

## The Consequences of Indulging Evil

2Samuel 13:1-39

One of the saddest stories in the bible has to be the life of Samson.

Samson was the son of a man named Manoah who lived in the time of the judges.

Manoah and his wife had no children and it didn't look like they were going to have any until one day the angel of the LORD came and told them they would have a son.

From the moment of his conception he was to be set apart to the LORD as a Nazarite.

He was to refrain from the fruit of the vine and a razor was never to touch his head.

God gave him incredible physical strength with which he was supposed to deliver the Israelites from their enemies the Philistines.

His biggest downfall, among other failures, was his love of idolatrous women.

His first attempt at such a marriage led to him looking like a fool but it got worse from there.

He ends up in an immoral relationship with a woman named Delilah and she presses him to find out the secret of his strength so that the Philistines might overpower him.

Multiple times she badgers him and each time he lies to her, but with each lie he tells he inches closer to telling her his secret.

Every time read I think, "How can he be so foolish? Can't he see what she is going to do to him?"

Sadly, he loves his evil desires more than the LORD and even his own life.

Finally, he tells her the truth that his strength is connected to his hair and if it is shaved he will become as weak as any other man.

She shaves his head, he is taken prisoner, has his eyes gouged out and is taken to the capital of the Philistines to serve as their entertainment.

[It is a sad story of a man who repeatedly chose to chase after the evil desires of his heart and suffered the consequences. There are a number of examples like that in the Bible and we find another one in our text for this morning **2Samuel 13:1-39**. This is, I admit, a difficult read. It is a reminder that the Scriptures do not sugar coat things for us, but rather present us with the terrible realities of what people are capable of. The big lesson of this text is that evil is not something we should entertain in our hearts because if we do there are serious consequences. As the chapter opens we find a man being indulged in his evil desires and we learn that...]

**Point #1 – Indulging evil desires is evil. (Verses 1-7)**

Encouraging, validating, or enabling wickedness is participation in wickedness.

*We are reminded of some of the family choices king David had made earlier in his reign as chapter twelve opens.*

Three of His children are mentioned. Absalom, his 3<sup>rd</sup> born son whose mother's name is Maacah, his full sister named Tamar, and Amnon David's 1<sup>st</sup> born son whose mother's name was Ahinoam.

It is obvious from the opening verses here that David's multiple marriages, among other things, has produced some dysfunction among his children. (**Verses 1-2**).

The word that is translated 'love' here has varied uses in the Old Testament.

One of the ways it is used is as an expression of 'appetite' or 'desire'.

That is how it is being used here. This is not healthy affection, this is as one commentator puts it, "...an animal desire."

This is more than a crush or passing thought, this is a desire that he feeds until he makes himself physically ill.

*Now throughout the text we find the writer constantly reminding us again and again that Tamar is Amnon's sister.*

That is a constant reminder that Amnon's desires are evil.

While it was not always the case in the history of the world, the LORD through Moses had forbidden the people of Israel from being joined together with close relatives.

Amnon has no interest in marriage though, for him it is just about conquest.

His desire for Tamar is evil, but that doesn't bother him at all, what is troubling him is that he doesn't see a way to do the evil he desires.

That changes when his so called 'friend', who is also his cousin, a man named Jonadab asks him what is wrong.

He tells him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

*Amnon should have been rebuked for the evil in his heart, but instead Jonadab, who is called, "a very crafty man" at the end of verse 3 says this in verse 5.*

His plan works exactly as he thought it might.

The king comes when he hears his son is ill, hears his request to have Tamar make him some food, and sends the command to his daughter to care for her brother.

David most likely has some blinders on in regards to his son and Jonadab exploits that to get Amnon what he wants.

Instead of challenging the evil in the heart of his cousin he feeds it and in so doing becomes a willful partner in what follows.

[I heard a news story on the radio a while back about a teen who got into a car accident that took the life of his friend. This teen had been driving recklessly at high speeds for a long time. He had been warned many times. His mom could have taken his keys, but instead she bought him a newer faster car. Was she driving? No, but she enabled her son's bad behaviour and in so doing participated in the tragedy.]

This is an easy trap to fall into especially in our day when feelings are given so much moral weight.

The indulging of the evil in the human heart leads to unspeakable horrors.

People don't get there in one step and they usually don't get there by themselves.

Evil is usually tolerated and/or indulged by friends, relatives or associates.

We live in a time when our society is telling people that they should be celebrated and affirmed in whatever desire they may have.

How often do we hear people say, "As long as they are happy that is the main thing"?

[That is a terrible lie brothers and sisters. The human heart has many desires that are evil and if we affirm, celebrate, or encourage that we become participants in that evil. That is a most unloving thing to do. It is like feeding spiritual poison to someone because evil is bad for people. We can see that in Amnon. As Jonadab's plan unfolds we see that...]

## **Point #2 – Indulging evil cultivates a foolish dissatisfied heart. (Verses 8-17)**

Feeding moral corruption closes a person off from wisdom and contentment.

*As is always the case with those who walk down the road of evil, there are multiple opportunities for Amnon to stop.*

Tamar goes to his house under the command of the king. How she felt about it personally is left unsaid, but from what we are told about her here she is the most honourable and godly person mentioned in this chapter.

She bakes the cakes as requested and dishes them up.

Right there is an opportunity for Amnon to stop, but instead he puts on more of a show and sends everyone out.

Being the first born of the king he had privilege and authority both of which he abuses here.

With the servants removed from the room, he gets Tamar to come closer under the pretense of nursing him back to health.

When she does what is asked of her he grabs her and makes his evil intentions known to her.

Before he violates her she speaks to him (**Verse 12-13**).

*At this point in Israel, purity is something greatly honoured among the people.*

She rightly calls what Amnon is about to do an “outrageous thing” a word that can be translated as senseless, disgraceful, profane, or immoral.

This is an offense against the LORD and His ways.

This is something that cannot be undone and she is the one who will have to live with the harm.

Doing such a thing will show Amnon to be a man without the fear of the LORD an utter fool bound for destruction.

Instead of doing this she says, “Ask the king and he will give me to you.”

Whether or not she believed that is unknown.

It may be she thought such a statement was her best chance at escape.

Look at what he does with her wise counsel (**verse 14**).

His self-indulgence of evil makes him a fool.

*Besides being a fool we read this in verses 15-17.*

He goes from one extreme to another.

He allowed himself to be governed by an evil desire and when he fulfills it he finds no satisfaction in it.

If he had an ounce of sense he should be filled with hatred for himself, but instead he is filled with hatred for his sister and casts her out.

She even pleads to not be cast away because as she says, “That would be worse than what has already happened.”

That likely strikes us as a strange thing to say, but we shouldn’t expect her to have calmly reasoned out the situation, she is beside herself with grief over what has been taken from her.

Again he refuses to listen and casts her out.

His evil does not satisfy him, quite the opposite, and he has cut himself off from anything resembling wisdom.

[That is exactly what the pursuit of evil does. It seems so attractive and in our desire we think it will bring us satisfaction. That is not what happens at all. When we get what we want we are left with an empty feeling and we usually deaden our hearts to the word of God which sets us up for making a train wreck of our lives. Here is another consequence of indulging evil...]

**Point #3 – Indulging evil hurts people and tolerates injustice. (Verses 18-22)**

When bad desires grow into action others will suffer and if that is allowed to continue then concern for what is right diminishes.

*The hurt caused to Tamar is emphasized in verses 18-19.*

The purity and chastity and the king's daughters is something that is clearly valued in Israel at this time.

The daughters of the king were given distinctive dresses to celebrate their modesty.

Through no fault of her own, that is taken from Tamar and she rightly laments over the crime committed against her.

She puts 'ashes' upon her head. A common practice in times of lament and sorrow.

She also tears the dress intended to display her purity. Like the ashes, tearing one's clothes is a display of great grief and sorrow.

It is a visible display which shows something is terribly wrong.

For Tamar is likely has two meanings, one of sorrow and also the loss of what her dress what intended to proclaim.

*Commentator Ronald Youngblood points out that her putting her hand upon her head is a sign of exile or banishment.*

Being kicked out of Amnon's house with the door locked behind her, for her felt like being cut off from her people without any kind of hope for the future.

The pain caused to this poor woman is unspeakable.

Her brother Absalom, whose name ironically means "my father is peace", offers her a small comfort and takes her into his home where she must live with what has happened.

That is the hurt. Let's look at the tolerance of injustice in **verse 21**.

The king is really upset over what has happened and he should be.

He was used by Amnon, Amnon abused his daughter in a terrible and irreversible way, and he cast her aside like a piece of garbage.

*Anger hardly seems like a strong enough word to capture what the king should be feeling here.*

Despite the fact that he is exceedingly angry, what does he do about it?

The Mosaic Law is pretty clear on the punishment. Amnon is supposed to be put to death for what he has done.

That doesn't happen. As far as we can tell from the text David does absolutely nothing.

Why? Well, it is likely a combination of things.

It is likely that he has not disciplined his son as he should have in the years leading up to this event.

Amnon strikes me as a man who was rarely told no as a boy and has grown up an entitled brat.

*It is also likely, David's own sins have hindered his ability to carry out justice.*

He is guilty of the same kinds of things and perhaps that keeps him from action.

Whatever the reason may be, justice is ignored and when justice is put aside it comes at the expense of the victims of evil.

[Not too long ago there was a case of vandalism and the teenagers responsible were caught on camera. The video was shown to police who knew the ones responsible and responded, "There is nothing we can do." What do you think will happen with those kids? They will most likely carry on with the destruction of property and probably progress into worse.]

That is what happens when we give even passive approval to evil.

The idea that people can do whatever evil is in their heart without hurting anyone else is absurd.

When God's laws are broken someone always gets hurt and when people and societies tolerate such things the problem always gets worse.

[Amnon's sin happens in the context of a series of bad decisions over a long period of time. David does not heed the LORD's design for marriage and family. The king sets a terrible example with his own sin. Amnon fixes his heart on things the LORD forbids. His friend/cousin hatches a plan to live out his evil desire and at other points along the way what is right is ignored and Tamar suffers, but the story doesn't end there. While David has done nothing, Tamar's brother Absalom has been harboring hatred in his heart and hatches a plan of his own. What happens as a result shows us this important lesson, that...]

#### **Point #4 – Indulging evil leads to destruction. (Verses 23-29)**

Sooner or later pursuing what is wrong leads a person to death.

*Just as David was drawn into the plot of his oldest son, he is drawn into the plot of his third born.*

Verse 23 tells us that two years have passed since Amnon's crime against Tamar and the time had come for Absalom to shear his sheep at a place called Baal-hazor.

To celebrate, Absalom says to his dad, "Come with me!" in verse 24.

It was very common to throw a feast when the sheep got sheared.

David though believes it would be too much of a burden to have his entourage go and feast with Absalom and so he declines.

Absalom asks for Amnon to go in his place.

David wonders at that invite and asks at the end of verse 26, “Why should he go with you?”

Notice **verse 27**.

Absalom, as we will see, is a skilled politician and is able to somehow break down David’s concerns and the king gives his permission for all of his sons to go.

Remember Absalom has held his tongue for two years. He has no doubt had many interactions with his brother and given him no reason to think he is upset.

The idea of free food and drink is enough to lure the fool to a place of vulnerability.

Listen to what happens (**Verses 28-29**).

There is no indication in the text that Amnon ever felt sorrow or remorse for what he had done.

He showed no pity or concern for Tamar.

He had concerned himself solely with chasing after his evil desire and now it had caught up with him.

When he least suspected it the sword came and put an end to him.

That is the way it is with feeding evil desires, it leads to destruction.

[One of the clearest examples of this in the Bible is the king of Egypt. How many times did he suffer for opposing God’s commands to let the people of Israel go? Time and again he chose evil and it cost him the decimation of his country, the life of his son, and the destruction of his army.]

If the desires of our hearts are evil and we feed them it will lead to destruction.

The Bible is very clear on that. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 says, “...do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

Praise the LORD there is hope for the sinner. Verse 11 goes on to say, “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

Repentance and faith can save us from destruction, but embracing evil desires? Feeding them? That can only lead to judgment and wrath.

[That ought to be a sobering thought to us. It is impossible to embrace the things that God hates and escape destruction. I bet after two years Amnon thought he was home free, but his evil caught up with him. We are every bit the fool if we think we will escape his fate apart from the

turning from our sin and towards Jesus and accepting Him as LORD and Saviour. Indulging evil is evil, it gives people foolish and unsatisfied hearts, it hurts people and tolerates injustice, it leads people to destruction, and lastly our text shows us that...]

**Point #5 – The consequences of indulging evil are often long lasting. (Verses 30-39)**

While the fool refuses to think about the implications of his corrupt desires he will have to live with his choices.

Well nothing breaks up a dinner party quite like a murder and all the sons of King David hop on their donkey and run for their lives.

Somehow a messenger gets to David before his sons arrive and he gives the king bad information saying that Absalom has struck down all of his sons.

Look at David's reaction in **verse 31**.

What went through his mind we can only guess, but what is clear is the news has brought tremendous grief to him.

One of his sons had followed in his example of adultery and now another had followed his example of murder.

If only he had kept himself from evil, if only he had torn his garments over Tamar, if only he had disciplined his son for his evil.

Now he is left the consequences of what has happened.

Somehow, Jonadab, the main enabler to Amnon and nephew of the king has some more accurate information.

Perhaps he was at the feast and made it back before David's sons. He says this to David in **Verse 32-33**.

It is not nearly as bad as the original message, but the news is far from good.

This updated news soon proves true (**Verses 36-39**).

Bitter tears prove to be the reward for all that has taken place.

Amnon got what he deserved there is no doubt about that, but it is nothing to rejoice over.

As the oldest he would have been the presumed heir to the throne and now he is dead on account of his evil.

Of course there is more to weep over.

Absalom, David's third born son, having acted in deceitful hatred rather than godly justice has run away.

He has fled to Talmai, king of Geshur. That is the father of Absalom's mother Maacah which means he has a place to stay as long as he wants.

There are deep wounds here. David cannot undo what has happened to his daughter, he is powerless to undo the death of his son, and another son is now living in exile.



Things are messed up and they will be for the foreseeable future.  
 That is the way things often end up when we enable either our own  
 evil desires or those of others.

[Anyone remember the name Chernobyl? It is the sight of a famous nuclear reactor accident in April of 1986. That was almost 40 years ago and it is still one of the most radioactive places on the planet.]

That is how it can be with evil.

The consequences can hang around for a very long time, sometimes a life time.

I don't say this to cause despair.

The power of the gospel can restore what seems impossibly broken.

David finds grace and forgiveness in the faithfulness of God in Christ and we can too.

We should not despair, but we ought to consider very carefully our attitude towards evil.

If we cultivate it in our hearts it can lead to things that cannot be undone on this side of eternity and we should take that to heart for our own good and the good of everyone around us.

*The great theologian and writer John Owen had it right when he said, "Be killing your sin or your sin will be killing you."*

We must not be like the world brothers sisters.

The world encourages people to indulge the desires of the heart without reference to what God wants and that is evil in itself.

We must never indulge or enable people to do things that God hates because if we do we become participants in evil.

We would do well to learn the lesson that indulging evil in our hearts will leave us unsatisfied fools.

Indulging such things will leave people hurt and promote injustice in the world.

Those things linger and persisting in evil can only lead to one place and that is destruction.

Let us then be people who find our happiness in holiness so that we might avoid such things and live to the glory of God and enjoy His goodness both now and forevermore.

Would you pray with me towards that end?