

April 10

2 Samuel 8; 10-12; 21

Hello every body. This is Klint Bitter coming to you with your Project 4:4 daily accelerator for April 10th.

Today our reading jumped around a bit through the chapters of 2 Samuel 8; 10-12 and chapter 21 along with a couple psalms. As we continue walking through the life of David, we see an era of conquest as the nation of Israel is expanding.

In today's reading, there were 2 wars mentioned. First, David's defeat of the Philistines. This would have been a strong victory for the nation of Israel and David, personally. You'll remember that as a boy, David's brothers were fighting against the Philistines when the boy, David, killed Goliath, the giant Philistine. To defeat this enemy and "subdue" them would have surely been a big victory.

The next war mentioned starts in a peculiar way. David, trying to show kindness, sends out a group of diplomats to express Israel's sympathy for their king who had just died. The new king, son of the former ruler who had just died, gets some bad advice.

Thinking that Israel had really sent the ambassadors as spies to scope out a future conquest, Hanun humiliated them and sent them packing as a message to Israel. If that wasn't enough to provoke Israel to war, the Ammonites then hire an ally in the Arameans and amass a large military force.

War was inevitable. From the reading, you know what happened next. God gave David victory.

Let's pause the story for just a moment. One of the things we can learn through this history lesson is an affirmation of that we see in other places throughout the Scriptures. Did you catch it?

Proverbs 20:18 says, "Plans succeed through good counsel; don't go to war without wise advice." Well, Hanun got the counsel part correct, but failed the "wise counsel" aspect. The historical record we have here indicates just how bad that counsel was. Not only did they misinterpret the intent of David's gesture, but that misinterpretation would also lead to a bloody defeat at the hands of Israel.

This episode begs the question: where in life are you getting advice? When you're faced with a big decision, are you flying solo or are you a person surrounded by wise counsel? You may be tempted to take this story and conclude that advisors can be a bad thing, but you'd be neglecting a large portion of biblical teaching that says just the opposite. Instead, be careful with the people you let in your inner circle. Seek wise counsel for the forks presented in the road of life. Always test advice against Scripture. One sure fire way to determine whether the counsel

you're receiving is wise or foolish is to run it through the test of Scripture's teaching.

Well, as that war continued against the Ammonites – while Israel is out attacking Rabbah, modern day Amman, Jordan – we have the now famous record of David's moral failure.

It's a sobering read. There's such stark contrast between the young David who goes to such great lengths to act honorably throughout the whole ordeal with Saul and this David whose sin spirals out of control.

It's a familiar story and you've just read it, so we won't rehash it all here. But there are many deep, real life lessons about pride, lust, the far reaching effects of sin, confession, and God's great forgiveness; just to name a few.

First, let us be reminded that lust is a real battle. Whether that lust is physical, visual lust or emotional, it will wreak havoc in your life. It starts with a glance, a consideration. Before you know it, its evolved into action. It's been said that sin takes us all farther than we intended to go, keeps us longer than we wanted to stay and costs us more than we wanted to pay. It's easy to see the truth of that statement illustrated here.

At first glance from his balcony David couldn't have imagined the literal, physical death that would result from his choice. So, you and I when standing at the cross roads of temptation are ill equipped to see the full cost of sin. As James 1:15 says, "Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

The applications for our lives are many. First, if you're dabbling in the fires of temptation, run. Run far and run fast. As attractive as it looks in this very moment, it's not worth it.

Second, if you've jumped into the pool of sin, stop it. Don't try to hide it. Secrecy is a sin incubator. Stop lying to yourself and those you love. Trying to hide from your sin won't make it's consequences any easier to bear and will likely cause further damage.

Third, confess. Seek God's help and the help of a (or a few) trusted followers of Jesus and break the pattern. Admit your guilt and repent. God is faithful and just, if we confess our sins, he'll clean us up.

Finally, find forgiveness in our God of unthinkable mercy. As great as David's sin was and with all the havoc his choices had created, God's forgiveness was greater still. Notice David wasn't spared all of sins consequence. But David's righteous standing before God was restored. As followers of Jesus, made right with God through his atoning death on the cross, we're afforded right standing before God in spite of our sinful exploits. Hold fast to that reality, but do not cheapen it.

It's a sobering reminder that sin leads to real, painful death; though the enemy would have us believe otherwise. Tomorrow, we'll continue tracking through the history of Israel and David's kingship.

Until then, this is Klint Bitter encouraging you to pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.