

Text: II Samuel 11:1-5 (Pew Bible, pg.304)

Title: “Surviving Marriage Storms”

INTRODUCTION

We’re celebrating marriage this month at our church. The Sacred Marriage and Sacred Search conferences were fantastic weekend. And we’re looking at some of the famous lovers in the Bible. But we also have some famous couples in our church:

EARLY SERVICE – STEVE AND JAN MORGAN (55)

EARLY SERVICE – GLENN AND CAROL HEDGPATH (49)

LATE SERVICE – JOHN AND JANIE MILAM (32)

LATE SERVICE– DUSTIN AND CASEY BURNETT (15)

ILLUSTRATION – Last Wednesday, April 10, was the anniversary of a fateful day in this history of my hometown of Wichita Falls. On April 10, 1979 a horrible tornado ripped through the city leaving 45 people dead, hundreds injured, and 20,000 people homeless. Nan and I had just celebrated our second anniversary and we lived in the parsonage that belonged to the church I pastored. That house happened to be right in the path of the tornado just as it reached its maximum wind speeds ... over 200 miles per hour.

Open your Bibles to II Samuel 11:1-5. We learn from every relationship found in the Bible, including the marriages. Every marriage will encounter storms ... finances, health, trouble having children, trouble raising children. Perhaps the greatest storm a marriage faces is the storm of unfaithfulness. How do we shelter ourselves from such storms? How do we recover from them? Well we learn from the relationship of two famous lovers in the Bible, David and Bathsheba. Read text.

Let me reintroduce King David to you. He is perhaps the greatest hero of Hebrew history. You find David’s life story told in I and II Samuel, as well as in the first part of I Kings. The Bible says that he was a man after God’s own heart, but he was also a man with some dangerous flaws in his life. And because of this a huge, devastating storm blew into David’s life, and into the marriage of Bathsheba and Uriah. These events are included in the Bible to instruct, warn and encourage us. So let’s look at it and see how we can avoid or recover from marriage storms.

1. THE CAUSE

2 Samuel 11:1 - In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king’s men and the whole Israelite army ... but David remained in Jerusalem.

Now some would say that David was at a vulnerable age in his life. He’s probably in his forties. He has accomplished and accumulated so much; and perhaps David didn’t realize how vulnerable he was. This was the season of the year when he would have typically been out with his army in military campaigns. The text says, “But David remained in Jerusalem.” It’s as if the text is signaling us that David was making a huge mistake. He was not where he was supposed to be, doing what he was supposed to be doing.

So here is David, by himself in Jerusalem, unoccupied, unengaged in his true life's purpose ... and extremely vulnerable. He's the king, so he can do anything he wants with anyone ... and that's a dangerous position to be in if you're not riveted to a higher purpose in your life.

Here's the first important way to shelter yourself and your marriage from this kind of storm.

STORM SHELTER – Stay focused on your God-given responsibilities.

Maintain your walk with God. There's no indication that David has depending on God like he was when he wrote...

Psalm 46:1 - God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Maintain your relationship with your spouse and children. Stay engaged in the fulfilling God's purpose for your life. To stray from these purposes for even a day makes you vulnerable to temptation and to compromise. And that's the next thing.

2. THE COMPROMISE

2 Samuel 11:2 - One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful,

2 Samuel 11:3 - and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

So David has his eye on another man's wife. David is also married ... actually to several women at the same time. David has married seven wives that we have names for, plus many other concubines and wives who remain nameless in the Bible. And some of this is the pressure of being a king in the world of David's day. This is one of the things God warned Israel about when they clamored to have a king like the pagan nations around them. God warned them that kings often do this kind of thing. They accumulate wives and harems as a display of wealth and power. And they could lead the king's heart astray. And David caved in to this pressure; he compromised.

But this relationship with Bathsheba goes far beyond this. It was a personal flaw in David's heart that led him to fall. David knew that in the creation account of Genesis and again in the Law of Moses God clearly establishes the sanctity of marriage as a relationship between one man and one woman for a lifetime. But he compromised.

I know that the world many of you live in every day is filled with these kinds of stories ... of people flirting and sleeping around. And much of the entertainment we expose ourselves to blatantly reinforces that kind of lifestyle. And that makes it all the more of a challenge for us as the people of God to hold up the high standard of marriage in our lives.

It says that in the evening David got out of bed. Perhaps he had taken a nap and was lounging in the cool evening breezes on the roof of his palace. From that elevated position David could look down

on to other houses, and his eye happens to catch Bathsheba taking a bath. He may have accidentally glanced in that direction; if so there's no sin in that. It became sin when he allowed his glance to become a gaze ... and David was hooked!

ILLUSTRATION – You've heard the old saying, "You can't stop the birds from flying overhead, but you can stop them from building nests in your hair."

2 Samuel 11:4 - Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her ... Then she went back home.

So how do we avoid this kind of storm?

STORM SHELTER – Recognize temptation early and take steps to escape.

ILLUSTRATION – When the storm comes you run for cover. Neither Nan nor I were at home when the tornado hit our house. But most everyone who lives in that part of the country has a storm cellar or at least a closet in the interior of their house where they seek shelter. But you don't stand out in the yard and watch it blow you away.

1 Corinthians 6:18a - Flee from sexual immorality.

Run from it, in whatever form it takes ... on your computer screen, in that flirtatious co-worker or whatever way the temptation to sexual immorality comes at you ... flee!

1 Corinthians 10:13 - No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

There's something God obligates Himself to do. He provides the way of escape. Our part is to stand up under it without giving in.

But David doesn't do that. He plunges head long into a destructive affair. Bathsheba goes back home, but what happens in David's palace doesn't stay in David's palace. Maybe David felt badly about what he had done. Perhaps he thought it would never be known, and that he could simply move on. But one day there's a knock on the door. The messenger brings word ... Bathsheba is pregnant. And that leads to the next chapter in the story...

3. THE COVER-UP

2 Samuel 11:5 - The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

Let me just pause here and point out something that is rarely talked about in this story. David not only committed adultery and immorality, but also he also destroyed another marriage, and eventually another life. Maybe you noticed this earlier. When David sends his servant to find out about Bathsheba, the servant said (literally, "thought to himself") ...

2 Samuel 11:3b - “Isn’t this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”

This is another man’s daughter ... this is another man’s wife. Sometimes men have such a low view of women. The woman they lust after on the internet, or passing on the street are just objects to be used for their own pleasure. Guys, think about this: That girl or woman is someone’s daughter, and possibly someone’s wife.

So when David gets the news that Bathsheba is pregnant he goes into full crisis management. Perhaps he thinks, “I’m the king. I can make this go away.” Bathsheba’s husband Uriah is away at war with the rest of the army of Israel. We read later in II Samuel 11 that David gives the order to have Uriah brought home from the war. Give him a few days of R&R. He will surely sleep with his wife. And everyone will think that the child Bathsheba is carrying is Uriah’s child. But Uriah was too much of a leader to enjoy this kind of visit with his wife while his men were still on the battlefield. He chose instead to bunk with the king’s servants. David’s Plan A is foiled. So he devises Plan B for the cover-up. He does the unthinkable.

2 Samuel 11:14-15 - In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, “Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die.”

In short, David ordered Uriah’s execution. So to the adultery David already committed he now adds murder ... all because David is trying to *control* the situation rather than *confess* it.

So how do we avoid this kind of storm?

STORM SHELTER – Be honest and humble about your sin.

Gary Thomas reminded us this weekend that we all stumble in many ways. And one of the ways that we grow in our marriages is learning how to repent to God and to our mates when we stumble. I pray this never happens in your marriage, but if it does, the only way to rebuild after the storm is to be humble and honest about your sin. Later David wrote about this sordid period in his life. He looked back on all the deception in his life.

Psalm 32:3 - When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

Psalm 32:5 - Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”— and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Well, Bathsheba grieves the death of her husband, then David brought her to his house and she became his wife. And perhaps David thought, “Great ... fixed that!” But the Bible says that the Lord was displeased with what David had done (II Samuel 11:27). And that leads to the next chapter in the story.

4. THE CONFRONTATION

2 Samuel 12:1a - The LORD sent Nathan to David.

I encourage you to go home this afternoon and read II Samuel 12 and the account of how God confronts David through the prophet Nathan. The words of the prophet pierced like an arrow to the heart of David.

Why did God do that? It is because He loved David; but more importantly God valued the glory of His own name. In fact we're told that this entire episode was going to be scandalous among Israel's neighbors. So God deals with David in a way that will preserve His own glory. But he also does it to correct and restore David. It's a loving God who sends His messengers to get in our faces about our sin. And the best thing to do to shelter yourself in this storm is this:

STORM SHELTER – For the sake of holiness be accountable to others.

I have to wonder how the story would have been different if David was not so isolated in his life. What if he had a Nathan close to him all the time to whom he could be accountable? Well, the next part of the story tells us about...

5. THE CONSEQUENCES

When David hears Nathan's rebuke, David is sorry and repents, but there were still consequences to his actions. II Samuel 12 describes all that will happen as a result of David's sinful choices.

2 Samuel 12:13-14 - Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."

God's forgiveness is real, but that doesn't mean that we will be shielded from the consequences of our sin. The child that was born to Bathsheba, whom David conceived, would die, and there is a huge hole ripped in David's heart.

STORM SHELTER – Think ahead to the potential fallout of your sinful choices.

Think beyond the pleasure and the exhilaration of the moment of sin to the days and years of devastation and humiliation that follow ... when you have to face the people you hurt ... your spouse and your children ... your friends at church ... the non-believers before whom your witness has been destroyed. Satan never shows you that when he tempts you.

Well, is there anything good, anything redemptive, that comes out of the tragic storm?

6. THE CONCLUSION

2 Samuel 12:24 - Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and lay with her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him;

God's plans for our lives aren't derailed by our sin. God's power and grace are greater than our sin. Did David face severe and painful consequences for his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah? Absolutely! Did David suffer because he got out of the will of God? Certainly! But God didn't watch all this unfold and say, "Oh my. David has messed up bad. All my plans for him and through him have been blown up." No, God's grace and power are greater than our sin.

The fact is that there was a genuine love between David and Bathsheba. And the Lord blessed them with another son. His name was Solomon. Solomon would carry on the kingdom of His father, and for most of his reign would lead Israel to worship God alone. Down through the ages God was faithful to fulfill His promise to David that he would never fail to have a descendent upon the throne of Israel. Because of Israel's unfaithfulness, God had to accomplish this in a rather circuitous way, but He kept His Word to David. And in the Gospel of Matthew is the ancestral chronology of the Messiah Jesus Christ. And as the ancestors of Jesus are listed there in Matthew 1:6 it says...

Matthew 1:6 - and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

When the storm of sin hits our lives and our homes, here's the shelter:

STORM SHELTER – Claim God's grace, which is greater than our sin.

1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

He can do that because Jesus paid the price for our sin. We see the Gospel in this heart-gripping story. God is greater than our sin. He was powerful to overcome all the terrible consequences and aftermath of David's sin. And through the Cross of Jesus Christ, God took our sin and buried it at the bottom of the sea. He gives us new life through the resurrection of His Son. God's grace overcomes all of our sin ... past, present and future. Put your life in His hands today and gain the victory.