

Retreating Inward

2 Samuel 11:6–15

Cast off all sluggishness today to follow the Lord's royal way.

How is the Lord calling you to enter into spiritual battle right now?

You are in the royal palace in Jerusalem. David succumbs to temptation when he allows his desires to take him away from his present responsibilities. He has taken for granted what he has and lost sight of the glory of God.

Pray that the Lord draws you out of sloth to embrace the kingly mission he has given you. Pray for the grace of freedom and humility for all Exodus Men, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord and Master of my life, spare me from the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter. Instead, bestow on me, your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, O Lord and King, let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed forever and ever. Amen.

A Reading from the Second Book of Samuel

So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people fared, and how the war prospered. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house, and wash your feet." And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing." Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will let you depart." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day, and the next. And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house. In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die."

Reflection

We see David going to great lengths to try to cover up his sin. He is a shadow of his former self. The man who previously accepted responsibility for crimes done on his behalf is now working hard to make it appear like he did nothing wrong. Sloth lives in fantasyland. As we have already seen, it is always looking out the window for some "greener pastures." When it comes

to one's own sin, sloth busies itself with inventing some kind of alternate reality. There is always some explanation, some "context," some spin that makes it all understandable.

Dom Jean-Charles Nault describes well what we see in David when he writes:

Acedia, then, is a profound withdrawal into self... It is... an uninhibited seeking of personal satisfaction in the fear of "losing" something. The desire to save one's "freedom" at any price reveals, in reality, a deeper enslavement to the "self." There is no longer any room for an abandonment of the self to the other or for the joy of gift; what remains is sadness or bitterness within the one who distances himself from the community and who, being separated from others, finds himself likewise separated from God. (Noonday Devil, pp. 245-46)

Sloth has been called a "flight from God as friend." This spiritual listlessness causes trouble before we even realize it. Because of a lack of vigilance and slackening in fulfilling his duties, David not only falls into one sin, but is quickly led from sin to sin. His life is now out of control and it is swallowing others up with him. Most importantly, his focus has turned away from God and led him to a profound emptiness.

Where do you find yourself retreating inward, withdrawing from others, trying to protect your freedom, or trying to cover up your misdeeds?

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

Week 6 Action Items

Pray for your fraternity.

Keep up regular exercise.

Reflect on your vacation plan.

Invite men to join your fraternity for Kings of Summer, Part 2 beginning this Sunday.