

# Caged by Sin

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## Introduction.

- A. My brother says that one of the huge advantages that the police have over criminals is experience. Most police officers see the same patterns of crime hundreds and hundreds of times, so they're able to look for the mistakes that lawbreakers typically make and catch them that way. The criminals, on the other hand, don't have nearly the same opportunity to learn because as soon as they mess up, they get caught.
- B. In our spiritual struggles, Satan has the same advantage over us. He has thousands of years of experience. He's seen every kind of person. He knows just what will appeal to each one of us, and how to present it.
- C. When our enemy is so clever, we can't afford to be foolish. We can't afford to blunder through life, stumbling recklessly across Satan's traps, because if we walk in that way, we will never reach heaven. Instead, we have to take thought for the schemes of the devil, so that as we understand him, we learn to resist him.
- D. In this process of attaining spiritual wisdom, one of the most important aids that we can use is the Bible. The Scripture often records God's people in an unflattering light. It doesn't skip over the times when they sinned, and even when they fell. That's so that we can study the word and learn from their examples.
- E. One of the most important things that those examples teach us is that sin is a continuing process. Just as we come closer to God with each temptation that we resist, every temptation that we give into tangles us up more with the devil. We are tempted to return to that sin again and again, but we also find ourselves in positions where we are forced to fight against sins we would never have contemplated before. By this process, Satan drags us down farther and farther, until finally he has us completely. Let's look at how this played out in the life of David in 2 Samuel 11-12. Let's look at how even this man after God's own heart was caged by sin.

## I. David and Bathsheba.

- A. This whole sorry saga begins with the story of David and Bathsheba, and that started with what probably seemed at the time to be an insignificant decision. We see it described in 2 Samuel 11:1. At the time of the year when kings were supposed to be out doing kingly things like defending their country from foreign enemies, David stayed at home, and his idleness gave the devil an opportunity that would cost him dearly.
- B. From this, friends, we need to learn the dangers of idleness in our lives too. Let me ask you: when is it in your lives that you have the biggest struggles with sin? Is it when you're so busy that you're on the run from sunup to sundown, or is it when you have a bunch of time on your hands that ungodly thoughts and actions start creeping in? I know when it is for me. Now, this isn't to say that time away from our jobs is a bad thing. In fact, the opposite is true. However, notice that when Jesus had down time, He didn't spend it going to parties or shooting the breeze with His disciples. He spent it in prayer. At the very least, friends, with our free time, we need to be structured and useful with it, so that we aren't wasting hours idly watching TV or idly surfing the Internet or idly hanging out with ungodly people. Those things expose us to temptation too.
- C. We see the immediate results of the idleness of David described in 2 Samuel 11:2-4. Notice, folks, how much this reveals about David's sin. It's not like David saw her and jumped off the palace roof to chase her down. He saw her and thought about her and asked around about her and sent messengers to bring her to him. David wasn't overcome by momentary passion. Instead, he lusted and deliberately chose to sin.
- D. Likewise, folks, rarely indeed are we surprised into sin. Instead, Satan very carefully smooths our way into sin by giving us the opportunity to think about it first, then the opportunity to act on the lust that we have conceived. Most often, we sin because we have prepared ourselves to sin. That tells us, then, that we must be especially vigilant whenever we spot sin preparation going on in our minds. It is not some harmless fantasy when we indulge in momentary lust or anger or pride or hatred. Instead, as we think about those things, we are bringing ourselves closer to acting on them. Soon, we will end up doing what we thought was impossible.
- E. We see the immediate consequence of David's sinful action in 2 Samuel 11:5. Who knows how many millions of people have heard just the same words that David did, and had the same sinking feeling as they realized it wasn't over? David thought he was through with Bathsheba when she went back to her house, but the only thing that was over was the pleasure of sin. Now, he had to deal with the consequences of adultery.
- F. Folks, sin works just the same way in our lives too. As I've been telling the high school class recently, sin is like a credit card. You get the fun now, but you have to pay later, and you keep on paying and paying, far beyond the worth of what you have received. There are two reasons why this is so. The first is the nature of sin, and the second is the nature of Satan. First, remember once again that sin is sin because it is bad for us. God didn't forbid fun things. He forbade things that look fun but in reality are self-destructive. Second, remember that Satan's goal is to take over our lives and destroy us spiritually. When we give into sin, we open a crack in our defenses. Satan's not going to hit us where we're strong. He's going to exploit our weakness, and keep on hitting us there until he succeeds in killing us. The fun stops, but the results keep going.

## II. David and Uriah.

- A. With Bathsheba's pregnancy, things move to the second act of the tragedy, the story of David and Uriah. Uriah is Bathsheba's husband, and he's one of David's soldiers. The problem is, Uriah's out on campaign where David should be, so if he comes home and finds that his wife has a new baby boy, he's going to know something's wrong. David gets the bright idea, then, of bringing Uriah home on leave, so that he'll go to his house, sleep with his wife, and unknowingly cover David's tracks. The problem is that Uriah doesn't go to his house. We see why in 2 Samuel 11:10-11. He foils David's scheme by being too honorable and upright to enjoy the comforts of home when his comrades are suffering on the battlefield. David is still trapped.
- B. When we sin and start coming up with schemes to avoid the consequences of sin, we often run into the same problem. Sin is awfully hard to cover up, and it makes sense that it would be that way. After all, God's not about to help us dodge the painful lesson we have coming, and Satan just enjoys seeing us suffer. The more we sin, the more complex the cover-up gets, the more things we have to keep straight, and the worse it will be when the whole thing comes crashing down. One lie leads to another lie, and that lie leads to two more lies, but all of them put together aren't as easy to deal with as one simple truth. Sin is tough to get out of.
- C. Now that David's first plan has been foiled, he comes up with another plan. We see its description in 2 Samuel 11:14-15. David still needs to come up with a legitimate daddy for Bathsheba's baby, and if Uriah won't fill the role, then he needs to die so David can fill it. And so, without any apparent hesitation, David finds himself plotting to murder one of his men, a good and honest soldier who has nothing but serve him loyally. A year ago, David would have reacted with horror to even the thought of doing something like that. Now, though, because sin has got David so thoroughly trapped, he thinks that murder is the only choice he has left.
- D. See how far David has fallen so quickly? Friends, once we get caught up in a continuing sin saga, the same thing happens to us. The more we choose to sin, the more difficult it becomes to do righteousness. Also, the more we sin, the more Satan takes control of our lives. It happens all the time. All of us love our families, and I suspect that the men in here would willingly die to protect their families from harm. Yet I know a brother in Texas who got addicted to cocaine and ended up stealing from his wife and daughter to support his drug habit. Once we get trapped in sin, Satan easily persuades us that the unthinkable is the only choice we have left.
- E. Sadly, David's evil plan succeeded. We see this in 2 Samuel 11:17. Uriah had done nothing wrong. Indeed, he continued to do nothing wrong. He followed orders, went into a dangerous part of the battle, and was killed. Sure, the sword that took his life was wielded by one of the Ammonites, but the guilt was David's.
- F. We need to see too, friends, that one of the results of our sin is that innocent people get hurt. Libertarians like to talk about so-called victimless crimes, but there is no such thing as a victimless sin. Sometimes, as with adultery, the victims are obvious. Other times, they are less so, but the victims are still there. For instance, when we lie, we injure those close to us, because they need to be able to trust us, and we make that impossible. When we speak hatefully, we often leave scars that last longer than the trauma of any physical wound. Even the sins of our thoughts damage others, because those sins eventually shape our actions. That's a big part of what makes sin so evil. It is utterly unloving and destroys people who don't deserve it.

## III. David and God

- A. At this part of the story, it seems like things have worked out well for David. He has the beautiful woman he desires, and her old husband is dead. Of course, this doesn't end the story. It only sets the stage for the interaction between David and God. We see this begin in 2 Samuel 12:7, 9. On earth, there was nobody who was going to stand up for Uriah, even if there were more than a few people who probably put two and two together. However, in heaven, God saw, and He could not allow such injustice to pass without vengeance. Judgment was going to fall on David the king just as it would have on David the shepherd.
- B. Folks, this is one of the most important things we need to remember about sin. God always sees, and God always judges. We may think we hide it from others with our webs of deceit, but we never succeed in hiding it from Him. Everything that we do against someone else, everything that we do against God, will receive its just punishment. The judgment of God may be delayed, but it will always come.
- C. Likewise, our sin can have terrible consequences in what it teaches our children. Look at the promise that God makes in 2 Samuel 12:11. As 2 Samuel progresses, it reveals that the bringers of violence and immorality will be none other than David's own sons. Amnon, David's firstborn, took his half-sister Tamar and raped her. Tamar's brother Absalom killed Amnon, then rebelled against David and defiled David's concubines. Where do you think these two young men learned such a loathsome mixture of lust and violence? They learned it from the example of their father. They learned it so well that they ruined his life just as he had ruined Uriah's.
- D. Our own sin can have just as powerfully corrupting an influence on our children. If they see us go piously off to church every Sunday, yet come home and sin secretly all week long, what are they going to think of the Lord's church? If they see us constantly bicker and fight with our spouses, what kind of lessons are we teaching them about marriage? Perhaps the most important teaching that we give our children is not with our words, but with our examples. If our examples are sinful, we are teaching them how to sin.

**Conclusion.** If you've been caged by sin, it's not too late to make your life right with God. Come to Him today.