

2 Samuel 12, Selfish sinners get surprising grace

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Preacher: Steve Palframan

- [0 : 0 0] We are going to read the whole of 2 Samuel chapter 12, and Rebecca is going to come and lead us in our reading. So Rebecca, over to you. The Lord sent Nathan to David.
- When he came to him, he said, there were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb that he had brought.
- He raised it and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who'd come to him.
- Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who'd come to him. David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, as surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die.
- He must pay for that lamb four times over because he did such a thing and had no pity. Then Nathan said to David, you are the man. This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says.
- [1 : 0 4] I anointed you king over Israel and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah.
- And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with a sword and took his wife to be your own.
- You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised me. And you took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.
- This is what the Lord says. Out of your own household, I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes, I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you. And he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight.
- You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel. Then David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. Nathan replied, the Lord has taken away your sin.
- [2 : 0 3] You are not going to die. But because by doing this, you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the son born to you will die. After Nathan had gone home, the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife had born to David and he became ill.
- David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused. And he would not eat any food with them.
- On the seventh day, the child died. David's attendants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. They thought, while the child was still living, he wouldn't listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we now tell him the child is dead?

He may do something desperate. David noticed that his attendants were whispering among themselves and he realized that the child was dead. Is the child dead? he asked. Yes, they replied, he is dead.

Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the Lord and worshipped. Then he went to his own house. And at his request, they served him food and he ate.

[3 : 06] His attendants asked him, why are you acting in this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat. He answered, while the child was still alive, I fasted and wept.

I thought, who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live. But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.

Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba and went to her and made love to her. She gave birth to a son and they named him Solomon. The Lord loved him and because the Lord loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedediah.

Meanwhile, Joab fought against Rabba of the Ammonites and captured the royal citadel. Joab then sent messengers to David saying, I have fought against Rabba and taken his water supply. Now muster the rest of the troops and besiege the city and capture it.

Otherwise, I shall take the city and it will be named after me. So David mustered the entire army and went to Rabba and attacked and captured it. David took the crown from their king's head and it was placed on his own head. It weighed a talent of gold and it was set with precious stones.

[4 : 10] David took a great quantity of plunder from the city and brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes, and he made them work at brick making. David did this to all the Ammonite towns.

Then he and his entire army returned to Jerusalem. Amen. Great. Thank you so much, Rebecca. Let's pray again and ask for the Lord's help.

Heavenly Father, as we come just now to look at your word together, we know that we are so easily distracted. There's perhaps no point in our service at which all the other things in our lives feel so distracting and as important as now when we're trying to listen to your word.

So please, by your spirit, help us, we ask. Pray that the words that I say might be useful and true. And pray that you might be at work through this time now for the sake of your glory to change our hearts and lives, to trust you and live for you.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. This morning's passage is the follow on from last week. So if you weren't with us last week, let me give you a very brief overview of what you need to know.

[5 : 21] David, who is the king of Israel, last week in last week's passage, took the wife of another man called Uriah the Hittite. He took her.

He slept with her. He got her pregnant. He had her husband killed. And then he married her. And chapter 11 ends, if you look at the top of that page, with those ominous words.

But the thing David had done displeased the Lord. And now chapter 12 starts with these words. The Lord sent Nathan, Nathan the prophet, to David.

Now, I don't know whether you can imagine what it might be like to be Nathan. And the Lord sent Nathan to David. This has to be, I think, probably up there with the worst jobs in all the world.

I don't know, maybe you think your job is bad. This is a terrible, terrible calling. God is sending Nathan to the most powerful man in the world at the time to tell him that what he has done is wrong.

[6 : 26] And God knows it and is going to punish him for it. That would be enough to make you nervous, I would imagine, as you walk up the palace steps. However, Nathan has a plan.

And he has very cleverly, instead of tackling the issue head on with David, disarms David with this story of a rich man, a poor man, and a treasured sheep. And the plan works amazingly well.

In the end, David does all the hard work of condemning himself. Condemning the rich man and leaving Nathan just to say those words that we saw earlier. You are that man or you are the man.

Now, despite David's tenderhearted response, so notice in verse 13 that he openly confesses, still David is not sheltered from the consequences of his sin. Instead, we're told that the sword will never depart from his house, which becomes a sort of ominous heading for the rest of the chapters of 2 Samuel.

And the more immediate consequence is that the baby born to David and Bathsheba dies. Apparently, it seems in verse 18, within a week of him being born, Nathan turns up when the baby is born.

[7 : 33] Importantly, though, that means that the child never gets circumcised. It never even gets named. The child is always just called the child in the passage. You jump ahead in time in the story in verses 24 to 25.

Bathsheba becomes pregnant again. And that child does live and is given a name or more accurately, two names. One, Solomon, meaning peace, and the other, Jedidiah, meaning beloved of the Lord.

And then at the end of the story, you have this surprising kind of twist at the end as David defeats Rabbah and takes the crown on his head of their king and places it on his own head before defeating more of the Ammonite cities.

Now, that's like a really super quick run through chapter 12 to get your bearings. Let me point out three themes in 2 Samuel chapter 12 for us this morning. The first one is this, the horrible selfishness of sin.

I hope you saw when we did the family Bible slot as well. This is clearly the point of Nathan's story of the rich man and the poor man in the opening four verses. Let's just notice the detail together because it's really important.

[8 : 36] Notice that the rich man is dealt with very, very quickly in verse 2. He had many flocks and herds. That's all we find out. We just find out very briefly about him. But then when we come to the poor man, the narrative slows right down just to kind of emphasize.

This is like an ancient highlighter pen. Let me tell you how poor this man was. Let me tell you how attached he was. So notice that he had nothing but one.

Just one, not many, just one. One single, little, not big, not significant, not large. Ewe, not a stud ram, just a female lamb. Young, not old.

And he bought it, presumably at significant personal cost, given the poverty of the man. And then in the rest of the story, you're told the preciousness of this little ewe lamb. And it's almost comical, isn't it, how this story ramps up the preciousness of this lamb.

Notice the layers again in verse 3, the second half of it. He raised it. It grew up with him and with his children. This is a family project. They're all engaged in this. Oh, look at that lovely little ewe lamb.

[9 : 41] It ate food and even drank from its cup, his cup. I've got a dog. I really like my dog. I'll never let my dog drink from my cup, right? This is a precious lamb.

Like a daughter to him, we're told. It's laid on really thick. And David seemingly has no idea at this stage that the story is fictional. So here is a man, a poor man with a single precious possession, a solitary treasure in the shape of a ewe lamb.

And the rich man, with very many flocks and herds, he has a visitor, verse 4, a traveler who has come from him. And the rich man, we're told, refrained from taking one of his own sheep.

Literally, the word there is to show compassion. The literal sense of it here is that the rich man shows compassion to his own many sheep, whilst at the same time having no compassion either on the poor man or on his single solitary young ewe lamb.

In other words, the point of the story is that the rich man is more concerned for his own sheep than he is even for his poor friend, taking this precious lamb and killing it to serve up as a meal for the visitor.

[10 : 49] Now, David is outraged, isn't he? And he's really quick to pass judgment. He's the king of Israel. His job is to judge situations like that. He is the one who they bring in justices to when he declares what judgment will be given.

And he is enraged by this story, enraged by the injustice of it. So he pronounces the full Old Testament judgment. A stolen lamb should be replaced fourfold.

And the rich man himself, we're told, deserves to die, presumably because in stealing the lamb, he was guilty of, in effect, kind of kidnapping a child. And then having let David speak himself into a corner, Nathan delivers the sucker punch in verse seven.

You are the man. What a brilliant story. But I want you to see with me what's really going on here. You see, think about it. How can David be the rich man?

You know, if anything, David's crimes, which remember, are taking another man's wife, murdering her husband, and then taking her to be his own wife. Okay, those were his crimes.

[11 : 54] If anything, they are a lot worse than the crimes in this story, aren't they? The rich man in the story doesn't murder. I mean, the rich man in the story is despicable, isn't he? He's a terrible guy. But he doesn't murder anybody.

He doesn't take anybody else's wife. He's inconsiderate. He's brutal and abusive. But he just takes a sheep. And yet David, in chapter 11, kills, commits adultery, and steals another man's wife.

So what's going on in the story that means David is the rich man? Well, notice that what follows from being told that he is the man is this underlining of David's richness and of his wealth.

You know, think about all that's yours, David, we're told. Think about where it comes from. You know, I anointed you as king, says God to David. I delivered you from Saul. Verse 8, I gave you your master's house.

I even gave you his wives. And I would have added much more had you asked. Yet David, you have despised the word of God by killing Uriah and by means of the Ammonites, and you took his wife to be your own.

[12 : 58] You see, here's the point. David is the rich man, not because his crime is identical, but because his reasoning is exactly the same. So despite David having all that he could wish for, despite him having everything that God had given to him, still it was not enough.

Now, when you understand that about this chapter, then what you see is a crucial fact about sin in the Bible, which is that whether it's stealing sheep or committing adultery or breaking and entering or disobedience to your parents or getting angry or lying or whatever else it is, behind those sins lies a heart of selfishness.

Selfishness. Selfishness. The heart of the rich man was a selfish heart, and that's the heart of David. I think that's the center of this story.

The main actor in the world is the selfishness of the human heart. A heart that thinks it can take whatever it wants, even if that means abusing whatever power it has.

You know, to put it bluntly, David's sin is the action of a horrible selfish desire. But here's the twist, and that is that David finds it pretty easy to see that selfish desire in other people and finds it impossible to see it in himself.

[14 : 15] And that's what we're all like. You and I are really good at seeing other people's selfishness and really poor at seeing our own. And this story is meant to expose our own selfish hearts.

Now, in a really important sense, David is a unique person in the Bible. He's the king of God's covenant people. He's a precursor of Christ. You are not him. He is not me. Yet still the Bible is consistent that this selfish heart of David is something that we all have.

And whilst all sinful actions are not the same, murdering is morally worse than taking a lamb and feeding your guests with it. Yet still the point is here that the same horror of selfishness, this me first at your cost, lies behind all sin.

And so if we're absolutely honest, we are all like that. The heart of the rich man is the same as my heart. But there's one last detail to notice here. So look at verse 9 and verse 10 and notice that David despises God in both those verses.

So in verse 9, he despises the word of God, the word of the Lord. And in verse 10, he said to have despised the Lord himself. If you look over at verse 14, Nathan says that he has shown utter contempt for the Lord.

[15 : 29] Now, I want you to notice that that is a surprising thing as well. You know, David has despised Uriah by taking his wife. For sure, he had sex with his wife. He shouldn't have done that. He despised him.

He showed him utter contempt. But the Lord, I think all the way through the story, David would say he trusted the Lord. He loved the Lord. He wanted to live for the Lord. How has he shown utter contempt for the Lord?

Well, I think this is the key to it, isn't it? Selfishness, the selfish heart puts our self at the center. That necessarily despises God. Why? Why does a selfish heart necessarily despise God?

Well, because the human heart is made to have God at the center of it. Not you and not me. This is so important. Let me try and illustrate it for you this morning.

Imagine it like this. You might be going away on holiday, right? Some of us are going away on holiday. So imagine you're going away on holiday and you very kindly allow me to stay in your home while you're away.

[16 : 29] And what you do is you give me a list of instructions. Okay? Listen, Steve, you're going to stay in my home. Here's a list of instructions about what you are allowed to do and not allowed to do while you live in my home while I'm away on holiday.

And when you come back from holiday, what you discover is that I have ripped your instructions up into small pieces and left them on the doormat. So they're the first thing you notice as you walk through the door. And then as you come in, I've emptied all your cupboards.

I've spray painted your walls. I've lit in a small fire in the living room just to keep myself warm. I've used the kitchen as a toilet. I've let the dog run wild all over your home.

What do you think as you walk in? Well, you are upset and offended by the state of the house. But let me say what you really think is you think Steve must despise me.

He has shown me utter contempt. He's shown no care for what I have generously given to him. I have not taken you seriously or your instructions seriously.

[17 : 31] And that is sin here. Our lives are given to us by the God who made us. For us to live for him and for his glory. With him at the centre because that's the very purpose for which we're made.

And yet, just like me in that home, we have despised God by ripping up his instructions for our lives and living them for ourselves. Making a mess all over the place. And so we show God utter contempt.

Following our own desires and passions, we offend the God who made us. You know, whether it's the adultery of 2 Samuel chapter 11. Whether it's the rape and murder of 2 Samuel chapter 13.

Or whether it's the respectable sins of being irritable or angry or frustrated or greedy. Or disobedient to your parents. Or lustful or proud or lazy.

The truth is, when Nathan the prophet says, You are this man. I am this man. This woman. It's you. It's me.

[18 : 31] And the selfishness of sin despises God and shows him utter contempt. Secondly then, the consequences of selfish sin.

If you glance back at the passage and look down at verse 10, you'll see that pretty much from there on in, And it is all about the consequences of David's sin. And as you read it, you can see it's effectively God sort of handing David over to his sin, to his choices that he has made.

The consequences of his actions. Verse 11 is a prophecy which is going to get played out in chapter 16, verse 22. And we'll see that next term. And even though David gives an unqualified admission of guilt in verse 13, and even though God forgives him, and we'll think more about that in a moment, still he's told that his newborn son will die.

Even seven days in fasting and prayer won't change that fact. Even praying to the point at which those around him worry about his sanity does not change it. The baby still dies. Now we just need to be careful here because it is unusual in the scriptures for this to be the case.

Death in infancy is not normally related to the sins of the parents. Not today and not in the Bible. In fact, in John chapter 9, Jesus breaks the connection between parental sin and infant suffering in the story of the blind man.

[19 : 49] But here a connection is made. David's son dies. A fate which he knows he too one day will share when he goes to be with him in verse 23. Now this handing over judgment of David.

That David experiences consequences from his sinful choices. You know, we might not be able to draw a straight line because David is told directly by God why all of this is happening.

Still, the truth is that God today hands us over to our sinful, selfish choices, allowing us to experience the limits of his providence and common grace, to experience a world ravaged by selfishness rather than overseen by a loving creator.

Just think about this with me for a moment. Back in Genesis 3, how does God judge Adam and Eve when they sin and rebel against God? When they despise God, what does he do?

He throws them out of the garden and he hands them over to the weeds, to the consequences of their sinful selfishness. In Genesis 4, Cain, having murdered his brother, becomes a restless wanderer with no one to trust and no one trusting him.

[20 : 59] You show yourself to be that kind of brother, Cain, and you will face the consequences. Abraham has to send Hagar and Ishmael away because Sarah is jealous. Samson ends up being captured by the woman he shouldn't have been with.

Hezekiah ends up losing the temple treasures to the Babylonian empire he showed off to. Romans 1 puts it like this. It will come up on the screen behind me. Romans 1, furthermore, Just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God.

That's sin. So God gave them over to a depraved mind so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity.

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful. They invent ways of doing evil. They disobey their parents.

They have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them.

[22 : 03] Being handed over to our sinfulness. There's a bit more to say on this too, but we need to be careful as we say it. Notice that David's repentance here is heartfelt and real.

There's nothing to suggest in this story that he's anything other than genuinely moved and heart-struck by his sinfulness and his need for mercy. In fact, it's around this time that he writes Psalm 51, which we read earlier in our service, which in many ways is a model for repentance.

And God forgives him for his sin. He does not hold it against him. He is not going to face death for it. Yet still, listen, genuine repentance, although it removes the judgment, the final judgment of God, does not necessarily spare you from the consequences for your sin.

David experiences the unraveling of his family and his life, the death of his sons, a consequence for what he's done. Now, like I said, we need to be careful because you can't always draw a neat line from the thing you've done wrong to the thing you're experiencing.

You can't always do that. In fact, we're encouraged at times not to even look for that. We don't have all the information. And even if we had all the information, we wouldn't understand it. But what we do need to say, because it's here in 2 Samuel chapter 12, it's here in Romans 1 as well that we've read together.

[23 : 17] It's also there in Galatians 6, when God says, he's not mocked at whatever you sow that we will reap. Our lives, even our lives as Christians, are marked by the consequences of our sinfulness.

In other words, if in our Christian lives, we can be sure that we will not face God's final judgment, but we will still face the consequences of the lives that we lived.

Now, if as a Christian this morning, you selfishly pursue fame and fortune at work, if even as a Christian, even trusting the Lord and turning from your sin and wanting, you know, wanting in a sense to live for him, if doing that you still live for selfish desire and try and do everything that you can to get fortune at work, you will be sure that you'll face the consequences of that in your life, don't you?

You know that in your home, in your relationships. If you lie and twist the truth to get your own way all the time, you can expect to find it difficult to trust people or to make genuine friendships. If you're perpetually materially discontent and you try and kind of inoculate yourself against that by just buying stuff all the time, you can expect your relationships with others to be shallow, of little help when life is hard.

If you don't fight the temptation to have a view of life that has you in control and you at the center, then you can be sure again that you'll face the consequences. Now, if you neglect the means of grace in the life of the church, because you know what, to be honest, my life is just too busy with other things, then you will struggle as a Christian.

[24 : 48] It works for us corporately as well. If we are selfish and self-interested as a church, if we're more interested in the fame and fortune of West Kilburn Baptist Church than we are concerned about the kingdom of God, then we can expect to fight as a church with one another and slowly wither away.

Perhaps the most obvious place that we see this link is in the topic at hand in chapter 12, which is this, and let's not duck it. It's difficult, but let's not duck it. We see the consequences of this in sexual sin more than anywhere else.

You know, selfish sexual desire, a desire that's willing to sacrifice what it knows it's right for a moment of self-indulgent pleasure. That selfishness, which we know we all wrestle with, has a particularly destructive power in our lives and our relationships.

So much so that it can kill marriages, it can destroy childhoods, it can ruin mental and physical health, it can rip churches apart, it can ruin the witness of a lifetime, it can tarnish gospel ministry for years and years to come.

That's not because sex itself is naughty or dirty or even because sexual sin is unforgivable. That's not true. God can and does forgive sexual sin, which is good because we're all sinners in that way.

[26 : 05] But despite living in a culture that doesn't think what we do with our bodies is very important, still the witness of the Bible in our own eyes is that sexual sin, even forgiven sexual sin, has consequences in our lives.

If we don't fight this kind of selfishness, it carries a particular destructive force. So we must be careful. We must be careful. David here is a warning, isn't he?

He's a warning about what can happen if you give in to a moment of selfish pleasure and the consequences for those around you and for yourself. Let me say this morning, if this is an area in which you're particularly struggling, we all are in a way, but if you this morning are particularly struggling in this area, please seek out the help of a trusted Christian friend.

Speak to me or one of the other leaders of the church. We'd be only too happy to help you and pray with you. Finally, though, this morning, let's end with this. Surprising grace for selfish sinners.

We've touched on these verses already, but I think verses 24 to 25 are some of the most startling in the passage. Nathan gets to go back to David. He's sent again, but this time not to deliver the news that his child would die, but to deliver the news that the Lord has set his love on Solomon.

[27 : 24] So much so that he was to be known for that love, named after that love even. So after all the chaos that marks the end of David's life, Solomon goes on to reign for a period of remarkable peace in the life of Solomon, when the nation of Israel enjoys the high point of their national life under Solomon's reign.

Then after that, we're given the detail of this battle for Rabbah, the battle which, if you remember, Uriah was killed in. David goes and he takes the crown of the king and he puts it on his own head.

So this is the image that you're left with at the end of the chapter, aren't you? David and Bathsheba have a son who's going to be a king of peace and David is wearing a crown on his head.

God, who would take a relationship started by selfish desire, uses it to bring peace and prosperity and joy to his people. And he takes the crown of a king who showed contempt for him and put a crown on his head.

You know, you're supposed to read that and wonder of the grace of a God like that. Wow, you would do that for him, God? You see, there's more to this, isn't there?

[28 : 35] You know, the antidote to human selfishness is what? You know, don't you, religion is never the antidote to human selfishness. Why is religion never the antidote to human selfishness?

If selfishness is the heart of sin, why will religious obedience never be the answer to it? You know, if you say, I'm going to turn up at church, I'm going to pray every day, I'm going to read my Bible every day, and then God must show me kindness and goodness and, you know, must give me a ticket to glory.

Why is that never going to work? Because that kind of religion is selfish, isn't it? You're not thinking about God, you're thinking about yourself. How can I get God to do what I want him to do?

Well, I'll get him to do it by my religious obedience. So of course, religion is never going to solve the problem of a selfish human heart. What will solve the problem of a selfish human heart? God's selflessness.

And we know that even more than David, don't we? Who in an outpouring of grace and mercy would bring peace to an undeserving nation. And as New Testament Bible readers, we see that's not so much through Solomon, do we?

[29 : 47] It's through his beloved son, the eternal son of God, born into history through the line of David and Bathsheba, who lays down his life on a cross, selflessly given into the hands of sinful men and women who called out for his death, that through him and his selfless sacrifice, we might receive eternal salvation and the final death of selfish desire.

The parallels are all over this account, aren't they? You see, in 2 Samuel chapter 12, David's selfish sin leads to the death of his unnamed son, who is replaced by a son who becomes the great King Solomon.

And in the gospel, it is the selfless love of God, which leads to the death of his only son named Jesus in the place of selfish sinners, who is then not replaced, but raised up to new life, to endless human life, as the King of God's people, the King of peace and prosperity forever and ever, wearing not the giant golden crown of Rabba, but the crown of God himself as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Let me finish here this morning. The truth is that the story of David and Bathsheba is meant to be very, very convicting. You are meant to read 2 Samuel 11 and 12 and say, as you leave here this morning, I'm no better than David.

I'm no better than David. I'm just like that. But you're meant to leave also thinking, how wonderful that my God, the God of the Bible in selfless love, sent his own son to die for my sin, that he might be raised up to new life and crowned with the crown of crowns as King of kings and Lord of lords to rule and reign for all eternity.

[31 : 34] And maybe you're not a Christian this morning. If you're not a Christian this morning, can I encourage you to come and call out to that King and say, please, King Jesus, will you save me by your act of selfless love?

And some of you here this morning have been Christians for a very, very long time. Can I encourage you to call out to King Jesus and say again to him, King Jesus, please again, cleanse me of my selfish sin.

I turn to you. I trust in you. I love you. Help me to live my life for you. Help me to fight sin because I know that just like David, in a moment of passion-fueled craziness, I could ruin my life.

Please don't let me do that, Lord. Please be with me. Please help me to live my life for Christ. Let's close in prayer. Let's pray. Let's just have a moment of quiet.

Maybe you can pray in your own heart and you can respond to what we've had. Let's. Let's pray.

[33 : 04] Heavenly Father, we turn to you and we say that we are that man, that woman that has lived for ourselves and despised your word, shown you utter contempt by putting ourselves on the throne of our own lives.

And we turn from our sin and with David we say that we have sinned against you and we say that we're sorry. And Lord, we thank and praise you that in an act of great selfless love and kindness, you've sent the Lord Jesus that he might undo our selfishness.

Please, we pray, forgive us and cleanse us. Come and live in our hearts and rule and reign, we pray. Help us to live lives to your praise and glory.

And we ask as a church and as individual members of the church that you might help us to be people who take sin seriously. Help us never to toy with it or pretend it doesn't matter.

And Lord, we confess we live with the consequences of the mistakes that we've made corporately and individually. And we say and ask, Lord, that each one of them might turn us back to you to again remember of our need of you and again long for a day when we'll be with you in a place with no more sin or sickness or suffering or death.

[34 : 28] Come, Lord Jesus, we pray. Amen. Amen.