is exactly what happened.

I don't know that we can tell how old David was at this time, but it has been estimated that he was probably in his early 40's. So he was not a really young man. He was old enough to know better.

But what makes this an even greater tragedy was David's life and character up to that point. When Saul was to be replaced, Samuel, speaking of David, said,

13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee (1 Sam. 13:13-14).

And year later when the Apostle Paul was preaching in Antioch of Pisidia, and briefly tracing the history of Israel, he referred to God's choice of David in these words:

20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will (Acts 13:20-22).

Notice what God's testimony concerning David was: "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."

And that is what David was, *a man after God's heart, a man devoted to God and thoroughly committed to doing the will of God.* That described David before he sinned so grievously against the Lord, and that described him afterwards. His psalms tell us how David with all of the trials that he went through, showed himself to be completely devoted to the Lord and to the Lord's will. That was apparent when he refused to kill Saul even when he had the opportunity. As long as Saul was king, David considered Saul to be the Lord's anointed, and David would not raise a hand against him.

But something happened that evening in Jerusalem that brought shame upon David, an incident which caused his enemies to blaspheme the name of the Lord. When Nathan the prophet had called David to admit his sin, he said this:

13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die (2 Sam. 12:13-14).

Now I don't believe for a moment that we have this in the Bible because the Lord wanted to bring further humiliation upon David. But I do believe that this is in the Bible to be a warning to all of the people of God in all future generations until the Lord comes, of a danger that faces every single one of us, and not necessarily of the same kinds of sin, *but a warning about sin of all kinds.*

In my own student days, and since then, the Lord has given me the privilege of sitting under some of the Lord's choice servants – and I have profited much from them and from their teaching. One of these was Dr.

Harry Ironside who for many years was the pastor of the Moody Memorial Church in Chicago. He was a visiting Bible lecturer at Dallas Seminary, and even before that I heard him speak at Baylor University where a number of us were able to get him to come down from Dallas to speak to a group of young men who were preparing for the ministry. But one day when Dr. Ironside was teaching us at Dallas, he mentioned that one of his frequent prayers was *that the Lord would let him get home to glory without dishonoring the Name of the Lord*. And the Lord answered that prayer. He was a man in his seventies at the time, and I remember how surprised I was to hear such a request coming from such a godly man. But I know now why he prayed that prayer, and I have prayed the same prayer for myself I don't know how many times. We are all so vulnerable, and we should realize that if a godly man like David could fall, then we all need to beware. And that is the reason I believe that these sins of David are recorded in the Word. I have heard men say that if David could sin as he did, and still see the blessing of the Lord afterwards, then the same can be true of us. But those are the words of men who are certain to get into trouble.

Tonight during our song service we sang #471, and it is from this song that I have taken my subject tonight: *An Unguarded Hour*. Let me read the words of that song to you again. Sometimes we notice the words of our hymns more when we read them than when we sing them.

(Read #471 in the Trinity Hymnal.)

Now in the remaining time I want to point out some things which David did, and apparently did not do, which led to these terrible sins.

## **I. HE OVERLOOKED THE PLAIN TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE.**

You can be sure that David was very well acquainted with the commandment which said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

He was a married man with several wives, and Bathsheba was a married woman. She was Uriah's wife. So that when David learned who she was, instead of sending for her, he should have forgotten all about her.

I feel sure that if we could know about David's spiritual condition at that hour we would learn that his fellowship with the Lord was not what it had been before. We need to spend time every day with the Lord, and pray that the truths which we know so well will be freshly impressed upon our

hearts to guard us in such times of temptation – whatever the sin may be. David was probably the one who wrote the words, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psa. 119:11). And this means that we need to be under the mighty power of the Word of God every day that we live. Just as a soldier in the thick of the battle would never go to face the enemy without his weapons, so we should never face a day without fortifying our hearts with the Word of God.

But let me tell you another way in which David had disobeyed the Word of God.

Long before Israel had a king, the Lord told Moses what was to guide the kings when that time came. And this, among other things, is what Moses wrote: “Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away” (Duet. 17:17a). And yet look at the list of David’s wives which are given to us in 2 Sam. 3:1-5. (Read.)

God never intended one man to have more than one wife *at a time*. And yet it was a common thing for men in OT times to have multiple wives. Abraham did. Jacob did. Solomon, David’s son, had a thousand wives and concubines, and listen to what happened to him:

2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father (1 Kings 11:2-4).

The fact that God did not judge those men who had more than one wife, did not mean that it was all right for them to marry as many women as they wanted to have. And David had to know this. But the fact that he had so many wives evidently made him feel that there was no problem in having one more.

What I am trying to say tonight is that if we are looking for reasons why David could do as he did, was because there were areas of his life in which he was not pleasing God at the time. And this softened him up to sin so that he ultimately did what he did.

But let me mention another point.

II AFTER A TIME OF GREAT BLESSING

**II. DAVID WAS NOT MEETING HIS RESPONSIBILITY AT THE TIME THAT THIS SIN OCCURRED.**

We are told in 2 Sam. 11:1 that this was “the time when kings go forth to battle.” It was not just that the kings sent their men into battle, but when they went forth with his men.

So David was at home when he should have been with his men. And Uriah’s reaction showed how deeply he felt about this himself. He couldn’t imagine being at home enjoying his wife and family while his fellows in the army were facing the enemy.

This should tell us two things. The first is, that we need to be sure we are where we are supposed to be at any particular time. To neglect that which is our responsibility can only open the door for trouble. The other is, that we need to be very, very careful about the time we have for ourselves. We all need breaks in our schedules, but how careful we need to be about the way we use our time.

We need to ask ourselves what we do when we have time to ourselves. What do we look at on television? What kind of books or magazines do we read? When we take a vacation, do we take a vacation from the Lord? Or do we look forward to our vacation times as times when we can read more of the Word, and spend more time in prayer – not only by ourselves, but with our wives and children?

Remember what our hymn told us:

Principalities and pow’rs, must’ring their unseen array,

Wait for thine unguarded hours: Watch and pray.

Oh, the Devil is so clever! And we are so prone to turn to sin. At first it might be in what we neglect to do, but then the next step is positive disobedience to God and His Word. Sins of omission lead to sins of commission.

Let me mention one more thing although there is much that we need to learn from this tragic time in David’s life.

**III. ONE SIN IS EASILY FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER SIN.**

David was in trouble. He tried deceit first of all to cover his sin, and when

that didn't work, he resorted to murder. Oh, he didn't lay a hand on Uriah, but he engineered his death. And we find him violating the commandment that we were talking about this morning: "Thou shalt not kill."

David as the king was responsible to write out a copy of the Law for himself. How extensive this was, we do not know – whether it was all of the five books of Moses, or just the sections in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy which had to do with the Law. But whatever it was, you can be sure that there was a day when David sat down and wrote, "Thou shalt not kill." And after that he wrote, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Why would the Lord give the kings an assignment like this? You will find it in Deut. 17:18:

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites:

But that was not all. Listen to the next two verses: Deut. 17:19-20:

19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:

20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

There surely had to be some breakdown between David's heart and the Word of God. I don't say that he wasn't reading the Word, but you and I all know that we can read the Word without really profiting from it.

**Concl:** Don't you agree that there are many ways we can learn from

David's experience what we need to do to keep ourselves from sin? And this is a most valuable portion of Scripture – for young people, middle aged, and older. I repeat: We are living in enemy territory, and it appears that way more and more all of the time, doesn't it? The level of life in America is going lower and lower and lower. And it will drag us down if we are not walking with the Lord, feeding upon the Word every day, and praying faithfully for ourselves, our families, and every believer we know, that we will all be kept faithful to the Lord. The Lord is never responsible for our sin, but He is the only One Who can keep us faithful until the time when He calls us home. "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but ..." (Matt. 26:41).