

2Samuel 11:26-12:13 – David's "Taking"

1. Taking what isn't yours...

So today, I want to start by asking you a question.
Have you ever taken something that wasn't yours?

How about you take two minutes and chat to the person next to you, and ask them
A very different question – not have you ever taken something that wasn't yours.
Rather -Have you ever had anything taken from you?

So, what have you had taken from you? How did that make you feel? How did you respond?

At the heart of today's passage are two simple concepts – 'taking' and 'giving'.

King David, as we saw last week – took something, or rather someone, that wasn't his to take.
King David, took Bathsheba from Uriah, when he 'sent for her' and 'slept with her'.
Worse, King David, took the life of Uriah, when all his attempted cover ups failed.

And so today, we deal with the aftermath, the fall out, the consequences of the actions King David.

2. Nathan & the rich man's taking (vv. 1-4)

So the story starts today with Nathan, the prophet.

Nathan was the prophet through whom God told David that he would build a mighty house.

Nathan was the prophet that declared to David –

you think you're going to build God a physical house

– well, in actual fact – God is going to build you a dynasty!

And so when Nathan appears on the scene again – we should think – what is God going to say?

- What will The Prophet declare to The King?

So Nathan tells David the wonderful story of the rich man and the man “who was, literally, ‘in want’

The heart of the story is the relationship between the man ‘in want’ and his little ewe lamb.

He cared for that lamb, like one of his own children, fed it from his own plate

He gave it drink from his own cup.

And did you notice the word that stands out most strongly for his care of this little lamb?

It ‘lied in his bosom’, literally, ‘slept in his chest’.

So warning bells should be going off in our head – there is a beautiful ‘rightness’ to this relationship

There is tender care, there is a genuine love demonstrated in this sleeping arrangement.

And yet, that same word – ‘slept’, has totally different connotations from the last chapter.

For David ‘slept with’ Bathsheba.... Which was the destructive, sabotage of relationships.

An intimacy, that should never have happened.

A union, that should never have been brought into reality.

So if warning bells are ringing, then the sirens should be sounding when we read what happens next.... << vv. 12:4 >>

The verb “take” leaps out of the page at us. The rich man “takes” what is not his to take.

Worse, the rich man “does” what should not be done. He kills the lamb, he ‘does’ the lamb in.

And this action that the rich man ‘does’, the rich man’s doing, should send shivers down our spine.

For what is the brief editorial comment, before Nathan starts on this parable? << 12: 1>>

What David had “done” and what the rich man ‘does’ in this story are ‘evil’ in the eyes of Yahweh.

➔ David’s response: “anger of his nose” for “son of death”

And so it is with tremendous irony, and horrible hypocrisy, that David responds to this story.

<< v. 5>>

“The man who has done this” – shall be declared by the king of Israel to be ‘son of death’.

The anger of King David will fall not upon the fictitious ‘rich man’ but upon the real king, himself.

But the irony goes deeper than that.

For the last time the king of Israel uttered such a curse upon someone, was << 1Samuel 20:30-31>>

King Saul cursed David, after he escaped, with the aid of Saul's own son, Jonathan,
And it was King Saul who called for David to be 'son of death'.

So after surviving all the attempts that Saul made on his life,
The tragic irony here is that David brings about his own downfall,
Worse, David declares his own death, when he pronounces the royal decree
– "this man shall be son of death"

3. David & Yahweh's taking (vv. 5-13)

The delivery of judgment upon King David comes through the simple yet damning words – << v. 7>>

What is more, God give David a massive reality check.

Everything that David thought about this little story comes crashing down upon his own head.

For David is the rich man, but it is worse than that,

For all the wealth, all the possessions, all the power, all the authority David has, was given to him.

God lists off everything that he has given to David << vv. 7-8 abbreviated >>

God has given David everything, and would've have given him more.

But David has abused the position of power, that God gave him.

David has abused the position of power in principle and in practice. << v. 9 >>

David has failed in principle – because he has despised the word of the Lord,

And because he has done what is evil in his sight.

David has failed in practice – because he struck down Uriah, and took his wife.

The judgment that is delivered upon David, follows, and will be played out in the following chapters

→ *The public taking (vv. 11-12)*

David took Bathsheba away from Uriah in secrecy, God will take wives from David in public.

→ *The sword un-departed (vv. 10)*

David used the sword of the Ammonites to end the life of Uriah,

so the sword will not depart his house.

The beauty and simplicity of the monarchy – that there is a transition of power from one generation to the next,

Will never happen within the house of David – for blood will stain the throne of David.

→ *David's response: "I have sinned against the LORD" (v. 13)*

In response to overwhelming revelation, condemnation, and prophetic devastation,

David responds in the only appropriate way – confession – "I have sinned against the Lord"

4. Taking: Looking back (Genesis 2)

So what are we to make of this episode in the life of king David?
What framework do we have to orientate this story?

First, we need to look back.

We need to look back and ground king David's action in his predecessor's actions.

For David's unauthorised taking follows on from someone else's unauthorised taking.

David's cover up follows on from someone else's cover-up.

David's murder follows on from someone else's murder.

Who am I talking about? Who committed similar crimes?

Adam and Eve took the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of God and evil.

Adam and Eve covered themselves up in the Garden and hid from the Lord.

Adam and Eve's son Cain committed the first murder – of his own brother.

And so King David's actions are painted against the black back drop of Adam and Eve.

More King David's actions show the evolution, or really the devolution, that has occurred.

The King that was given everything, grasped for more, and so all was taken away from him.

→ *Taking & Giving today (Romans 1:28-32)*

And sadly, the same is true today. As the apostle Paul writes. << Romans 1:28-32 >>

God says – you want to act in this way, then I will give you over to it.

God says – you think you know better, well then I won't stop you.

God says – my judgment is to give you exactly what you want.

- Exactly as he gave David what he wanted – the sword, and the continual taking.

5. Emptying: Christ Jesus (Phil 2:5-11)

In stark contrast, then, stands the one man who had it all, and yet, did not grasp for more.
The one man who had all power and authority, and yet, willing gave it all up.
The one man who emptied his life, rather seizing more.
Paul describes it in this way, << Philippians 2:5-11 >>

What is the opposite of grasping for power? Of trying to take what does not belong to you?

“Emptying oneself”, “making oneself nothing”,
“making himself a slave, being born in human likeness.”

Now – we can be so familiar with Jesus’ abdication, that it just rolls over us.

A helpful contrast is the last time a king of England abdicated a throne.
On 10th December, 1936, King Edward the Eighth, wrote these words ... << Ppt >>

And why did he give up his throne – for Wallis Simpson...
He gave up his throne for someone he loved.

Why did Jesus give up his throne –
He gave up his throne for the whole world that stood in rebellion against God,
He gave up his throne for people like you and me.

6. Subtracting & Dividing vs. Adding & Multiplying

So how do we apply this passage to us today?

What does God's giving and David's taking have to do with us?

Well, I'll boil it down to sum simple mathematics.

It's subtraction and division vs. Adding and multiplying.

That is, as loyal subjects to our King Jesus,

we can either be in the business of subtraction and division,

or we can be in the business of adding and multiplying.

I'll explain what I mean.

King David, even though he had everything given to him,

was in the business of subtraction (or take-away) and division.

He 'took away' Bathsheba, and he took the life of Uriah.

The result was division – his kingdom, his family was divided by the sword.

King Jesus, already had everything, but chose to put everything he had in our possession.

King Jesus, willingly added his own life, so that we might no longer face death.

King Jesus gave so that we might live.

And out of his love for us flows a multiplication of that love for others.

So in our lives, are we going to subtract and divide, or add and multiply?

When the rumour mill is at work, do we subtract and divide?

Did you hear about... tear them down, and divide us against them.

When someone has offended you, rightly or wrongly, on purpose or by accident

Will you tear them down, and draw a line between you and them? Will you subtract and divide?

Or will you give of yourself, and multiply love to them, to reconcile and restore?

The great news of the grace shown to us should drive us.

The footsteps of our king Jesus should guide us

We are in the business of adding to the lives of others,

And multiplying the love he has shown to us.

Let's pray.