

# Whatever Happened to Repentance?

by William Graham

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*Repentance starts with God moving in our hearts and involves a change of heart, not just a change of actions.*

**Duration:** 28:47

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 12:1

**Topics:** "Repentance", "Sin and Forgiveness"

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## Description

William Graham addresses the critical topic of repentance, using the story of King David's sin with Bathsheba as a backdrop. He emphasizes that true repentance begins with God's conviction and is not merely feeling sorry for being caught in sin. Graham highlights the importance of recognizing the foolishness of sin, the need for self-indictment, and the visible expression of repentance in our lives. He calls for a heartfelt return to God, urging listeners to confess their sins and make God the hero of their stories through genuine repentance.

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## Transcript

If you have your Bibles, I want you to turn to 2 Samuel chapter 12. And I've titled this message, Whatever Happened to Repentance? And the reason is, is because we live in a world today that we glorify sin and we demonize God. Often, and to be honest, this was not a sermon I was planning on preaching.

It was a different passage, but I got a text this morning that just kind of hit me in my gut. And it's, uh, I'm going to have to deal with something when I get home. Nothing, no one's passed away or anything like that.

It's just, it hits you in the gut and it's dealing with sin. And, um, and so God just started laying this on my heart. And so I want you to, in this sin that we're going to be looking at, it's probably one of the most well-known sins in the Bible.

And unfortunately it's one of the greatest sins known in this world. And it's the David. David has committed adultery with Bathsheba.

He's took another man's wife. She became pregnant, um, to cover it up. He tried to get the husband to come home to visit her, but he wouldn't.

He would, he was such an honorable man that he slept at the foot of the king on his doorsteps and wouldn't go to his own house while they were, the rest of the men were at war. And so David had no

choice, at least in his mind, and had the man killed on the battlefield. He put him on the front lines and he made all the other men retreat, left, uh, Uriah up there to be killed by the Ammonites.

And then he married, then David would marry Bathsheba and have the child. But God didn't like that. But here's the good thing.

And we're going to see some good things in this. All right. So if you have your Bibles, I want you to turn to second Samuel chapter 12.

I'm going to start reading in verse one. Then the Lord sent Nathan. Nathan's a prophet.

The Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said to the king, there were two men in one city, one rich, the other poor. He's given a parable right here.

That's what he's doing. And the rich man had an exceedingly many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished. And it grew up together with him and with his children.

It ate his own food and drank from his own cup and laying his bosom. And it was like a daughter to him. And a traveler came to the rich man who refused to take one from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to visit him.

But he took the poor man's lamb and he prepared it for the man who came into his house. So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man. And he said to Nathan, as the Lord lives, this man has done.

This shall surely die. And he shall restore fourfold for the land, because he did this thing. And because he had no pity verse seven, there's one that you underline the Nathan said to David, you are the man.

Thus says the Lord, God of Israel, I anointed you king over Israel. And I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house, your master's wives into your keeping and gave you the house of Israel and Judah.

And if that would have been too little, I also would have given you much more. Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword. You have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.

Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house because you despise me. And you've taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. Thus says the Lord, behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house.

And I would give and take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor. And he shall lie with your wives in the sight of the sun for you did it secretly. But I will do this thing before all Israel before the sun.

So David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said, David, the Lord has put away your sin. You shall not die.

However, because by this deed, you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blasphemy the child also who is born to you shall surely die. Then Nathan departed to his house. Repentance.

We don't see that today. Only how many times we see something on television, when we see some celebrity get caught up into whether it's a sex scandal that's hitting Hollywood or whether it's alcohol abuse or something. And they say, oh, I'm sorry.

And they check themselves into rehab and to them, they've done it. They've changed directions in life, but that's not what the Bible calls repentance. These people have only got, they're only sorry that they got caught.

They have not repented. They haven't had a change of heart. And so I want to talk to you about repentance.

And first and foremost, point number one, repentance starts with God, not because God has sinned. God doesn't do sin. So understand what I'm trying to say.

Repentance starts with God. God is the one that starts to prompt our heart. God starts to convict us.

And this is what we see in verse one. Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. It was the Lord sending Nathan.

There's nothing in man that warrants change in character of his heart. We can't do it. We cannot conjure up repentance on our own.

It has to be supernatural. It must come from God. God sent Nathan to David to confront David about his sin.

And it was a sign of mercy. This is what, listen, we deserve punishment. We deserve the wrath of God, but yet God is long suffering.

And here he sends his prophet Nathan to confront David, to confront David and make David change directions in life. David, you're going in the wrong direction. I want you to go this way.

And so he's out of God's love and mercy. He's trying to redirect his servant who's gone the wrong direction. And Nathan used a parable.

And this parable was like a story. It was a made up story, but it was to reflect truth. It's like looking into a mirror.

And so he told this story and David, David doesn't like what he's hearing because he doesn't like this story. But yet we see that repentance, it starts with God moving in our hearts. We deserve punishment, but yet God shows us who we truly are.

Repentance is not something that we can just conjure up on our own. It has to be something supernatural coming into our life. Whether it's me preaching or your pastor preaching, whether it's a message that you hear on the radio, or if it's a book, or if it's God's word that convicts you of sin in your life, God's sending that to you to help you to change directions in your life.

It starts by God sending the messenger and speaking the truth. Repentance starts with encountering God in his word. That's why I love your pastor so much.

He preaches God's word. And it looks like you're going to be going through the minor prophets pretty soon. And you're going to wonder what in the world has that got to do with anything today.

It has everything to do for today. And great lessons we can learn from the minor prophets. But your pastor preaches the whole Bible, not parts of it, not the fun parts.

He preaches the parts that speaks to every part of human life. And that's what Nathan was doing. Nathan came here to present God's word.

And the Lord sent Nathan to David and he came to him and said, he spoke truth into David's life. And one reason repentance is missing is that we don't encounter God through his word. What we see today, people don't want to spend time in God's word.

They'd rather be entertained. They'd rather go to a baseball game. Listen, nothing wrong with baseball games or soccer games.

My kids are in soccer this weekend back home in North Carolina, but we'd rather go do these things and spend time right here in God's word. And we, then we wonder why we don't have repentance and to change societies because we don't spend time here and not just as a church, but as an individual, we have to spend time in God's word. So first repentance, it starts with God moving in our hearts.

Number two, repentance reveals the foolishness of sin. And that's what the peril was. When we, we talked about this parable about a, a rich man, he had a friend that came out of town and the man was hungry.

So the rich man said, well, I'll prepare you a meal. And he had lots of lambs. He had lots of herds.

I mean, he could have got him a, anything he wanted, but instead he went over and took the one man, the poor man who had just one little lamb. He took it and killed it. And repentance reveals the foolishness of sin.

And my friends, that's what sin is. It's foolish. I don't know how many times people think, well, I'll just do this in the dark and God won't see me.

I'll do it. And no one will know about it. You better believe someone knows about it.

His name is God. God sees it all. You cannot hide from God.

And the parable paints a picture of a foolish man. Who's trying to steal from a poor man. And this parable was serving is that like I said before, it's like a mirror to David.

David's getting angry, but he doesn't know that he's the man yet. And we like David, we want to scream foul, or this is not right. There's injustice here, but yet it's showing us how stupid this is because David said, what stupid man would do something like this? What kind of man would go? Why would a rich man steal from the one? This makes no sense.

This is, this is idiotic. Sin is foolish. We scream with David because we see the absurdity of the actions of this, of this rich man committing this sin.

But the problem is today, my friends, repentance doesn't happen because we don't see the absurdity of our sin. We try to justify it. We want to hang on to it.

We want to enjoy it. And we think we're fooling God. You may be fooling others, but to be truthful, you're probably no fooling.

The only one you're fooling is yourself. People see God sees everything. Number three, repentance needs to be aroused.

Our hatred towards sin, repentance needs to arouse our hatred for sin. And it says in verse five and six, so David's anger was greatly aroused. He saw the injustice.

He saw the sin was going on and his, it said that his, his anger was aroused. He was getting mad at what he saw and what he heard. And my friends, that's what sin, that's what sin needs to do in our life.

When we see sin on television, it should break our heart. It should make us angry. Instead, we hit pause, hit rewind.

We want to sit there and enjoy it instead of letting it arouse and get us angry about what's going on in life. We, we sit there and we laugh at it. Oh, this is just, it's the 21st century.

We try to, we see so much on television. We get, we get used to it. Don't we? My friends, that's a, that's, it's not good.

It's not good to be sensitized where we, we see this every day and every day and every day. Now we're used to it. Oh, that's no big deal.

We'll now that's, that's just television. I mean, we'll, if we had to do that, we couldn't see anything on television. Maybe there's our problem.

Listen, the television's not the evil in this world. It's man's heart. It's man's heart.

And there is a lot of good things on television. A lot of bad stuff too. But David had become callous towards sin and sin makes you blind to your own selfishness, to your own self need.

That's what sin does. It blinds us. And we think that we're okay, that we're not sinners.

But the Bible says, for we have all sinned. We've all come short of God's glory. Will Graham is a sinner.

Your pastor, Jim Simla is a sinner. Billy Graham is a sinner. We've all broken God's laws.

We're no different than David. The thing is David, David sin's been written down. Did you know this book right here is the most published book in the history of the world.

All right. Now think about this. David's sins recorded in here.

It's been printed over and over and over again. His sin for the whole world to see most of the time, our sin won't even make a paper. We may, a few friends will find out, maybe someone at work will find out your boss, whatever it might be.

The most part, our sins quiet, but David had forgot about his sin. He thought no one knew about it. And he, he buried it.

He thought with Uriah, maybe he tried to justify his sin. He said, well, but I married her. I mean, I got her pregnant, but I married her.

I married Bathsheba, but God has not forgotten anything. God could see everything that was going on. Nothing escapes God's mind or his judgments.

And David had lost the softness for God's heart because David was known as what a man after God's own heart. But now we see that he's calloused towards sin and he doesn't know what's really going on. He lost that.

It needed to be revived. And God is sending Nathan to revive it. It's like spiritual surgery.

It's not pleasant to go through, but it's much needed. And this purple aroused David's anger because of the sin that took place. Our spirit must be aroused at the presence of sin and our life.

Let me ask you, is you got sin in your life? Is your spirit pricked right now with that sin that's going on in your life? You say, man, I hope no one finds out about it. Will I'm trying to keep that quiet. God sees it.

Sin makes you feel like a fool because you think that you're hiding it when God sees it all. God already knows what you've done. God knows what you've done already.

He knows my sin. And before I came in here, I had to get on my knees and I prayed before God, God, and I kept asked all my sin before God, God, I think I always get away with things, but God, you see it all. And I had to confess my sin before the Lord, before I even preached this message.

Repentance is lacking today because we no longer hate sin, but we often accept sin or even celebrate sin today. Sin is the opposite of God. Sin is disobey God.

It's the opposite of obeying him. Sin means you disobeyed God. And that's what it's called.

And God is holy. He's perfect in all his ways. Amen.

Is God perfect? And if sin is the opposite of that, then my friends, that's what you're doing. You're going away from God. That's what sin does.

It blinds us to it. They're in different directions, sin and God. They're in opposite directions.

You cannot continue to serve God and sin at the same time. It is impossible. And that's where so many Christians go wrong.

They say, well, I can just, I'll just keep sinning and I'll, I'll keep loving God. You're doing the opposite. You cannot go, you cannot serve both.

You cannot be disobeying God and obeying God at the same time. You need to repent. You cannot continue to serve God and sin at the same time.

It's impossible. You must change directions. And that's where the word repentance means.

It means going in one direction, going in my own self interest, looking for sin and enticement, and I need to repent it. Repentance literally means 180. I got to change direction, not a 360, 360.

I'd be going back in the same direction, a 180. And I got to go back toward God and his holy statutes. That's what repentance means.

And that's what God is doing. Guys saying you need to change directions. Proverbs 14, 12 says there's a way that seems right unto the man, but at the end of it, it is death.

Cause when we see it, Hey, what's wrong with this? This looks good. Everyone else is doing it. The path looks broad and this is every way he's going, but narrow is the way unto the Lord.

My friends, we often, we see something good and say, oh, well, everybody else is doing it. I mean, everyone does it at work. Sad thing is a lot of people do it at church and we just try to justify it.

And it says, this has got to be okay. Look, I can do so much good at the end of this. It looks right.

But the Bible says at the end of it, it's death. It's destruction. It looks good.

It looks pleasing to our sights, but it's in the wrong direction. That's why repentance is lacking today because we don't want to turn. We don't want to change.

We want to keep going thinking that we can still serve God and serve sin at the same time. And nothing can be further from the truth. Number four, repentance is self indictment.

And that's what David said. He said, uh, verse 13, I have sinned. He indicted himself.

He verbally came out and said, I have sinned. It's in self indictment. Nathan identifies the thief as David said, David, you're the man.

You're all angry about this injustice, but David, you're it. You're the man that's caused all this problem. You're the man that's stolen.

You're the man that has killed. And so this parable revealed to David that he was actually looking at himself in this story. He does not see a picture of a King.

When he's looking into this mirror, David's looking to this mirror because of this parable. When he's, when he starts to understand it, he doesn't see himself as a King. He doesn't see himself as a husband.

He doesn't see himself as a father or a prophet. He sees himself as a, what a thief and a murderer. When David finally came to his senses, he says, I'm a thief.

I'm a murderer. I'm an adulterer. He indicted himself.

David Hadley finally to see himself and God sees him. That's the question. You see yourself as a business person or a family person, but it's how, how does God see you? And that's what repentance does.

Repentance helps us to understand how God sees you and me to see our sin. Repentance involves self-indictment. David had finally had to see himself as God saw him as a murderer, as a thief, as an adulterer.

And David identifies himself as a sinner. He is, he said, I have sinned. I'm the center.

I have sinned against God. And so David confesses his sin confess means to agree with you saying, well, I'm telling God my sin. He already knows your sin.

That's remember we've already talked to us. God sees everything. He already knows what you've done.

He knows what you have said. He knows who you've been with. He sees you, what you've done in the dark.

God sees what you've done under the table. God sees your thoughts in your mind and in your heart. God sees it.

He sees where your eyes wander. God sees it. He knows what internet sites you're clicking on.

You think you've done it where no one else can see it. God sees it. But when we confess our sin before God, we agree with him of what we've done.

We're not revealing to God that we're sinners. He already knows that he wants to know, do we agree with him? And David confesses. He agrees with God on who he is.

He confesses the sins and we must, we must understand that our sin is really against God. And that's what David said there in verse 13, I have sinned against the Lord. He said, I've, I've broken his commandment.

He actually wrote two of his commandments. Do not commit adultery and do not commit murder. He committed both.

And we must see ourselves as God sees us as a murderer, as a sinner, as an adulterer, as a thief, as a liar, whatever it is in our life, we must confess it before him. We need to agree with God on exactly what we have done. My friends, God sees it all.

He already knows what you've done. When we confess to God, we're actually saying to God, God, this is, I'm agreeing with you. I am this person.

I'm a, I'm a liar. I'm a cheat Lord. I'm a self promoter.

I'm more worried about myself than anybody else. I love myself more than other people. Whatever it is, you confess it before God.

You agree with him. You are that person. We must understand that even sin against the neighbor is actually sin against God.

When you curse at someone, you're just like, you're cursing at God. God sees it all. And today repentance is lacking because we never want to indict ourselves.

I mean, whoever wants to say, I'm an adulterer who wants to just stand up and say, I'm a murderer who wants to stand up and say, I've stolen things. Nobody wants to do that. Nobody wants their sin out there.

My friend, I just told you, David sin has been printed in the most popular book ever printed. His sin is there for the whole world to see. And you know what David would say? I pray that brings God glory.

My sin, my confession, bring God glory. Repentance today. We don't want to indict ourselves.

That's why we blame everybody else. Oh, I did this because of that person. Listen, that's what Adam did to Eve.

They were under the bus when there were no buses. He said, God, it's that woman you gave me. That's what he said.

I mean, listen to the absurdity of that. So that's why we're laughing because it's true. Isn't it? We want to blame others.

He, Adam was blaming God for a perfect woman, but that's what we do. We don't want to indict ourselves. We want to blame others.

We never want to take the punishment for something. And matter of fact, oftentimes we see this today all over the news. When someone gets in trouble, especially in, in Washington, DC, they have to stand before Congress.

And what do they say? I plead the fifth. It's interesting, but a couple of months before that, they're yapping up and talking like this, but man, when they get on the stand zip, my friends, this isn't a Republican or Democrat problem. All right.

This is a heart problem of me. We don't want to indict ourselves. We'll plead the fifth before God, but it doesn't work with God may work in our country.

And now I'm thankful for that, but it doesn't work before God. We often fail to understand that when we confess our sin, we are revealing our sin because that's what we think we're revealing it to God, but God already knows it, but we are revealing our repentance. When we confess our sin, God, you're right.

I am a sinner. I am. That's what David's saying.

I am an adulterer. I'm a murderer. I'm a thief.

And it was showing his change of heart. He's saying, Lord, I'm changing directions. You're right.

I am that person. And God's calling them back. Why? Because God loves them and God loves you.

That's why God's pricking our hearts today over sin in our life. Right now, God's convicting you of sin in your own life. What has God convicted you of right now? God's trying to chase you back home.

Come back to me. He's saying, finally, number five, repentance need to has a visible expression and there's going to be consequences. We see that in verse 11 and 12.

This says the Lord behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house. I'll take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor. And he shall lie with your wives in the sight of the son for you did it secretly, but I'm going to do this before all Israel before the son.

And so this is exactly what happened. David did something secret. And God said, I'm going to make it public.

And I'm going to bring problems in your own family. Now you brought a sword and you killed Uriah with the sword. Now the sword is going to be in your house and it's going to bring destruction in your house.

Your son's going to die. The one that she was carrying that son was going to die. Your own sons are going to turn on you and they're going to run you out of the kingdom.

And your son's going to sleep with your wives in front of the, he did it on the rooftop. So everybody could watch that comes later on in second Samuel, David's sin became public. David's sin had consequences and David would weep.

And he fasted. We'd see that in the next few verses after this, he wept and he fasted. He ended up writing one of the greatest Psalms, Psalm 51.

If you have your Bibles, you can just in your margin there in chapter 12, there in second Samuel, you can just write Psalm 51 because that's what David right. And it's one of the most beautiful Psalms talking about confession, confessing his sin before God, what he'd done with Bathsheba and with Uriah and with God, it shows his contrite heart and his true repentance. Our repentance needs to be visible as a reminder on how serious it is that God takes in true repentance.

We'll find a way to make God the hero of the story. When you repent of your sin, we just heard a young man. I don't know where, I can't remember his name, but he was, uh, he was up here singing a second ago and he gave his testimony and he did what he gave God the glory is God's story.

God's the hero. God's the one that rescued him. God's the hero.

And my friends, that's one to encourage you. When you, when you confess your sin before God, you're making God the hero of your story. Make God the hero of your life by confessing your sin.

And listen, I, you don't have to write a book about your sin, but confess your sin, ask for forgiveness from the one that you've wronged from the other person. And from God, our repentance needs to be visible as a reminder of how serious it is God takes our sin. My friends make God the hero by repenting of your sin saying, God, thank you for loving me.

Thank you for chasing me. Thank you for chasing after me, Lord. And, and corralling me back home because God wants you to come back home right now.

And then listen, I've, I've only been with you for a few minutes. You don't know me. I don't know you, but we're brothers and sisters in the Lord.

And God is putting something in your heart right now that you need to confess beforehand. I don't know what it is. I don't know any of you in here, except that man over there and one other man that came with me.

That's it. I don't know what's going on in your heart, but God sees it. My friend, God's not fooled.

You can't plead the fifth before God, but God says, come home, confess your sin. You're the sinner. God says, come back to me.

Repentance starts with God's moving in our heart. Maybe he's done that with you today. Repentance reveals the foolishness of sin.

Repentance arouses our hatred towards sin. I repent this. We self-indict, we convict ourselves that we're the center and repentance needs to have a visible expression.

My friends, that's what we're going to do right now. We're going to confess our sin before God. I'm not here to call you out.

You're going to confess your sin before God. I'm just going to lead us in a word of prayer and you pray out right now to the Lord. Let's bow our heads and close our eyes.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. I'm sorry for my sin. Lord, I'm tired of the junk in my heart.

I'm tired of carrying this. Lord, I am a sinner. I'm so sorry.

Forgive me. Make me clean. Make me whole.

I turn back to you. Thank you for touching my heart. Lord, break my heart.

Don't let me get calloused towards sin. Help me to have a soft heart. Soft to the touch of God.

Thank you for touching my heart this morning. I love you, Jesus. And all the God's people said amen.

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