

**October 8, 2020 - 2 Samuel 12:1-10, 13 (Seminarian Alex Brown)**  
**“Who Is the Man?” 1) My sin says that it’s me, 2) My Savior says that I’m free.**

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Two men stood in the throne room. One of the men had it all. This was King David. He had wealth, power, and land - rule over all Israel. He even had God’s promise that the Savior of the world would be born from his family. But he also had a secret festering in his heart that he thought no one knew about, a sin that he had committed and covered up with lies, deceit, and murder. The other man had a message for David, one that he needed to hear. His sin was not hidden as well as he thought. This was the prophet Nathan, sent to David by God.

Nathan began by telling a story. It went something like this - once in a city, there lived two men. Now, one of these men was rich beyond his wildest dreams, and the other man was so poor he had practically nothing. The rich man had wealth, land, and vast herds. And the poor man? He had one, small ewe lamb which he had bought with his own money and raised alongside his children.

This lamb ate from his table, from the scraps of food that he gave it from his hand, and it drank from his cup. It would even lie down on his lap and go to sleep there. This wasn’t just a lamb in his eyes - he thought of it like it was his own dear child, a daughter. He loved it with all his heart.

Now, remember the rich man? He was visited by a stranger who was going to stay in his house. Not wishing to be a bad host, he wanted to prepare a meal for his guest. But as the rich man looked out over his vast agricultural empire, he didn’t want to use one of his own sheep for the meal.

So what did he do? He went and had the poor man’s lamb, taken bleating and crying from his arms, killed and prepared as a meal for the stranger instead.

At this point, David is livid, a storm of rage builds on his face as he gets to his feet to pronounce judgment upon this man. “As surely as the LORD lives, this man must die. Because of what he has done, by not showing compassion, he must pay for that lamb four times over and he must die.”

The king had spoken, his judgment pronounced on the rich man, his oath binding before the LORD, heard with the ears of his servant Nathan. Judgment. Death. What

Nathan said next took all the rage out of David and left him speechless.

“David. You are the man.” By his own words, David stood condemned before the LORD, and all the walls of lies he thought he had covered his sin up with came crashing down around him until only his broken and sin-blackened heart remained, exposed before God.

But Nathan wasn’t done, there was more he had yet to say. Painful words that needed to be heard. He had announced the accusation, now came the evidence of David’s condemnation. “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says - I anointed you to be king over Israel, and I delivered you from Saul’s hand when he tried to kill you. I gave you his house, his wives - everything he had - and I even gave you all of Israel and Judah as well. David, if all that wasn’t enough for you, I would have given you so much more. Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You killed Uriah the Hittite, you struck him down with the sword of the Ammonites, and you took his wife to be your wife. Because of what you’ve done, violence and bloodshed will never leave your house. And as for you, David...”

David knew what his sins deserved. He had just pronounced a sentence of death upon a man for essentially stealing a sheep. How much more did David deserve, having done the terrible things he’d done. You are the man. He had lusted after and then committed adultery with Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba. You are the man. He had tried to cover up what had happened, to hide the fact that she became pregnant. You are the man. When all attempts at fixing the problem failed, David had Uriah killed in battle, murdering a friend to cover up what he had done.

Do not covet your neighbor’s wife. David did. Do not commit adultery. David did. You shall not murder. David did. You shall have no other gods before me. David did. David, the man after God’s own heart, had followed after his own sinful heart instead. You are the man.

By his own sins, David stood condemned before the LORD. He had no excuse for what he had done, and he knew that he deserved no mercy from the LORD. There

he stood, with the utter darkness of his heart revealed before both God and man. David deserved death.

But that wasn't what cut David to the core. Despising the LORD, that was what David had done. As a result, the relationship that David had with his heavenly Father was broken. And because of that fact, David's heart was crushed, and he repented from his sins. "I have sinned against the LORD."

Two men stood in the throne room. One, a crushed and broken king, and the other, a prophet who had just delivered the condemnation against that king. The prophet had more to say, but it wasn't more judgment and condemnation. Now, the prophet was able to pronounce something different. Something far more beautiful, a message of comfort and restoration, a message of healing and hope. Forgiveness, undeserved, yet freely given out of God's love. "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die, David."

You and I face similar condemnation for our sins. Condemned, not by a prophet, but by our own actions and by the very Word of God. What excuse do we have? Every lie and denial, to others and ourselves, are torn down and our sin-blackened hearts lie exposed before the wrath of a righteous God who cannot tolerate, cannot stand the sinful actions of mankind. No sins committed against one another, and certainly not sins committed against Him.

By our own sins, whatever they may be, we stand condemned. Like David, we know what our punishment is. Not just a physical death, but an eternal one as well, confined and condemned to the fires of hell. And there is nothing you or I can do to change that. We don't deserve mercy, we only deserve death. You are the man. I am the man.

Like David, we have no excuse to give to our God in response for what we've done. The Law crushes our sin-darkened hearts, it exposes us for who we are by nature - enemies of God deserving only wrath and punishment. The Law only condemns. So, what led David to repent? What leads us to repent?

It isn't the Law, and it certainly isn't the fear of condemnation, a last-ditch effort on our part to avoid the wrath of a righteous God. There's nothing we can do. Therefore, it must be grace. God's grace, completely undeserved, and freely given to us, his children, which changes our hearts.

"I have sinned against the LORD." In that moment, as God looks at broken and crushed sinners, waiting for the condemnation that we rightfully deserve, he gets to say something else. Something far more beautiful, a message of hope and salvation. "I forgive you. I have taken away your sins, you are not going to die."

"Why? God, look at what I've done, my sins condemn me! I am the man!" "No, my child, you are not the man. Don't look at the things you've done anymore. Look at what I've done for you." As God looks at us, waiting for the righteous judgment we deserve, he doesn't point to you, and he doesn't point to me. Instead, he turns and he points to Jesus, his dearly loved Son. "You. You are the man."

Jesus stood condemned before God, not because of his sins, he had none to call his own. He lived a perfect life, keeping all of the LORD's commands and not despising, but loving his Father's word. And yet, he took our sins upon his back, and he died the death that you and I deserve, in our place, all because of his great love for us. He has taken away our condemnation and replaced it with forgiveness and salvation. Forgiveness, undeserved, yet freely given out of God's love.

We deserve only wrath and punishment, but God's full and free forgiveness, given out of love for us, restores us to him as God's dearly loved children. Our sins whisper words of condemnation and force us to bow our heads in shame, but with a triumphant proclamation from our Savior, "It is finished", those sins have no power over us anymore. Jesus has set you free. With a gentle touch, he lifts your head to gaze upon his smiling face. And now he says, "Look! I have taken away your sin. You are not going to die. Because of what I've done, you will not die, but live."

So, who is the man? Your sin says it's you. My sin says it's me. But our Savior says, "Look! I have set you free." Now go. Serve the LORD with gladness, knowing that your sins are all forgiven. Be at peace with God. Amen.