

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature,

Session 25, David's Repentance, Solomon

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All right, get ready to dive deep. Ancient Israel, that's where we're headed this time. You know, you sent us this lecture transcript, all about King David and Solomon, his son, and his huge idea of, well, repentance.

Yeah, it's pretty amazing, you know, how these stories, they're from like thousands of years ago, but they still resonate with us even today. It's all about messing up, facing the music, and trying to get back on track, back to what's right. It's pretty human, you know? And this source material, it jumps right in, right into the deep end, with a story most folks probably know.

Yeah, even if they haven't opened a Bible in forever, David and Bathsheba- but it's not just a scandalous story, right? It really gets to the core of how power and desire and morality, how they all clash. Exactly. We're not just talking about ancient gossip here.

This story shows how even someone who's considered a hero, a guy the Bible actually calls a man after God's own heart, well, he can make some seriously bad choices. The lecture emphasizes, you know, the contrast between what David does and how righteous Uriah the Hittite is, Bathsheba's husband. It does make you think, right, about the pressures people faced, even back then, you know, when someone powerful messed up.

But what's really striking is how the prophet Nathan confronts David. He doesn't barge in there, like yelling, you know, sinner. No.

Instead, he uses this parable, this clever story. It leads David to condemn himself before he even realizes, wait a minute, he's the one who's in the wrong. Yeah.

It's like a masterclass in how to communicate, right? I mean, think about it. How often do we shut down conversations, you know, by being too direct? Maybe Nathan's approach teaches us something about how to hold people accountable even today by, well, appealing to their own sense of justice. And then we get to Psalm 51.

It's like David's pouring out his heart after, well, after everything that's happened. The source material actually breaks down the stages of repentance using the Psalm. Honestly, it's like steps everyone can relate to, whether you're religious or not.

Yeah. You don't have to believe in a specific God to understand what it means to own up to a mistake. The first thing is, you know, acknowledging what you did wrong, no excuses.

That's tough, though. A tough step for a lot of people. And then the lecture says, you have to see how you hurt other people.

It's not enough to just feel bad. You know, you've got to step outside yourself, see the impact on those around you. That's something that really hit me hard because sometimes I

think we get so caught up in our feelings, you know, the guilt or shame, and we forget to consider how our actions really affected everyone else.

It's like the lecture is pushing us, you know, to be more empathetic, even when we're the ones who screwed up. Absolutely. And that leads to the next stage, you know, which is the lecture calling for understanding your own sinfulness.

It's not just about this one thing you did. It's like recognizing patterns in your behavior, those tendencies you have that, well, maybe aren't so great. This is where it gets personal for a lot of people, I think.

And the lecture, it doesn't shy away from that. And for people who are religious, there's also this part about how your actions affect your relationship with God. But even if you're not, I think that translates to how you see yourself in the bigger picture.

You know, do your actions line up with the kind of person you actually want to be? Exactly. It's all about values and integrity. It doesn't matter what you believe.

And the lecture asks this tough question. Can someone who's done terrible stuff- I mean, truly awful things like murder or adultery- still be used for good? They use David as an example, you know, writing Psalm 51 after everything he did; it suggests redemption, right? Redemption is possible even when you've been to some pretty dark places. Makes you wonder, right? How we judge people, both historically and in our own lives.

Do we fixate on their worst moments, you know, or do we allow for the possibility of change? So for those listening, what do you think? What makes someone truly redeemable in your eyes? It's a big question. We're thinking about it, but what I find powerful in all this is the idea that even someone like King David had to go through these stages of repentance, you know? It makes him human. It shows that we all mess up, even the so-called great ones.

And that working through our mistakes, well, it's a process, not just a switch you flip. That's a good point. It's not about being perfect.

It's about being willing to face our flaws, you know, and try to do better. And that, well, that brings up another tough question, one that the lecture dives into. And one that's really personal to me, honestly, is the mystery of what happens to babies when they die.

Yeah, that age-old question. It's puzzled theologians and parents for, well, centuries. The lecture uses the death of David's child, the one with Bathsheba, as a starting point.

You know, the heartbreak, the search for answers, and the lecture- it's honest about the fact that the Bible doesn't give a clear solution. To be honest, it's something I've always struggled with. The lecturer actually shared their own experience with a miscarriage.

It was raw, you know, and honest. It made me realize this isn't just some theoretical debate. It's something countless people grapple with on a deeply emotional level.

It's a question born from love and grief, right? Wanting the best for a child who's, well, gone too soon. The lecture touches on different views, like the idea of original sin, or, you know, is there an age, you know, before you're accountable for your actions. But in the end, it

highlights that verse: Will not the judge of all the earth do right? It's like suggesting that even when we don't understand, we can still trust, you know, in a larger sense of justice.

That verse, it's always brought me comfort too. But the lecturer, they said something else, and it really blew my mind. They suggested that maybe God, maybe he withholds this knowledge, you know, from us on purpose.

Now that's intriguing. Why would God do that, do you think? Their idea was that if we knew for sure where babies went after death, well, it could lead to some pretty terrible stuff. Infanticide, but disguised as sending souls to heaven; forced conversions of pregnant women, knowing it could actually put babies at greater risk because of human actions.

Wow. Yeah. That's a chilling thought, but it does make you wonder, right, about knowledge and human behavior, the relationship between them.

Maybe sometimes not knowing is a form of protection, a way to keep us from, you know, twisting even the most secret things to serve our own agendas. So we don't get a definite answer from the Bible. Yeah.

But maybe the lack of an answer, maybe that is a message. It makes us wrestle with the mystery, to lean into faith, and to really examine, you know, our own motivations when it comes to life and death. It reminds us powerfully that some things we may never fully understand, and that's okay.

The journey of faith, sometimes, it's about embracing the unknown, trusting in something bigger than ourselves. But moving on in the lecture, we're leaving these, you know, existential questions behind. We're entering the world of power dynamics, earthly ones; David's getting old.

And the question of, well, who will inherit the throne? It's getting heated. It's like a soap opera, but with chariots and sandals. His son, Adonijah, you remember him, right? Tried to steal the throne from Solomon before.

Well, he's back at it, gathering followers, making his move. And the lecture points something out, something interesting. It says David never interfered with Adonijah, which might've contributed to his entitlement, his ambition.

It makes you think about parenting, right? Even for future kings, do our actions or even our inactions shape the leaders of tomorrow or even the troublemakers? It's like, even in ancient Israel, they had family drama. And just when it seems like, you know, Adonijah might actually win this thing, Bathsheba steps in, Solomon's mother. She's not just sitting around, you know, embroidering.

She's a powerhouse, reminding David of his promise to make Solomon king. And she's got the prophet Nathan on her side too. Talk about a power couple.

Together, they appeal to David's sense of duty and loyalty. It's like, you know, Hey, remember that whole covenant thing? You promised Solomon the throne. The lecture even points out the geographic details, you know, of all this: Adonijah goes to En-Rogel.

It's this spring further from Jerusalem to make his move. But David has Solomon anointed at Gihon, this spring that's much closer to the city. It's like the location itself was a power move, you know, showing that Solomon is the true heir.

Yeah. Those little details, they actually say a lot about how power worked back then, being close to the city, close to the action. It was key.

It reminds us that even in ancient stories, it's worth paying attention, you know, to those small details because they often hold clues to deeper meanings. Okay. So Solomon's on the throne, but as we get into his story, there's something the lecture points out that made me do a double take.

We hear all about Solomon's wisdom, his achievements, but he rarely actually speaks for himself. It's like we're listening to his greatest hits album, but we never see, you know, the studio sessions. Does that make sense? That is curious, isn't it? It's almost as if we're supposed to figure out his character, you know, through his actions and how people react to him.

It challenges this assumption, right? That wisdom always has to be loud and outspoken. So does that make him, I don't know, less relatable than David, you know, who wore his heart on his sleeve? Or is it a different kind of wisdom? One that's more about observing, planning things out, and letting your actions, you know, do the talking. Honestly, I'm not sure.

What do you think? Yeah. It's an interesting question. Maybe Solomon's wisdom was more about what he did, not just what he said.

And speaking of doing things, one of the first things Solomon does as king is, well, tackling some unfinished business. Stuff David left him to deal with, specifically this hit list. People he wants, well, taken care of.

Yeah. This part, it always makes me feel kind of uneasy. We've just gone through all this with David, you know, the repentance, second chances.

And then he hands Solomon this list of people to basically, well, eliminate. It's a harsh reminder, you know, that things were different back then. Power was often maintained through violence.

Yeah. It's a pretty stark contrast, right? To the image we have of Solomon, the wise and peaceful ruler. The lecture goes into detail about these people, you know, why they were on David's list.

You've got Joab, David's general, who is involved in a lot of bloodshed. He even killed someone who could have challenged David for the throne. So even though Joab was loyal, he was also, I guess, a liability.

It makes you think about those tough decisions leaders have to make, you know, loyalty versus what's best for everyone else. Then there's Shimei, a distant relative of King Saul. He actually cursed David while David was, you know, on the run from his own son, Absalom.

David forgave him, but it seems like, well, maybe he couldn't quite let it go. I think we've all been there, right? Holding onto grudges, even when we think we've moved on, shows that even David, this man after God's own heart, was still human, capable of pettiness, holding onto resentment. And then, of course, there's Adonijah, Solomon's brother, the one who, as we saw, tried to grab the throne.

David clearly saw him as, well, a threat, someone who had to be dealt with. It's interesting, though, that David didn't deal with any of these guys himself. The lecture suggests maybe he felt, I don't know, conflicted.

He had a long history with Joab, maybe some guilt even over some of the things Joab did for him. And with Shimei, well, maybe David felt like revenge would kind of undermine his own act of mercy from years earlier. It makes David more human, don't you think? He wasn't this flawless leader.

He wrestled with choices, made compromises, left some messy situations for his son to clean up. It does make you wonder, well, what'd I do in that situation? I mean, would I have the guts to make those tough calls? Even if it meant going against my own feelings or loyalties, it's a question probably every leader, from ancient kings to, I don't know, modern CEOs, has to grapple with at some point. But leaving those moral dilemmas behind for a second, the lecture shifts gears to something that really piqued my interest.

This idea that Solomon was already considered wise, even before that famous dream where God offers him, well, anything he wants. Ah, yes. The dream at Gibeon.

That story's captured imaginations for, well, centuries. You're right, though. The lecture challenges this assumption that Solomon's wisdom was like a gift, something he got overnight.

It actually points to parts of the text where David himself acknowledges Solomon's wisdom before the dream. That's what got me. It makes you think, right? About talent, intelligence.

Are we born with it, or is it developed? Maybe it's both. God takes what we've got, our natural abilities, and he amplifies them, guides us towards our potential. That's a great way to put it.

And the examples the lecture gives, they really support that. Remember when David tells Solomon to deal with Joab, according to your wisdom? And again, when he's talking to Solomon about Shimei, he mentions Solomon's wisdom. Clearly it wasn't a sudden thing.

Solomon already had this reputation for being insightful, capable of making good judgments. That changes everything for me. It's not about Solomon going from zero to hero in the wisdom department.

It's about him having this gift, this inclination towards thoughtfulness. And then God comes along, and it's like, okay, you've got this spark. Let me turn it into a flame.

Let's see what you can really do. I love that image. It really ties into a bigger idea about how God works in our lives.

He doesn't always give us a complete makeover. Sometimes he builds on what's already there, refines it, and strengthens the gifts we have. That's encouraging, actually.

It means we're not starting from scratch. We all have something to offer, something God can work with. So even before the dream, Solomon's showing signs of being a wise leader.

But then comes that iconic scene, a Gibeon. It's like a classic folktale. Yeah, like a genie in a bottle situation.

God appears to Solomon in a dream and says, "Ask for anything you want, and I'll give it to you. What would you ask for if you were in Solomon's shoes? I mean. Honestly, probably something totally selfish.

Riches, power, maybe even a lifetime supply of those little chocolate mints they leave on your pillow at fancy hotels. I get it. It's human nature to want those things.

But Solomon, he asked for something different: wisdom and discernment. Not the flashiest choice, but definitely the wise one. Right.

It shows his priorities were different. He understood that to be a good leader, to make decisions that would actually help his people, he needed something more, something deeper than just wealth or power. He needed the ability to see the big picture, understand people, weigh his options, and choose the path that would lead to justice and prosperity.

That choice shows a level of humility that's pretty remarkable, especially for a young king. It suggests he recognized his own limitations, understood that true leadership means seeking guidance, relying on something bigger than yourself. Okay.

But here's where the lecture throws in, I don't know, a curveball, a perspective I hadn't really considered. The Marxist interpretation of Solomon's wealth. It challenges this idea that his riches were just a blessing from God.

It's a more critical take, you know, suggesting that Solomon's wealth wasn't just about divine favor, but maybe about exploitation and inequality. For those who aren't familiar with Marxist thought, how would you explain this in a way that's easy to understand? Imagine it this way: Solomon's kingdom was prosperous, but that prosperity came at a cost. He built these huge palaces, temples, and even a navy, but all that required resources, labor, and yes, taxes.

Marxist scholars would argue that this burden probably fell mostly on the common people. While the elite, Solomon included, benefited the most. So it's not about denying Solomon was wealthy, right? And it's about asking, well, at what cost? Who paid the price for all that wealth? It makes you question that traditional story, you know, of Solomon as this wise and generous ruler.

Was he truly just, or was his reign built on the backs of those less fortunate? It's a question that makes you think, and it challenges us to look at our own societies, you know, at how wealth is created, who benefits the most. It's a reminder that even in these stories about wisdom and, you know, divine favor, there can be these underlying issues of power and inequality that are worth looking at. Absolutely.

It's not just ancient history. It's something we need to think about today, about our own societies, the systems that create wealth, you know, and who's really benefiting. It's a reminder that even in stories about wisdom, about divine favor, there can be these underlying issues of power and inequality that are worth examining.

It's true. But even with all the debate about his wealth, one thing that's clear is that Solomon had this reputation for being incredibly wise. And the lecture highlights this with a story that's become, well, almost legendary, the judgment of the two mothers.

Ah, yes. That's a classic example of Solomon's wisdom in action. The story shows his ability to think outside the box, understand human emotions, and ultimately arrive at a just solution.

It reminds us that true wisdom isn't just about being clever. It's about using your intelligence to serve justice and compassion. Okay.

For those who need a refresher, remind us what this story is all about. It's one of those tales that, you know, sticks with you, even if you only heard it once in Sunday school. So two women, both prostitutes, come before Solomon, each one claiming to be the mother of, well, a living baby.

Tragically, one of the women rolled over on her own baby during the night and, well, accidentally suffocated him. Desperate to have a child, she switched the babies while the other woman was sleeping, hoping to trick her and claim the living child as her own. Wow.

That's intense. How does Solomon even begin to figure that out? It seems impossible to know for sure who the real mother was. It's a classic, he said, she said situation, but with, you know, a baby's life at stake.

Solomon, in a moment of brilliance, proposes something that's, well, shocking at first. Cut the living child in two and give half to each woman. Of course, he doesn't actually intend to do this.

It's a test, a way to see who the real mother is by her reaction. That's so clever. I can imagine people in the courtroom gasping when he said that, but it worked.

Right. It did. The real mother was horrified at the thought of her child being harmed.

She immediately begged Solomon to give the baby to the other woman. She'd rather lose her child than see him suffer. That act of selflessness, that instinct to protect her child, it showed everyone who the real mother was.

It's a story that's, well, both heartbreaking and hopeful. It shows how deep a mother's love is and how Solomon used his wisdom, not just to settle an argument, but to protect the innocent and make sure justice prevailed. It shows a key aspect of Solomon's wisdom: his understanding of people.

He knew how to appeal to their emotions and use their instincts to uncover the truth. That's a valuable skill, not just for Kings, but for anyone who wants to deal with conflict and make wise decisions. It makes you think about how we deal with disagreements.

Do we try to outsmart each other, or do we try to understand what's going on underneath the emotions, the motivations? Solomon's approach, it suggests that sometimes appealing to the heart, it can be more effective than just logic and reason. Yeah. It's a reminder that wisdom is not just about facts and figures.

It's about understanding people, empathy, and finding solutions that work for everyone involved. And as Solomon's fame spread, it wasn't just his own people who wanted his advice. The lecture introduces us to someone who came from far away just to witness Solomon's wisdom for herself: the Queen of Sheba.

Talk about a testament to his reputation. This wasn't someone from the next town over; she traveled from what we think is modern-day Yemen, across deserts and mountains, all to meet this legendary King and test his wisdom with riddles and questions. It was like a pilgrimage.

The lecture points out that Solomon doesn't boast. It's the Queen of Sheba and others like her who praise him. True wisdom doesn't need to announce itself.

It shines through in how you handle challenges, the respect you earn, the impact you have. Makes you think about how we measure success today. It's all about promoting yourself, social media, proving how smart you are.

Solomon's story suggests something different. Let your actions speak for themselves. Let the results of your wisdom, your kindness, your leadership- let that be what draws people to you.

That's a powerful message. One worth thinking about. What kind of legacy are we building? One built on hype or one built on real contributions, meaningful relationships, a commitment to making the world better.

But as much as we might admire Solomon's achievements, the lecture doesn't shy away from the darker parts of his story. It acknowledges that even the wisest King, he can stumble, he can fall. It's a reminder that the human heart, even one full of wisdom, is still vulnerable.

We see this in Solomon's later years. He strays from God, influenced by as many foreign wives. This part always raises so many questions for me.

How could someone who experienced such profound wisdom, divine favor, how could he turn away from the very source of that wisdom? It's like a reminder that even those who seem to have it all figured out can still get lost. And that question has troubled theologians and believers for centuries. Can someone who's truly known God completely turn away? It's a tough one to wrestle with, especially when we think about, you know, our own lives, our own choices.

It's like, are any of us immune to temptation? Can we ever be so sure of our faith that we're beyond making mistakes, straying from the path? It's a humbling thought. It makes me want to approach people, you know, even those who've made bad choices, with more compassion and understanding. I think that's a key takeaway from all this, you know: humility, both in how we see ourselves and how we judge others.

We're all on a journey, and that journey, it's not always a straight line. There will be twists and turns, moments of darkness and light, times when we stray from what we know is right. But even in those moments when we stray, the lecture suggests there's still hope.

It mentions Ecclesiastes, you know, traditionally attributed to Solomon. It reflects this disillusionment with the world, but also maybe a hint of returning to faith. It reminds us that even when we mess up, even when we wander, you know, there's always a chance to find our way back.

Maybe Solomon, in his later years, looked back on his choices and found a renewed sense of purpose, a connection to God. It's a hopeful thought, and it speaks to the power of faith and second chances. But before we wrap up this part of our deep dive, I want to circle back to that theory about Pharaoh's daughter and her possible influence on Solomon's wisdom, specifically the book of Proverbs.

It's just too fascinating to leave unexplored. Yes. The theory that suggests this kind of cross-cultural exchange of wisdom, with Pharaoh's daughter as the bridge between Egyptian and Israelite thought, is an interesting idea; it adds another layer to Solomon's story and makes us consider different ways of interpreting, you know, the Bible.

I'm still really intrigued by this possibility. It suggests that wisdom is not limited to just one culture or tradition. It can be found in unexpected places through unexpected sources.

So yeah, picking up where we left off, that theory about Pharaoh's daughter and the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31- it's not about changing the Bible or anything, but just acknowledging that these texts were written in a specific time, a specific place. And those influences, well, they matter. Okay.

So let's say just for fun that Pharaoh's daughter did have a hand in shaping this, you know, description of the virtuous woman. What clues might we find in the text itself that kind of hint at her Egyptian background? Because at first glance, it seems, I don't know, pretty traditional, like a stereotypical image of a good woman. Yeah.

On the surface, it does seem that way. But if we, you know, look a bit closer, knowing what we know about ancient Egypt, some interesting parallels pop up. For instance, women in ancient Egypt had a much more prominent role in society than in a lot of other cultures back then.

They could own property, run businesses, even hold positions of power. That's pretty different from, you know, the image of women just staying at home, being subservient to men, which is what we often see in ancient texts. Exactly.

And when we look at the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31, we see some of those empowered Egyptian women reflected. She's described as capable, resourceful, entrepreneurial. She manages her household wisely, but she also, you know, engages in business, buys and sells land, and even provides for her family.

She's not just a homemaker. She's a force to be reckoned with. It's like she's running her own little empire.

And the lecture points out that this image fits pretty well with what we know about women in ancient Egypt. They weren't just expected to be, you know, beautiful and obedient. They were expected to be intelligent, capable, actively involved in the world.

Exactly. And if we consider the possibility that Solomon, when he wrote this passage, was drawing on his wife's cultural background, maybe even, you know, paying tribute to her qualities. Well, it adds a whole new layer to the text.

So instead of just a list of virtues, you know, for Israelite women to try to live up to, it becomes this, like, blend of cultures, this recognition that wisdom and strength can be found in women from all walks of life, different backgrounds, different beliefs. And remember, the lecture talked about the similarities between Proverbs and Egyptian wisdom literature. There's a good chance Pharaoh's daughter would have been familiar with those texts, and maybe she shared them with Solomon, influencing his own thinking, his writing.

So it's not just about Solomon, you know, pushing his own culture onto his wife. It's about this potential for exchange, cross-cultural exchange, learning and growing by encountering different perspectives. It's like Solomon, in all his wisdom, he recognized that he didn't have all the answers.

He was open to learning from others, even from someone who came from a different religion, a different culture. Yeah, it challenges this idea that wisdom is like a one-way street flowing from a single source. Instead, it suggests that wisdom is more like a river, you know, fed by all these different tributaries, each one adding to its depth, its richness.

And if we approach the Bible with that kind of openness, who knows what we might find? What other hidden connections, surprising influences? It's like we're peeling back layers of history and seeing how connected everything really is. And it makes you wonder if maybe, just maybe, the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, she's more than just a, you know, model for Israelite women. Maybe she's a symbol of the power of women throughout history, their resilience, their strength, their ability to contribute to society, no matter their background, their beliefs.

It's a powerful message, one that really resonates with us today as we strive for equality and recognize the contributions of women in all areas of life. So as we wrap up this Deep Dive, I think we're left with more questions than answers, but it's not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, I think it's a sign of a truly great Deep Dive.

It sparks curiosity, it challenges assumptions, and it makes us want to learn more. I couldn't agree more. And for those listening, I think the takeaway is, you know, embrace that curiosity.

Don't be afraid to ask questions, to dig deeper, to consider different perspectives, even when it comes to, you know, ancient texts like the Bible. You might be surprised by what you find. And who knows? Maybe you'll discover your own, you know, hidden gems of wisdom.

Yeah. Insights that can enrich your understanding of the world, of yourself, and of how these ancient stories, well, how they can still speak to us across time and cultures. So until our next Deep Dive, keep exploring, keep questioning, and keep seeking wisdom.

It's all around us, waiting to be discovered.