# 2 Sam 12.1-25, Mat 5.27,43-48

Whether you are a man or a woman, the account of David and Bathsheba makes for interesting, but frankly disturbing reading. David, the courageous shepherd boy, the Goliath killer, the gifted music maker, a successful field commander, a reluctant outlaw and anointed King of Israel, had everything he needed to rule Israel well. But just when he thought he was strong he became weak. ld have been fighting with his troops to secure the borders of Israel. But David sent the troops off with his Joab, his deputy in command, while he stayed at home.

It seems that David became bored. And surprise, surprise, he saw a beautiful woman bathing on the roof of a house near his palace. David was actually very vulnerable. Temptation to sin is always round the corner. Most of the time of course we are busy doing things that leave us little time to take notice of temptation. But just seeing a beautiful woman bathing provoked serious desires inking David. He wanted her, so he found out who this beautiful woman was. Her name was Bathsheba. She was the daughter of Eliam, and the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Her husband was away fighting with David’s army. David knew what he was doing when he sent messengers to get the woman. She came to the king – and he slept with her. It was only a one-night stand, but she became pregnant. Once she was aware she was having David’s child she told the king. What would he do about the situation?

David had gone a step too far; now there would be a whole range of consequences which would bedevil his life, kingship and family. But David came up with cunning plan: he would ensure that Uriah, Bathsheba’s Husband slept with his wife as soon as possible. He sent messengers to get Uriah to come home from fighting, and assumed he would sleep with Bathsheba. But Uriah was a honourable man, and would not dream of sleeping with his wile when he was supposed to be fighting for his king. David even tried getting him drunk so that he would forget about his responsibilities and go to be with his wife. For all that, Uriah did not sleep with Bathsheba. David was becoming very concerned.

Uriah had to go: David arranged with Joab, his field commander for Uriah to be killed by enemy action. Then David would do the honourable thing as he saw it, and take Bathsheba to be his wife. So it happened that Uriah was killed in enemy action and David thought he had got away with it. The Lord knew however, and sent Nathan the prophet to David who carefully told a story about a rich man, who was entertaining a travelling guest. The rich man would kill and prepare a sheep for the meal, but he did not take one from his own flock. Instead he took a poor man’s only lamb. David was beside himself: he called out that this rich man deserved to die; he must pay the poor man for the lamb four times. David revealed his heart for the poor, the underdog, and the deprived. But there was a gulf between his heart and his head. Nathan’s story shook David rigid as he said to him ‘You are the man’. His sins were known to God

What was David to do? To his credit he did not seek to hide anymore. He immediately acknowledged what he had done, and the seriousness of his sins before God. The danger we all run is that when our sins are exposed we deny them, pleading that there were extenuating circumstances, other factors to take into account, excuses, excuses! Anything to avoid taking responsibility. But David knew he nowhere to hide from God. Having committed adultery, David knew from the Mosaic law he and Bathsheba deserved to be stoned to death. He had also had a man and accompanying soldiers who revered David as King killed

But because the Lord loved David as a man after his own heart, The Lord took away his sins: he would not die because of them, but what David had done could not go unpunished. God told David through Nathan that he had done so much for David, and would have done even more, But by making Bathsheba, Uriah’s wife pregnant, and having him killed by the sword, The sword would never depart from David’s house. David sinned in secret, but his wives will be given to someone else close to him, and they would be abused in public. The son born to Bathsheba will die

So it was that the baby became ill. While the baby was still alive David pleaded with God for the child, lying on the floor and fasting. But the child died on the seventh day, that is, before the eighth day when he would have been circumcised. The David got up and resumed normal life, eating and going to the house of the Lord to worship.

Life continued. David loved Bathsheba and had another son by her. They named him Solomon, and the Lord loved him. The Lord said through Nathan that he should be called Jedidiah – loved by the Lord. One day another child would be born in the house of David. Jesus would be the promised Messiah king who would sit forever on the throne of David. All we like sheep have gone astray; each of us has sinned and deserve to die. But through the death of Jesus on the cross for us God has forgiven our sins. And through his risen life we have eternal life now. I believe that God forgave David’s sins because of what had achieved from the foundation of the world. The cross was in the mind of God from all eternity, and David knew the love and goodness of God in profound ways. For God will never leave us or forsake us. And although we bear some of the consequences of our sins, we can be sure that God works for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose

Sermon preached by RKP on Sunday 27 August 2017