



Nathan

“The Faithful”

“You are the man.” 2 Samuel 12:7NIV

Today, “You are the man” is usually a compliment indicating that a person has really done the job well or is the perfect person for the job. That wasn’t so when Nathan told David “You are the man.”

The story is sometimes referred to as Nathan’s parable. God told a story to Nathan and had him deliver it to David. God felt that Nathan was the right man for the job, and if he had told Nathan “You are the Man” it would have been a compliment that God knew that Nathan could do the job. In the case that we see in the first few verses of 2 Samuel:12 it is quite a different story.

David had an affair with the wife of Uriah, the Hittite. Her name was Bathsheba, but even in the genealogy of Christ her name was not mentioned. She was simply referred to as the wife of Uriah, the Hittite! But as is so often the case, one thing leads to another so after his affair with the wife of Uriah, he decided to have Uriah killed in battle. David was staying in Jerusalem and Uriah was a very good soldier, but David deliberately told the men to push him to the front and make sure he was killed.

God told Nathan to go to David and tell him a story, a parable, about two men. The rich man who had many flocks and herds, and a poor man had nothing except one pet lamb which he fed and loved. It even grew up with his children and ate his food. Then a traveler came to the rich man and asked for a lamb, but instead of giving one from his herds, he took the poor man’s pet lamb and gave it to the traveler. David was enraged that something like this would happen and told Nathan that the man who had done this should die, and the lamb should be restored fourfold. Then David wanted to know who would do such a ruthless thing, Nathan replied “You are the man.”

Nathan was a necessary and helpful gift from God to David, and David understood that. He was David’s friend and counselor, always willing to speak the truth, even when he knew great pain would result. David knew that Nathan knew about his adultery and murder and probably some other sins. Nathan was able to help David see his wrongdoing and continue to love him and counsel him until David’s death. And he also helped to remind David of the painful consequences his sin would bring.

Nathan's approach helps us judge our own actions. It shows us how often we condemn others for things that we also do. We need to ask how God and others would view our actions. Many of our youth used to wear a bracelet or necklace with the initials WWJD. It was a reminder to them of “What Would Jesus Do.” Unfortunately, we have a huge capacity to lie to ourselves. We all need our Lord, but we also need a friend who is also rooted in God’s Word and will help us even when it may be painful for them also.

I wouldn’t have wanted to do the job that Nathan had to do, but sometimes we are called to do things that aren’t pleasant. If we think the Lord is telling us to do them, then we have to do it. Bible scholars say there is a sense in which David stole something from Uriah. Uriah’s wife was his and David took her for his own. The scholars say this was in a very real sense adultery and Nathan had to go and tell his king, David, that he was the man who had taken something that did not belong to him.

We know from previous information about Nathan that he was well respected by many including David. Nathan told David that God had given him everything he could have possibly needed including the house of Israel and Judah. But David wanted more. David did not banish Nathan though. He continued to allow Nathan to counsel him because he realized that Nathan was doing this for his own good. Later on, it is Nathan again that warns David while he is on his death bed that Adonijah is trying to take the throne instead of Solomon.

Dear Lord and Friend, You have given us so much and we know you care for us. Help us to always seek to do your will and take encouragement and constructive criticism from those who also love you and are helping us because they love us. Amen.

1. How would you have reacted to God’s asking you to go talk with someone that had committed a sin?
2. David suffered for his sins and we aren’t told that he ever complained. Do we know we are wrong when we sin? Do we try to make it right and not do it again?
3. How do we know that God cares for us?
4. Do you have a friend on this earth that will help you as you help him/her?

“What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!

Oh, what peace we often forfeit.
Oh, what needless pain we bear.
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!
Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful?
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness; Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Are we weak and heavy-laden, Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge—Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there.”

From “What a Friend we Have in Jesus” by Joseph Scriven

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