

The truth, she was beautiful and I was the king. Other kings in other countries get any girl they want anytime. Who is going to stop the king? She was bathing on her rooftop when I spotted her. I was walking on the rooftop when I should've been off at war with my troops. But I wasn't and it wasn't a big deal until I saw her. So I sent for her.

It seemed like I got away with it too. Not many people knew that she came to be with me that night. It was supposed to have been just one night. Then something a lot harder to hide came up. She was pregnant. Of course, not only were we not married but she was already married to someone else. Uriah was fighting where I should've been, on the front lines. A plan formed, if I could get Uriah home to sleep with his wife maybe he'd think the baby was his. But Uriah was faithful, to me it turned out.

Truth was it seemed like the only option. I wasn't thinking clearly in what wasn't my finest hour. I had Uriah killed. I didn't do it personally, but I signed the letter. For the next year I buried what happened and my role in it. Bathsheba became my wife after she mourned for Uriah. She was having my baby. I felt a little guilty, but not enough to say anything. I lived with it. Truth is it hurt. I was learning a lesson about

Truth and consequences

My old friend Nathan came to me one day with a story. As he spoke I kept getting madder and madder. When he finally stopped I wanted the man he spoke of to die for what he had done. To my surprise Nathan wasn't talking about another man. He was talking about me. I was the man. I had sinned. Everything that would happen in my family in the future would be my fault. God was angry with me just like I was angry with the man from the story. I deserved to die just like I thought that man did. Worst of all, I was guilty before God. Truth is, I somehow already knew that.

Do you have someone like Nathan? Someone you trust who tells you when you mess up, calls you responsible for where you step out of line? Maybe you don't, but you do have a place where you can go. Truth is you need to hear that you're just as bad as me. Maybe you haven't committed adultery or murder like I have. But you know the secret things you've done. Hatred which is murder, lust which is adultery. Greed, laziness, and worry. You've sinned. The secret things you only thought were secret, God already knows. You're a sinner just like me.

The overwhelming evidence, the sense of regret, the harsh Law spoken by Nathan, I couldn't take it anymore. I was living a lie for a year. It was so painful I could feel it in my bones. You heard my response recorded in the Bible. **"I have sinned against the Lord."** There was no sense hiding it anymore. God already knew and that was bad enough. There was no sense blaming someone else because I had done it. There was no ignoring it because it was staring me in the face. So I spoke the truth, and it felt good.

Then came the sweetest truth anyone can ever hear. Nathan spoke it, but it was God's word. **"The Lord has taken away your sin."** I sinned and God took it away. Not sweeping it under the rug, not turning away and pretending it doesn't exist. God didn't take those easy ways. Rather God confronted my sin with his own grace. It was all in the promise of a Savior. That Savior, the ultimate sacrifice would pay for my sins. Forgiveness wasn't based on me; it was based on God's love and mercy. Forgiveness could only come from one place, my descendent, my Lord, my Savior.

The same sweet truth is for you. **"The Lord has taken away your sin."** No matter what you've done, no matter how long it's been, no matter what circumstances you're in right now, God loves you in Christ Jesus. Without any conditions whatsoever Jesus loved you and went to the cross for you. Like me you find out even more. **"You are not going to die."** Jesus gives you life, life now, and life eternal. Jesus makes that life perfect by his work. Jesus offsets with his grace your hatred, greed, lust, laziness, and worry. He takes them and all your sins away by his death.

Now forgiven I couldn't go back to hiding. I couldn't go back to living the way I had been. My sin was out in the open. God knew it so I wouldn't hide it. Coming clean helped me move past those sins. I finally could say with confidence God forgives me and I know his forgiveness. I sinned much, I was forgiven much, I gave thanks much.

When you sin something changes. Things can never go back to the way they were exactly. Sin had entered my life, not for the first time, but it brought consequences. God announced through my friend Nathan, **"Because by doing this you have made the enemies of the Lord show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."** Sad words indeed. Because of my sin my son was going to die. How easy would thoughts of God's anger and punishment towards me have felt? Maybe God was getting back at me. But there was more to it than that. Sin always has consequences.

For seven days I prayed and fasted hoping God would let the child live. But the child died. I was thinking about myself. **"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.'"** I figured it would be gracious for God to let the child live. God knew it would be gracious if the boy died. It saved the child from bearing the mark of being a child from an affair. As hard as it is to say, God showed his grace in the consequences I faced.

Your sins have consequences too. You can't always match them up, consequence for sin. Sometimes you can. If you get an STD from having sex before marriage, that's a consequence. If you get mixed up in prescription drug use and die from an overdose, that's a consequence. If you lose a business client because of illegal business practices, that's a consequence. Most of the time the consequence isn't as easy to spot. We must leave all the consequences to God's grace. Because no matter what earthly consequences we face, the spiritual consequence of sin is always worse. Every sin deserves death, eternal death in hell.

But it's left to God's grace because what a relief that Jesus Christ provides us with his mercy. He washes away the sin and takes away any punishment that might come because of sin. Christ Jesus took all that punishment when he died. So no consequence is a punishment. God is never punishing you for the sins you commit because Jesus took all that punishment away. You're loved in Christ and are completely and totally forgiven in him.

Bathsheba had another child with me. We named him Solomon. The Bible says about him, **"The Lord loved him; and because the Lord loved him, he sent word through the prophet Nathan to name him Jedidiah."** Solomon's second name means loved by the Lord. Did you hear that? The Lord loves my son. That means the Lord loves me too. When I look at Solomon that's what I think, the Lord loves him and loves me. The Lord truly has taken away my sin. Every once and a while I have to discipline Solomon. Turns out he's sinful too. He needs that discipline so he knows how much I love him.

God does the same with you. He disciplines you, never punishes you. It's grace from God that he allows reminders of how far we've fallen. Grace is what keeps us focused and coming back to him. God might even allow suffering to enter our life or the life of someone we love. In Christ, suffering is a good thing because it brings us back to Jesus for hope and comfort. In this life, sin has consequences. God designed it that way so even as we are forgiven we still bear the earthly consequences for those sins. Thanks to God he allows that so we keep coming back to him.

The truth is everyone sins even me, King David. I sinned in some pretty big ways. But the bigger truth is God forgives sin because of his son Jesus. That truth applies to each of you as well. Every sin brings consequences, some big some small. Those consequences are part of God's plan of discipline to keep us close. They allow us to know his love and stay in his grace. The truth of God's love and the consequences of our sins which show his grace. That's my story and it's your story too.