

## TANGLED: Seven Sins that Holds Us Back

Deadly SLOTH: 2 Samuel 11:11-15,23-27

Intro: \*\*\*We would not have noticed the giant sloths in the jungle of Costa Rica if the guide had not pointed them out. They were not moving enough to catch the eye. But there they were, blending into the undergrowth like logs or rocks.

Sloth is “the reluctance to work or make an effort; laziness.” It is the opposite of hard work and self-discipline. It is included in the list of the seven deadly sins because it is just as deadly as the other six. It entangles us quickly, trips us up, and keeps us from becoming the people God has called us to be. Its synonyms are indifference, apathy, idleness, inactivity, and lethargy.

In the Bible sloth is neglecting the spiritual life and the word of God. The slothful person does not have the discipline to do what is required for spiritual, physical, and financial health.

The author of the narrative about David and Bathsheba intends for us to see the contrast between Uriah’s nobility, honesty, and loyalty, and David’s wickedness, selfishness, betrayal and lies.

Uriah ended up dead. David lived on with his widow in his harem. Maybe the liar got the better part of the deal. But the story is not about who wins but who sins. And David was no winner in the awful succession of events that followed.

All of David’s sin is finally revealed, shouted from the housetops, as Jesus said it would be. Everyone in that generation heard the sorry story, and so have we.

The tragedy is that a good and innocent man died. He was loyal to his king to his last breath. He died fighting bravely. He died at the insistence and instruction of David.

I wonder what David is thinking as he sends his army into the field and lounges around the palace sipping Gatorade.

If lack of discipline, procrastination, poor motivation, and bad feelings are keeping you from doing what is right, then you need to take a look at David and Uriah. You will find no greater contrast in behaviors and intentions than between these two in this sordid affair. David plays the part of the fool. Uriah is committed, hardworking, and faithful. Uriah reveals to us through his own words why he possesses such discipline, focus, and intense motivation.

### **I. THE ARK IS IN A TENT: *Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents...” (v11).***

A. Sloth means laziness or inactivity. It means that you are IMMOBILE when you should be ACTIVE.

B. David stayed in Jerusalem. The writer emphasizes this point as a fault in David’s character and decision-making.

1. He tells us it is the time when kings go out to war.

2. He tells us that his men and the commander of his armies are in the midst of battle. This would contrast with David’s eagerness in earlier years, even as a boy, to take on the enemy.

3. He describes David’s behavior on the roof as meandering, purposeless. He gets out of bed and wanders around. He is at leisure.

C. Uriah will not sleep with his wife or enjoy the comforts of home that David is enjoying. He wants to be out in the field. In fact, he tells the king that “The Ark...is in a tent” (v11).

1. Uriah makes a bold speech. It was certainly designed as a rebuke of the king.

2. The first thing he mentions is the Ark. This is the Ark of the Covenant. We do not know if Uriah means that the Ark is in the Tent of Meeting in its usual place or if the Ark is actually in the field with the soldiers. On occasion the army took the Ark with them into battle. It is actually how they lost the Ark at one point.

3. The Ark is their most sacred religious symbol. It usually sits in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle or the Tent of Meeting.

D. The Israelites learned in the wilderness, after building the Tabernacle, that God is on the move. They had to watch the pillar of fire at the night and the cloud in the daytime that were suspended above the Ark of the Covenant and the Tent of Meeting. When that cloud or fire moved, then all of Israel moved. In this way they learned to follow God on a daily basis.

E. I think the Ark of the Covenant is in the field with the army. If not, the Tent of Meeting intends to communicate how mobile the presence of God may be. Uriah is in awe of the presence of God with his people.

He is not about to abandon the Ark in its tent. He is not about to VEGETATE when God wants him to CONGREGATE.

F. For those of you who sleep through too many worship hours, listen to this. Laziness on the Lord's Day is no even less acceptable than on other days. If God is meeting here with your church, then you need to be part of the present people.

G. David's character flaw is evident. He wants to sit at home and sip his Gatorade while God is on the move. That is SLOTH.

H. This is highly dangerous because it leaves you out of the work of the Lord. Jesus said, "I do whatever I see my Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does" (Matthew 5:19). This is HOLINESS. It is part of the OBEDIENCE of Jesus.

## **II. THE TEAM IS HARD AT WORK: *"My lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"***

A. Do you know what it is to be part of a tight and purposeful team? They do not call a military unit "a Band of Brothers" for nothing. Soldiers say there is not bond on earth like the bond among men at war.

B. Uriah is part of just such a UNIT. He is listed as one of David's mighty men, a valiant soldier (1 Chron. 11:41). He refuses to go home and sleep with his wife because his Band of Brothers is in the field preparing for battle.

C. SLOTH makes you DISCONNECTED from the TEAM that is getting things done. It puts you in the SEAT of the SCOFFER rather than on the Delta Force.

D. Remember the GREAT PURPOSE that energizes your life. Remember the CONNECTION you have with those who share this inspiring ideal and lofty goal. Get up and go to them.

## **III. THE DRUG IS IN YOUR HAND: *At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk (v13)***

\*\*\*Most people, including me, know only one quote from the economist and communist, Karl Marx. He said that "Religion is the opium of the people." Atheism itself is may be an opiate.

A. People have never lacked an opiate to put them to sleep, to loosen their inhibitions, or to deaden the soul. Your behavior is not excused or hidden because you are drunk and have donned a Mardi Gras mask. You will give an account for every idle word and deed.

B. David gets Uriah drunk. This, too, is SLOTHFUL behavior. It may be wily and crafty, but it is UNDISCIPLINED and UNSCRUPULOUS. SLOTH, laziness, inactivity, will put you at risk of breaking the commandments. We see that mind-altering drugs can be a gateway to sex. David seeks to manipulate Uriah by addling him with wine. When you are "under the influence" you will do things you might not have done otherwise. Some people drink because it loosens their morals. Some invite others to drink in order to loosen their morals. Neither end is godly or proper. People are easier to manipulate when they are no longer sober. Wine is David's DATE RAPE DRUG, though in an opposite way.

C. If you are someone who likes to push the alcohol toward your target, then know this—it is sin, what you are doing, and you are hearing from God about it today through this text.

D. Uriah REFUSES to be manipulated. His convictions are deep enough that David cannot suspend them with alcohol.

## **IV. THE LETTER IS ON ITS WAY: <sup>14</sup> *In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. <sup>15</sup> In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."***

A. David signs Uriah's death warrant.

1. He gives the letter to Uriah knowing that this loyal soldier will not read it or have it read to him.

2. Uriah carries his own death warrant to Joab who has no conscience himself and will do whatever David asks of him.

B. Uriah has seen the SLOTH of David. This is the only way to account for the impassioned speech of verse 11. He has delivered a stinging rebuke to the King. David takes it in stride because he is so caught up in his sin. Even if Uriah suspected that David had been with his wife, Bathsheba, I do not think he ever suspected that his most wicked enemy was in the palace, not in the field.

C. This is MURDER, plain and simple. It is the footnote on David's character and career (I Kings 15:5). "David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord...except in the case of Uriah." It all began when he decided to

bench himself when the battle raged.

D. Like Uriah, you hold the key to your own undoing in your hand. You can surrender to the immobilized, disconnected, and unscrupulous lifestyle that undermined David. Or you can opt for a life of temperance, commitment, determination, and active discipleship.

Conclusion: