

## Christian Perspectives: A most trusted confidant & counsellor

A good friend and trusted counsellor came to a well loved and successful king and asked for a private audience. The king gladly listened to the counsellor's story of his kingdom's citizens.

The story began with a poor family who had a lamb, which was more of a well-loved pet. There was another family close by who owned large herds of animals. The wealthy family had a guest over, and rather than use any of their many animals for the meal, they decided to take the animal from the poor family instead leaving the poor family traumatized and destitute.

The indignation of the king burned hot at the injustice compounded by both the hopeless plight of the victims and fond memories of his own childhood bonds to these simple creatures. "Who is the wealthy person who has done this! They deserve the death penalty on top of paying back the animal 4 times over because they had no pity!?" This self-centered and flagrant violation of not only the law but also of common sense left all thoughts of mercy in the dust. Then the blindsided response "You, David king of Israel, are the man!?" This was when David, called the man after God's own heart, was brought face to face with his recent actions of raping his battle-brother's wife and the subsequent command to ensure that the reliable warrior would never return from fighting David's battles and David could claim his loyal companions's wife as his own (2 Samuel 12:1-12). While the details of the story of the lamb differed vastly from David's behaviour, the core was the same. David was guilty of something that was inexcusable and impossible to make right. By his own mouth as an external righteous judge, David was deserving of death for his actions as his own laws also required, but even that would not be enough. Where could he turn for mercy? He was the highest court in the land. He could not deny, suppress, or forget his guilt. He could not make restitution.

What would you do? We probably won't do exactly what David did and perhaps not to the intensity that David took it, but have we ever been caught red handed either by ourselves or others and we know to our core that we are in the wrong and we cannot make it right. Where can we turn?

Where did David turn? To God. The only court of appeal in the land that was higher than his own. There were some consequences such as the death of the child born from his actions (2 Samuel 12:13) but God forgave and restored him. God gave him the mercy that he would never be able to obtain otherwise.

How was God willing and able to overlook what justice demanded for David's actions? Is God afraid to bring punishment on the mighty king because David is too big to fail? No (Exodus 32:11). Is God whimsical and He decided that what David did ultimately wasn't that bad? No (Exodus 20:13-15, 17). Is the strength of God's love for David so great that he cannot bring Himself to punish David regardless of the weight of the crimes? No (Matthew 26:42). Did God decide to sweep it under the carpet after a token punishment was given to avoid a spectacle? God brought it so far into the open we know of it today.

How could God spare David? We already hinted at it in Matthew. The punishment did not disappear, it was simply redirected as the whole sacrificial system of the Bible was hinting at. Not to an ignorant animal like the sacrifices David knew of but to Jesus of Nazareth on a Roman cross in the first century outside Jerusalem. God is incapable of leaving wrong unpunished no matter the depth of His love for people from the purest to the worst that humanity has to offer. He knew that we couldn't pay the price and make it right even if we spent eternity trying so He made a way to pass our punishment to the only being able to pay the price. Himself as the man Jesus of Nazareth.

The entrenched stain of David's actions was purged and he could come to God as one clean and so can you. God's Son was not offered only for David but for everyone who knows they are incapable of making it right and hang all of their hope on God's free offer to them.

Andrew Gault,

Bethel Bible Chapel