

## Second Samuel Chapter 13 - John Karmelich

A friend at church has a great expression that fits well for this chapter. It is, "In every house, the walls bleed". It refers to the fact every house (every person) has problems! In my last lesson, we got an "R" rated lesson where David had an affair, and then he ordered the woman's husband killed to cover it up. God then told David in effect, "I'm not going to kill you, but by the time I'll get through with you, you will wish I had!" Bottom line it leads to this "X" rated chapter!

Let me summarize it: One of David's sons had the "hots" for his half-sister. To satisfy that son's desire he arranges a time to be alone with her! He rapes her and sends her back to her home. Since David is a king, most likely each of his wives/offspring had separate homes. The rape victim tells her full brother! He got mad and he kills the rapist (his half-brother) a few years later! David in effect doesn't deal with any of this! It leads to the question, "If we're guilty of a sin and dealt with it, does it mean we can now let others get away with similar sins if it's in our power to condemn it?" This chapter makes us consider our roles in dealing with problems and what should we do when our own "wall's bleeding"! Yes, it is a tough and "filthy" chapter but it's full of lessons about dealing with tough times in life which is why it's here in the bible!

The last chapter was mostly about the prophet Nathan telling David in effect, "God's aware of what sin you committed by sleeping with Bathsheba and ordering her husband to be killed. Both of those things call for the death penalty, but He won't let you die that way because He promised you'll start a dynasty of kings!" David suffered in worse ways! That punishment begins in this chapter. Does that mean God punishes us every time we sin? If that was true, none of us would live very long! As far as punishment God's business is His business and we just got to deal with life as it comes! A good sign God kept His word is this chapter as we're about to find out! Speaking of this chapter:

It opens by naming a son of David (Absalom), the oldest and assumed to be the next king! We read he had a beautiful sister (as opposed to David's daughter) to imply it is the oldest male's job to protect her. (A lot more on him later in this chapter and the next one!) The text says she was beautiful, which does not surprise me, as I suspect David had good looking wives! The text mentions that David had another son from a different marriage, and he had the "hots" for his half-sister as I mentioned earlier.

We then get a short story about a young man named Jonadab, David's nephew. I recall the last time I'd taught this chapter Jonadab reminded me of a famous TV character from the 1950's "Eddie Haskell" on "Leave it to Beaver". Eddie was always overly polite to the parents, but then got the main characters in trouble. (It's not a fair comparison, but that's what I thought of!) Anyway, Jonadab tells his cousin (yes, the rapist to be) to pretend to be sick and then the rapist tells his father (David) to ask Tamar (that's the girl's name) to cook for him. When they were alone Amnon (again the rapist) attacks her! We read that she pleads for her life, says how wrong it is and Amnon would be a laughingstock in the community. By the way, I don't think God ordained this out of revenge for the fact David had sex with Bathsheba. We know Amnon must answer for his sins! David's punishment is he had to deal with it (a lack of dealing with it as we'll see!) After the deed was done, Amnon kicks her out and she tells her brother Absalom.

In the meantime, Amnon developed a serious hatred of the girl he just rapped. Maybe it was guilt, or it could just be a case of once he "had her" she meant nothing to him! The sad part is once a guy goes on that negative path, they often continue. Without a fear of God's judgment, our sinful ways usually grow worse and often out of control. However, we don't know that about Amnon as we won't read about him till late in the chapter when Absalom has him killed.

Verse 20 fascinates me. Absalom asks his sister if Amnon was with her, not knowing the story! I suspect Absalom knew his half-brother's nature since they were family. Since he was the oldest brother, he had the job of taking care of her, so she lived with him dealing with the shame. At the same time Absalom's fuming and the site of her along what happened to her kept the tragedy fresh in his mind.

What's missing from this tragedy? Any lack of action by David! I've seen way too many family secrets buried and never dealt with till the consequences always grow worse and worse! I suspect David must have thought, "It's horrible but after what I did to Bathsheba who am I to punish him?" Yes, it's wrong, but I suspect that's what ran through his mind, so they buried "the family secret".

Meanwhile Absalom couldn't bury it because he saw her every day and realized how she suffered. This boiled over two years later at a "sheep shearing" party. To make it simple "pay day" when one cuts the hair of sheep. Money's earned from selling the wool. Absalom uses it as the best time to have his half-brother killed. He invited his father and I picture David saying something like, "It is ok, you kids have fun!" Absalom make the point to tell David to make sure Amnon is invited. It's so Amnon believes his father (the king) ordered him to go. I suspect David is suspicious but "let's it go" so as I said, "the kids can have fun together!" I doubt David knew of any revenge but I suspect he knew of Absalom's anger at his half-brother Amnon.

Absalom didn't do the "dirty deed" of killing his half-brother himself but gave the order to a servant for that deed (just as David gave the order for Bathsheba's husband to be killed!) I picture the party raging on. I suspect Amnon was checking out other women as "a tiger can't change his spots! Anyway, that's when the order was given and Amnon was killed. I'm sure that killed the party on the spot! Next thing we read is David' other sons quickly riding home out of fear of Absalom going after them next.

That leads us back to King David and yes, the "Eddie Haskell" character. The reason I compare him to that character was again, he was always on his best behavior around the parents. He effectively says to the king, "Don't panic Uncle David, your family is fine, it's just Amnon who was killed!" The last thing we read in this saga is Absalom does not return home because he fears the punishment of his father!

OK, I'm the first to admit, this is a tough chapter to get through. After all the text could have just said, one of David's sons raped his half-sister, and the sister's brother had him killed for it. Instead, it's made into a full chapter story. Why? To teach us lessons on the consequences of sin! Of course, David felt a lot of guilt about Bathsheba and was afraid to administer justice to his own family because of it! The thing David should have done in each case is to say "The law calls for this punishment and I know you're my son, but if I let you get away with this I can't be a judge/ruler over this country!" Yes a sense of grace can be mixed in and David could have said here's what I can do! The point is we can't ignore sin or like a disease it grows worse and worse. That's why in the New Testament there is a lot of space dealing with the issue of Christians and sin. It is to say in effect "It doesn't mean we're not saved when we sin, but it must be dealt with because it makes us a bad witness for Jesus and it will lead to more sin if we don't deal with the issue!" I'm sure that's old news to most of us, but the point as it relates here is to see the consequences of not dealing with sin when it occurs!

I know the naïve think the bible is all full of positive stories about doing good! It also lays out clearly a lot of "dirty laundry" in effect to say, "Learn from reading or learn the hard way!" Yes I make mistakes as none of us are perfect. Still to learn from studying the bible is a lot less costly than learning from our own lives. When we deal with our own family problems, I always say get good counseling and so we'll deal with our own issues as soon we recognize we must deal with it to make peace with God!

If you liked this little study, I wrote a more detailed account about twenty years ago! If you'd like you can read the rest or stop now. Either way, I'm grateful for you reading this. To see the other one, click on one of the two links on this web page. Thanks again, John