

The Tragedy of Lost Potential

2 Samuel 12:1-8

INTRODUCTION:

- A. George Bernard Shaw, the winner of the 1925 Nobel Prize for literature, played the “What If” game before he died. A reporter asked him if he could live his life over, and be any person he has known, or any other person in history, who would that be? Mr. Shaw replied, “I would be the man George Bernard Shaw could have been, but never was.”
- B. One of the tragedies of war . . . any war . . . Is the tragedy of lost potential.
1. Cure for cancer or heart disease.
 2. The world’s greatest leader.
 3. God’s greatest modern-day evangelist.
- C. The Bible speaks of a man who experienced firsthand “The Tragedy of Lost Potential.” **2 Samuel 12:1-8** – “Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: “There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor.
- 2 The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds.
 - 3 But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him.
 - 4 And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”
 - 5 So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!
 - 6 And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity.”
 - 7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.
 - 8 I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and **Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!**”
- D. Common to hear such statements as: (Depending on the wording)
1. “What could have been.”
 2. “What might have been.”
 3. “It could have been so different.”
 4. “It could have been much different.”

E. Tragic to hear such statements as:

1. “What if.”
2. “I regret.”
3. “I wish things could have been different.”
4. “If I had only done things differently.”
5. “I wish I had never been born.”

NOTE: These statements are not limited to the closing moments of life.

F. “If only” is a sad principle in life.

G. In 2 Samuel 12:8, Nathan delivered God’s message to God wherein God said, **“And if that had been too little, I also would have given you more.”** In essence God was telling David that if all the blessings He have given him was not sufficient, he would gladly have given him much more.

1. David’s sinful acts (coveting, adultery, murder) displeased God . . . Yea, had hurt the very heart of God.
2. Now God tells David through Nathan . . .
 - a. If only you had done things right.
 - b. if only you had honored me.
 - c. Things could have and would have turned out different . . . and better.
3. God knows how to pull your heart strings.
4. You may think your sin is hidden . . . but it is open before the holy eyes of the God of the universe. **Numbers 32:23** – “But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; **and be sure your sin will find you out.**”
5. Here is our point of emphasis . . . Because of sin you are asking to experience the tragedy of lost potential. (Repeat)

H. I want to set forth three obvious Biblical principles in this study:

1. **Sin causes you not to experience the fullness of God’s blessings.**
2. **Sin causes you to experience the loss of blessings already given.**
3. **Sin causes you to experience judgment in light of God’s blessings.**

SIN CAUSES YOU NOT TO EXPERIENCE THE FULLNESS OF GOD’S BLESSINGS.

A. What was it that Nathan told David in verse eight? **“And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!”**

1. God is liberal in his giving of gifts to His children, is He not?
 - a. **Matthew 7:11** – “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”
 - b. **James 1:17** – “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”

2. When God has given much, He stands ready to give more.

B. We miss the fullness of His blessings because of the disruptive nature of sin in our lives. **James 1:14-16** – “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.”

1. Our covetous hearts display ungratefulness to God for His blessings.

Listen to verse eight again: “I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and **Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!”**

2. Was David displaying discontent with the blessings God had already given him?

SIN CAUSES YOU TO EXPERIENCE THE LOSS OF BLESSINGS ALREADY GIVEN.

A. **2 Samuel 12:11** – “Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.’”

1. God would take away some of that which David had been permitted to have.

a. His wives.

b. Peace within his family.

2. It is untold the number of blessings that are lost because God’s people desire to go against God by sinning.

3. **It just doesn’t just mean a loss of potential blessings, but it can mean a loss of existing blessings.**

a. It doesn’t have to be a “big” sin.

b. It doesn’t have to be a public sin.

c. Like David’s, it may be private sins.

4. All sin requires that we put ourselves before God.

B. **Psalms 51:12** – “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”

SIN CAUSES YOU TO EXPERIENCE JUDGMENT IN LIGHT OF GOD’S BLESSINGS.

- A. **Luke 12:48** – “. . . For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”
- B. Concerning David:
1. David was still king . . .
 2. He still had the promise of his lineage continuing on the throne . . .
 3. But his family would not know peace. **2 Samuel 12:10** – “Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.”
 4. His family would experience trouble within because of the sins of David.
 - a. Ammon raped Tamar . . . Both David’s children.
 - b. Absalom murdered Ammon . . . His half-brother.
 - c. Absalom attempted to take the throne from his father, David.
 - d. Absalom was killed while fighting against his father’s soldiers.
- C. What sin can do in the lives of God’s people.
1. Separate them from God. **Isaiah 59:1-2** – “Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”
 2. Interrupt the flow of blessings they ordinarily would be receiving from God.
 3. Cause them to be exposed because of their sins. “. . . Be sure your sin will find you out.” **Numbers 32:23**
 4. Will reap for the evil he has sown. **Galatians 6:7** - “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”
 5. Will leave them needing to repent and be restored. (Simon, the Sorcerer, in Samaria) **Acts 8:22-24** – “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.”
Then Simon answered and said, ‘Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.’”
- D. Like David’s family, many families are in turmoil because of the sins of its members.

CONCLUSION:

- A. 2 Samuel 11-12 teaches us that, like David, because of sin we may never experience the fullness of God’s blessings.
1. We may find ourselves asking, “What if” and saying “if only.”
 2. Thankfully, the Bible indicates it can be otherwise.
- B. **Psalms 51:1-15**
- C. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**