

The Life of David

Week 11: Sow the Wind, Reap the Whirlwind

2 Samuel 13-18

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Two decades ... King David will spend two different, two separate ten-year deployments in the cave. His first decade was someone else's doing. But that was a lifetime ago. This decade that we'll study today—this decade that we'll be reading about today—will be all David's doing.

David's sins of adultery and deception and murder will ignite a fire in his palace that will burn for eleven years. And there's no doubt that David confessed, that he repented, that God granted him forgiveness. The prophet Nathan declared, "The Lord has taken away your sins." There's no doubt about that. He had been forgiven, and yet even God's forgiveness won't wash away these consequences. Later on, the prophet Hosea will write, "[When you sow the wind, you reap the whirlwind.](#)" David had sown the wind of the flesh, and now he will reap the whirlwind of consequences.

And those consequences were clear. The Lord said that "the sword will never depart from David's house," and "out of his own household God will bring calamity on David."

And the six chapters that we'll study today, 2 Samuel 13-18, show us that the bills have come through for David's sin, for his choices. And these six chapters contain the perfect stories of violence and intrigue and murder and death. But the stories that you find there, as troubling as they are, are not gratuitous. This story would get an R-rating in the box office, no doubt. But these are there purposefully. They are there for our benefit. They are there as a warning to us that when we sow the wind, we will reap the whirlwind. And those closest to us, those we love most, will be swept up into it along with us. These six chapters could save your life. These six chapters could save the lives of those closest to you. That's the power of these six chapters in 2 Samuel that we'll look at today.

Three Whirlwinds

Because there are three whirlwinds that will sweep through David's life and through his family, through his palace, over the next decade.

Whirlwind #1: David's Sins Are Repeated and Amplified in His Children

And the first whirlwind is this. Whirlwind number one is that David's sins are repeated and amplified in his children. David's crimes are replicated and they are magnified in his sons. Because, you see, that spring a few years ago when kings go out to war and David decided to stay back in Jerusalem, he wasn't alone in the palace. No, David's sons Amnon and Absalom were there with him too. And so, his children, his sons, were observing as their father took a woman who wasn't his. They were looking on as their father manipulated and deceived and plotted a murder to cover his tracks, and then lived for a year in open defiance against the Lord. They were watching and learning, as young boys do with their fathers. And, oh, did they learn.

And we see this repetition and amplification with David's sins. First, we see it with David's oldest son Amnon. We'll see him repeat his father's sin of illicit sex. And Amnon will follow in his father's footsteps by taking a woman who wasn't his. And why? Because he could. Because he wanted to.

And we see that in [2 Samuel 13:1-2](#) where it says, "In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David. Amnon became so obsessed with his sister Tamar that he made himself ill."

Amnon becomes fixated on his half-sister Tamar. And make no mistake, this is a demented lust. This is a sick compulsion and nothing more. And so, what does Amnon do? Well, he replicates another important lesson he had learned from his father: deception. He goes to his father David and he lies to him. He tells him that he needs an audience with his sister. And unknowingly, David sends Tamar to Amnon, and when Amnon has her alone he will rape her. He violates his half-sister, the daughter of King David. And then when he's done, he will multiply her shame and disgrace by kicking her out of his bedroom and out of his life. He uses her and then he discards her.

And Amnon doesn't just repeat his father's sins. He amplifies them. He builds on them. Because David had deceived Uriah, one of his finest soldiers. But Amnon will deceive his very father, King David. David took a woman who wasn't his and eventually made her his wife. But Amnon will force himself on his half-sister, and then when he's done, he will ruin her life and future. He kicks her out like a piece of trash. Sin repeated. Sin magnified.

And the story continues, and so does the repetition and the amplification of David's sins in his children's lives. And so, after this tragic event Absalom doesn't just harbor his sister Tamar by taking her into his own home; he harbors a hatred for Amnon, his half-brother. And Absalom is nothing if not patient and calculating. And so, he waits and he bides his time. And two years later, two years after this horrible incident, Absalom is ready to seek retribution. He is ready to put his plan into motion. And so, how does he start? By lying to his father. He starts it with deception. He goes to David and says, *I need you to send Amnon to a party that I'm throwing*. David may be suspicious of his motives at first—it's been two years, so maybe he's only a little suspicious. He says no at first, but eventually he relents. And he sends Amnon and all the king's sons to this party that Absalom has thrown. And Absalom makes sure that Amnon has had plenty to drink. And when Amnon is defenseless, Absalom's men will strike him and murder him, just as Absalom had told them to do.

You see, David had given instructions to have Uriah murdered, and now Absalom will give instructions to have his own flesh and blood, his own half-brother Amnon, murdered too. Sin repeated. Sin magnified.

But the story continues. Because after Amnon's murder, Absalom will flee Jerusalem. He will flee to the safety of his mother's hometown. And he will stay there three years. He will be in exile there for three years until his father the king allows him to come back to Jerusalem. He'll come back to Jerusalem, but in a nine-year span he will only see his father's face two times. So, Absalom is back in Jerusalem, but he is simmering with contempt for his father just as he had simmered with hatred for his brother. And that will ultimately lead to mutiny.

And he begins hatching a new plan. And how does he kickstart this attempt to overthrow his father? Well, with that cherished family tradition of deception. It shows up once again. Sin repeated. Sin amplified. Absalom positions himself near the city gates and he intercepts Israelites as they're coming to the palace, as they're coming to seek help from the king, the judge of the land. They bring complaints and injustices to King David. Absalom intercepts them there, and this is what he says in chapter 15: “*‘Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you,’*” unfortunately. “*And Absalom would add, ‘If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would make sure that they receive justice.’*”

And he does this for four years. He connives and he flatters and he deceives, and “[So he stole the hearts of the people of Israel](#)” (2 Samuel 15:6).

And then there’s another lie that Absalom will tell his father David. Absalom will ask David for permission to go to Hebron to fulfill a vow that he says he has made earlier. But Hebron is where kings are crowned. In fact, Hebron is where David was made king. And so, now David the king becomes David the pawn, because he gives Absalom permission to go. And he says these three words: “Go in peace,” little knowing that war, not peace, is coming for him. You see, Hebron is where Absalom will put the finishing touches on this rebellion and declare himself king.

And then there’s one last sin of David’s that will be repeated and magnified in his son Absalom—one final sin. And what happens is that once Absalom is crowned in Hebron, David flees. He takes off. He gets out of Jerusalem because Absalom is coming. And Absalom takes his place in Jerusalem. He takes his throne and wears his crown. And Absalom all but has the kingship in his hand. And so, he says, *You know, what do I do now to seal the deal on my kingship—to make sure that David will never sit on this throne again?* And who does he turn to? He turns to Ahithophel. Do you remember Ahithophel, grandfather of Bathsheba? Well, Ahithophel is a former trusted advisor for David, but no longer—not after what David had done. He goes over to Absalom’s side now. And when Ahithophel gets this question from Absalom, he says, *You know, I have just the thing for that. He says, This is what you do. You pitch a tent on the roof of the palace, the same roof that David had strolled across the night when he saw my granddaughter Bathsheba bathing. You pitch a tent on that very roof and you take the ten women, the ten concubines, that David has left behind in Jerusalem to care for the palace. And you have sex with every single one of them.* David had taken one woman, and in the very spot where he did so and allowed this illicit relationship to begin, Absalom in that same spot will take these ten women and will have illicit sex with them too.

Sin repeated. Sin magnified.

I wonder, have you seen the power of generational sin in your family, sin that’s passed down from parents to children to grandchildren? It’s very likely that you’ve seen how your parents’ sins have been transmitted to you. Their pride, their arrogance, their addictions, their vanities—they haven’t only injured you, but there’s a good chance that they’ve infected you too,

that they have trickled slowly but surely into your soul. We've probably all seen how this happened in each of our lives.

Application: Confront the Presence of Generational Sin

And this dark story reveals in painful detail how important it is that we do this. We have to confront the presence of generational sin. We have to face the power of generational sin in our families. Don't sit back and hope it goes away. It won't. Don't try to outrun it. You can't. That's the reality with generational sin. If you want to stop generational sin from infecting you and those who you care about most, then what you're going to have to do is this instead. You're going to have to plant a flag in the ground and declare, *This far and no further*. You're going to have to say, *This sin that has woven its way through my family history for decades, maybe longer, stops here. This sin is not going to infect this home, these people who I love dearly. It stops here. It will go no further*. And you plant a flag in the ground, and that's what you say. *This far and no further. This sin stops today*.

And as you do that, as you think about and consider what that might look like, I want you to know that this church has so many men and women who have had to plant a flag like that in the ground. They've had to do that very thing. And my wife Dayna and I, when we were at the beginning of our marriage together and we saw generational sins coming for us, we sought out three different couples who go to this church—three couples who we looked up to and respected, who love Jesus, who were a few decades ahead of us—and we said, “Help! What do we do? Help us to figure out how we stop this generational sin in its tracks. We don't want to be infected any more than we already are. We want to get rid of it. We want to stop it right here.” And we were shocked, and, I would say, also strangely comforted, to hear that all three of these couples shared with us that they had deep brokenness in their families of origin. They each shared about generational sin with their families that they had to put a stop to so that it wouldn't affect their marriage and so they could protect their children. And as they told us these stories, all three of them said the same thing, but separately. They all said, “Look, if we could go back and do anything differently, this is what we would do. We would've started earlier. We would have planted that flag in the ground and said, ‘This far and no further’ years, even decades earlier than we did. Why did we wait?”

And do you know what this is? This is becoming like Christ in all of life. That's what this is. Coming to Christ is relatively easy. But becoming like Christ is hard. It is so hard, it is so tough, to become like Christ in all of life. And it takes work. And when you plant that flag in the ground and you say, "This far and no further," that's not the end of the work. That's the beginning. That's where it really starts—the hard work of becoming like Christ in this area of life and rooting out this generational sin that's chasing after you. Because these hard-baked generational sins that chase after us don't go away on their own. And they don't die easily. And the reality is that it might mean that some relationships are disrupted or even ended for a time, maybe longer. It may mean the death of some dreams that you've had if you're really going to do away with this generational sin, if you're going to plant this flag.

And so, you're going to need help. You're going to need help. You can't do this alone. You're going to need an individual or a couple or several people who can come alongside of you in this fight, who can help you to plant that flag, to say "This far and no further." And what I want to encourage you with is that this church is teeming with men and women who can help you to do that. There's a good chance they're sitting on that row this morning. They're certainly in our Communities. They're in our Men's and Women's groups. They're in our Care and Marriage ministries. And these are men and women who can come alongside you. They can grab hold of that flag with you and they can stand with you as you declare before God and everyone else, "This far and no further. These generational sins stop here." You can do that. You can find that here.

You see, David had sown the wind and now he will reap the whirlwind. And the first whirlwind that he reaps is that his sons and will repeat and amplify his very sins. But this storm was only gaining strength. It was only getting stronger. Because there was a second whirlwind coming for him and his family.

Whirlwind #2: David's Sins Keep Him from Disciplining His Children Appropriately

Whirlwind number two: David's sins keep him from disciplining his children appropriately.

You see, David loses his moral authority in the lives of his children as a result of his choices. He is the lone justice of Israel's supreme court. That's who this man is. And yet, he is

inept when it comes to addressing the moral chaos that is running rampant through the hallways of his palace. He refuses to address it.

And we see this several times. We see it when David's son Amnon violates Tamar. The narrator gives us insight into David's emotional response, the way that he reacts to this. It tells us in [chapter 13, verse 21](#), "When King David heard all this, he was furious." He was irate, as any parent would be. So, do you know what King David does? Do you know what he does to right this wrong, to administer justice and discipline to Amnon for his actions? Do you know what he does? He does nothing. He does absolutely nothing. No justice, no discipline. He does nothing. David had said the words, "I want her. Get her for me," years earlier. And so, when his son does the same about David's own daughter, he says, *What can I say? What can I do about that?* He is hamstrung by his own sins. His guilt over his sins has paralyzed him from acting as judge, as king, as father. And so, he doesn't move.

And then Absalom waits two long years for his father the king to do something, to do anything, about this sin of Amnon's. And when David still hasn't taken action two years later, then Absalom realizes, *Well, I'm going to have to do something.* And so, he does. He murders his half-brother Amnon. And we see David's reaction again. It says, "[King David mourned many days for his son Amnon](#)" in [chapter 13](#). And so, what does David do? What does he do with his son Absalom? What does he do as judge of all the land? He does nothing. Once again, he doesn't act. There's no discipline, there's no love, there's no justice, for this crime that Absalom has committed.

King David feels deeply for his children. There's no doubt about that. But then he does nothing. The sins that he's seen repeated and magnified in his sons are allowed to grow out of control, because David looks at his sins and says, *Because I've done that, what can I say?* And so, he's paralyzed by the guilt of his sins. And he hears these words from the Lord: "Your sin is taken away." Maybe he even believed those words. But he still allows his past sins to block the discipline that his children needed from their king, from their father.

Application: Confront the Presence of Your Own Sin

You see, another important lesson that we can learn from King David is this: that you also need to confront the presence of your sin.

It's not just generational sin. We have got to face the power of our sin in our families, in our children's lives. Our sins can do to us what they did to David. And sin has this nasty way of handicapping us in one of two ways.

The first way is that it does to us what it did to David. It paralyzes us, and we choose not to confront the sins of our children or even someone we lead—someone who we're in some sort of leadership position with, spiritual leadership—and we do nothing. We don't act. And we choose not to act because we think, *Who am I to say something about this sin that's been in my life, or maybe still is?* So, we can be handicapped in that way.

The second way that our sin can handicap us is that it can entice us to be enraged when we see our sins show up in the lives of our children in those who we have leadership over. When we see our sin show up in their lives we can be enraged. And so, a level two offense becomes this level eight response, and we hit the roof. Our sin, if we don't confront it, can handicap us, especially when we're horrified to see it show up in other people's lives—our children's and others' lives.

And so, instead, we can confront the presence of our sin. We can go after that sin and we can declare, "This far and no further!" We can plant a flag in the ground that says, *This sin in my life—not just this sin that's in my family—but this sin that's running through my veins stops today. It stops now. God, help me.* And we can do that with our own sin. And we've got to do that with our own sin. Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you and those who you love most. And so, what do you do? You plant a flag, another flag. You say, "This far and no further." And if you do this, you're going to need a team. You're going to need a team, so you gather a friend, you gather your spouse, you gather your life group. Gather all of them. And you come together and you say, *Hey, grab hold of this flag with me. We're planting this thing today in the presence of God and in the presence of all of you. This sin in my life stops now. I'm not going to let it hamstring me in the way that it did David. I'm going to be the mother, the father, the leader, that God has made me to be, that I might be able to lovingly discipline those who He has put in my care. I want to be able to do that. This sin is not going to stop that any longer.*

So, David's sins cause these whirlwinds. First, his sins are repeated. They're magnified in his sons' lives. And then, his sins keep him from disciplining his children appropriately. And then, there's one final whirlwind that will erode David's parenting.

Whirlwind #3: David's Sins Turn a Giant Killer into a Passive, Distant Father

Whirlwind number three: David's sins turn a giant killer into a passive, distant father. King David was a statesman. He was a poet. He was a warrior. He was a king. He was a giant killer. He was a failure as a father. He wants to be close to his children, but he doesn't know how to do it. And this was the son who was forgotten by his father. There's no doubt about that. That is true. You know what? He still could have learned how to be a loving father, just like he learned to do all those other things so well. He could've sought out wisdom and help and guidance to become the father that he never had. But he chose not to. And instead, he resigns himself to this passivity, to this distance with his children.

And we see that show up several times in this story. After Tamar is assaulted by Amnon, not only does David neglect to bring her justice, but he doesn't even go to her to comfort her. He has nineteen sons and one daughter. And yet, when she needs her dad the most, he is not there for her. He could have been a part of bringing her some honor that she had lost due to what had happened to her. When she needed her father's affection and his consolation, he wasn't there. He kept her safely put away. We see it with Tamar.

We see it with Absalom. We see the same thing in David's relationship with Absalom. And there are two key words in this narrative that will demonstrate this relational wall that David has with his son Absalom. Two key words. And each of these key words will be said five times in this story. The first key word is the word "face." It's the word "face." While Absalom is in exile for three years, while he is safely put away from any discipline or judgment that he might have received, he's finally allowed to come back to Jerusalem. His father King David allows him to come back to Jerusalem. But this is what David said. When Absalom is brought back, these are David's words: "He must go to his own house. He must not see my face.' So Absalom went to his own house and did not see the face of the king."

It's not just that David won't discipline Absalom; he cuts him off from any chance of a relationship or restoration with his father as well. He builds this wall in his relationship with Absalom and nothing can take it down. And Absalom is so desperate to be in his father's presence, to be with his father, that earlier he'll burn down a field just to get to see his dad. And then later he will say, *You know what? You can condemn me to death. But I want to see my dad.*

Even if I'm condemned to death, I want to see him. And so, this is what he says, “I want to see the king’s face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death.” He longs to see his dad, to be seen by his dad, to have his love, to have his affection.

The first key word is that word “face.” But there’s a second key word in this narrative too that shows the relational barrier that David has built with Absalom. And that’s the word “son.” Five times the word “son” will show up in this story. And all five times it will come out of David’s mouth. But all five times that David says the word “son,” it’s after Absalom is already dead. Absalom will never hear the word “son” from his father’s lips while he is alive. It’s only when Absalom is killed in battle and David hears the news and discovers this, that he sheds tears of anguish and cries out, “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!” These are some of the most tragic words ever spoken by a father.

Application

The reality is that we all have the propensity to do this with our children, with our family, with those who God has given us to lead. You know, we can go to work or other places in our lives and we can be assertive, we can be courageous, we can be gregarious. And then something happens when we walk through the front door of our very own home. And it’s like we take that person off and we disengage. And we become somebody different. We discard that person. And there are so many ways to build a relational wall with our children, with those with whom we have leadership over, who God has given us leadership with. You could use a hobby to build that wall. You could use a glass of wine or work e-mails, getting important things done. All of those are so much easier than the hard work that relationships require. We can go to those things.

Or we can build relational barriers with others whom we lead—not just our children, but with other whom we lead—by withholding the words that they need to hear from us, that they want to hear from us. And we keep them at an arm’s distance because it’s just safer there. And we can do that.

And look, I know it is frightening to think about allowing God into these painful parts of our lives that He want to change, that He can do something about. I know that is frightening. But I would say that if you’re going to fear anything, fear this: Fear not letting God into that part of your life. Because when we do that with the Lord, this is what we will eventually be saying: “O

my son Absalom! O my son, my son!” We’ve got to let God in there when He can help, He can change. He has the power to do something, to transform us.

You see, this story is devastating. And in this period of David’s life, most of what we learn from him is what not to do. Most of the lessons that we get from David are how not to be as a parent, as a leader, as a leader in the places where God has brought us to in life. But I think there’s one final lesson that we can get from this story. We can do what David didn’t. Because what David did is he waited until it was too late. He waited until it was too late, when Absalom was gone. He grieved, he wanted to make it right, he wanted to do something. And we don’t have to do that. You know, whether it’s with our child—maybe they’re fifty years old, maybe they’re five years old—maybe it’s with a friend—we can go to the people in our lives that we need to say sorry to, that we need to apologize to, that we need to take ownership of the choices that we’ve made, the words that we’ve said. We can go to them and we can take responsibility for that. We can ask them if they would please forgive us. We can let them know about our desire, our plans to change, with the Spirit and God’s help; how we’re planting this flag in the ground that says, “This far and no further.” We don’t have to wait. We can do that.

You know, my dad planted a flag once. He said, “This far and no further” to his sin. And he took responsibility. And one day he came to me and he invited me into a conversation. And then he sat next to me on a couch. And he had a pad of paper and a pen in his hand and humility in his heart. And he asked that terrifying question: “How have I hurt you over the years? I want to confess and apologize for those things. I want to ask for your forgiveness. I want to change.” And it was a beautiful thing. It was a conversation that we’ll both always remember. And he did that with me and he did that with all four of his children.

You see, I was a thirty-year-old husband and father and pastor when my dad came and had that conversation with me. And I was able to see with my very own eyes, very personally, firsthand, what it looks like to plant a flag—how much it costs to plant a flag—to say, “This far and no further.” And I got to see with my very own eyes what it looks like for a sixty-year-old to become like Christ in all of life. You never have to stop growing in Christ like this.

You know, I wonder if maybe this isn’t just my dad’s story. I wonder if God is telling you that there’s a couch waiting for you. Maybe your son or your daughter or a friend, and a

conversation like that. You won't need much. Just a pad of paper, a pen, and a humble heart. Maybe God has that for you too.

Let's go to Him. Let's talk to Him, and more importantly, let's listen to Him and hear what He might have to say to us right now. Let's do that.

Loving Father, we ask You to be with us, to help us as we resolve to plant a flag; to say "This far and no further" to generational sin, to our sin, to passivity. Lord, we can't do this alone. We need You. We need Your people. We need the help that the body of Christ can provide.

And so, Lord, as Your Word says, may we flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness and faith and love and peace along with those who call on Your name out of a pure heart. Lord, would You give us somebody who could run alongside us, who could pursue righteousness and pursue You along with us and flee this sin that has chased after us?

Lord, we want to do that. Would You give us somebody who could? Lord, we pray that in Your Son's name. Amen.