

# Sin and Its Fruit

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 27 October 2024

Preacher: Niels van de Kastelee

[ 0 : 0 0 ] In a moment, Zoe will come up and read. We're in a series on 2 Samuel. Just I thought it's good to say it's a very tough passage. It's a horrific passage. There's sexual violence. There's murder.

Some of those really serious sins like physical violence, abuse. And that can be very tough to listen to. Maybe it reminds people of things that have happened in the past. But it's God's word and I hope we can listen and hear what God has to say to us.

But let's just pray. Our Father, thank you that your word is living and active. It's God-breathed. But it can be tough to hear. So we pray that you would speak to each one of us. Many of us, we find this difficult to listen to. Maybe some of us, there's things in the past and we feel ashamed or we've been hurt.

Or just these things are just show what a terrible world we live in. Father, we pray that we would not be distracted, but we could hear you.

[ 1 : 0 5 ] Would you speak to each one of our hearts? I'm just a man. I just say some words. But by your spirit, would you speak words about the cross, about Jesus, about hope to each one of our hearts?

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Zoe. 2 Samuel chapter 13 we read.

Now Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar. And after a time, Amnon, David's son, loved her.

And Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar. For she was a virgin. And it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimea, David's brother.

And Jonadab was a very crafty man. And he said to him, O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me? Amnon said to him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.

[ 2 : 1 8 ] Jonadab said to him, Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat and prepare the food in my sight that I may see it and eat it from her hand.

So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight that I may eat from her hand.

Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him. So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house where he was lying down. And she took dough and kneaded it and made cakes in his sight and baked the cakes.

And she took the pan and emptied it out before him. But he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Send out everyone from me. So everyone went out from him.

Then Amnon said to Tamar, Bring the food into the chamber that I may eat from your hand. And Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them into the chamber to Amnon, her brother.

[ 3 : 2 6 ] But when she brought them near to him to eat, he took hold of her hand and said to her, Come, lie with me, my sister. She answered him, No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel.

Do not do this outrageous thing. As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.

But he would not listen to her. And being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her. Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater

than the love which he had loved her.

And Amnon said to her, Get up, go. But she said to him, No, my brother, for this is wrong, and sending me away is greater than the other you did to me.

But he would not listen to her. He called the young man who served him and said, Put this woman out of my presence and bolt the door after her. Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves, for thus were the virgin daughters of the king dressed.

[ 4 : 43 ] So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

And her brother Absalom said to her, Has Amnon your brother been with you? Now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother. Do not take this to heart. But so Tamar lived a desolate woman in her brother Absalom's house.

When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. But Absalom spoke to Amnon, neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar.

After two full years, Absalom had sheep shears at Balhazor, which is near Ephraim. And Absalom invited all the king's sons. And Absalom came to the king and said, Behold, your servant has sheep shears.

Please let the king and his servants go with your servant. But the king said to Absalom, No, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to you. He pressed him, but he would not go, but gave him his blessing.

[ 5 : 52 ] Then Absalom said, If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said to him, Why should he go with you? But Absalom pressed him until he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

Then Absalom commanded his servants, Mark when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, Strike Amnon, then kill him. Do not fear, have I not commanded you.

Be courageous and be valiant. So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose and each mounted his mule and fled.

While they were on the way, news came to David, Absalom has struck down all the king's sons and not one of them is left.

Then the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the earth. And all his servants who were standing by tore their garments. For by the command of Absalom, this has been determined from the day he violated his sister Tamar.

[ 6 : 58 ] But Jonadab, the son of Shimea, David's brother, said, Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, for Amnon alone. Now therefore, let not my lord the king so take it to heart as to suppose that all the king's sons are dead, for Amnon alone is dead.

But Absalom fled, and the young man who kept the watch lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, many people were coming from the road behind him by the side of the mountain.

And Jonadab said to the king, Behold, the king's sons have come, as your servant said, so it has come about. And as soon as he had finished speaking, behold, the king's sons came and lifted their voice and wept.

And the king also and all his servants wept bitterly. But Absalom fled and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihad, king of Geshur. Then David mourned for his son day after day.

So Absalom fled and went to Geshur and was there three years. And the spirit of the king longed to go out to Absalom because he was comforted he was comforted about Amnon since he was dead.

[ 8 : 08 ] This is the word of God. Great. Thanks very much, Zoe. Yeah, it's a really tough chapter.

Maybe you're visiting today and you thought the Bible was a nice book about love. And then we have this terrible chapter. Many people object, right? They think, how can Christians believe in the Bible?

How can you believe? You say this is a holy book and then it has such terrible things. How can this book tell you how to live? I mean, it's very obvious that this is wrong, right?

The Bible doesn't say that go and do likewise. That's very clear. No, the thing is, the Bible is real.

The Bible tells us what the world is like.

You look at the world and that's where these things happen, right? There is rape. There is murder.

There are terrible crimes. There is violence and war, right? The Bible isn't just nice, fluffy philosophy.

[ 9 : 06 ] And actually, we need that, right? We see the world. We see everything happening. And then the Bible is just, you know, kumbaya, close your eyes, find your inner peace, and, you know, let's just love one another.

And then you think, this book has nothing to say to me, right? That's the thing. I mean, imagine you're sick and you're coughing and you're coughing up blood. So you go to the doctor and the doctor says, oh, you're fine.

You know, you're the most healthiest person I've ever seen. You wouldn't go back to that doctor, right? He's got nothing to say to you, right? You need someone who actually tells you, well, what's going on?

Of course, you can watch the news and read the papers and then watch the TV and then you will also see what the world is like. Of course, why do we need the Bible? The Bible tells us more. It tells us why and how and what God will do about it. Right? You go to another GP and he does a lot of tests and he says, okay, I can see that you're coughing up blood.

[ 10 : 05 ] Yeah, I knew that. What can we do about it? Right? What's going on? That's what we need to know. And that is why, yeah, we need, yeah, we need the Bible. Why we need the rest of 2 Samuel, actually.

Why the rest of 2 Samuel, it's going to be pretty dark. There's hope at the end. But this, but it tells us what it is. I mean, the thing is, like 2 weeks ago, I preached this, you know, sermon on chapters 8 to 10 and it was all so wonderful, right?

The promised glorious kingdom of justice and peace and everything was so great under this godly king of steadfast love and you kind of wonder, couldn't we have finished there?

Right? And David and the people of Israel and God lived happily ever after. That would have been a nice book. Except that that's not the real world, right?

The people who read this the first time when it was finished later, they knew the kingdom didn't last. It split, it fell apart, it was destroyed and they were out in Babylon enslaved and they just wondered what happened, right?

[ 11 : 10 ] Why are we here? What's going to happen now? What can be done? And that is why it's good that, yeah, the downfall of David is here in the Bible.

That's why we have the rest of 2 Samuel. If you were here last week, you will have heard David, wonderful king and then, well, he committed adultery and murder.

He is here not a nice picture of Jesus, right? He's not, you know, like David and Goliath. No, it tells us about a big problem, sin. If you don't know what sin is, well, sin is wrongdoing.

It's when we go our own way and do what we want and break God's law, don't do what he wants us to live, which of course is good and right and loving. And it's terrible.

I mean, the world says sin doesn't matter. Just do what you want and it's fine. And the Bible says, no, it's not. It's what we're going to see today. Even as Christians, I guess we know sin is wrong, but often we struggle, right?

[ 12 : 12 ] You know there's something in your life, there's some sin but you know, I'm so busy, I've got so much going on, I don't really have time to deal with this, right? Do we really have to? One day I'll die and then I'll be fine, right?

Why should I do something about this sin? Well, we need to listen to God's word that actually sin really matters. We can't just leave it because I guess the first point that's so clear, sin has terrible consequences.

Sin has terrible consequences. It's that simple. It's this hideous chapter. God is never mentioned. It's just godless. It tells you that sin is awful and ugly and has these terrible consequences.

At first, yeah, it is a rape. What's going on, brother and sister? I guess David, he had about 13 wives and so Amnon was the son of one wife and then Absalom and Tamar were children of another wife and yeah, Amnon lost it after his half-sister.

Friends come up with some cunning plan for getting the two together and yeah, he puts it into action. He pretends to be ill, asks his dad, hey, can my sister come and make food for me? And so, yeah, David and those, come on, yeah, sure, why don't you make some food for your brother?

[ 13 : 29 ] And so she goes there, he sends all the servants out, hey, can you feed it to me while I lie in bed, something like that. And she has just no idea, right? She's just being a kind, good sister.

But then, yeah, he grabs her and come lie with me. Verse 12, she answered him, no, my brother, do not violate me for such a thing is not done in Israel.

Do not do this outrageous thing. As for me, where could I carry my shame? As for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel. And ever, please speak to the king for he will not withhold me from you.

But he would not listen to her being stronger than he. He violates her and lay with her. And it's so sad, just unexpected and it suddenly happens and he doesn't listen and it just gets worse that he hates her, puts her out of the room, bolts the door and she's, yeah, and Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore and she laid her hand on her head and went away crying aloud as she went.

Her brother finds her, takes her in. So Tamar lived, a desolate woman in her brother's Epsilon's house. Right, the rest of her life she's now, yeah, living with her brother.

[14:57] It's terrible, right? I mean, what is this story about? Actually, it's not about Amnon, right? It emphasizes this poor girl and what happened to her, how in just a few minutes her life was ruined, her life was destroyed because of this guy, right?

The Bible doesn't often talk about sexual violence, it's very restrained, there's no details at all, but I hope you can, it makes your blood boil, right? This is terrible, this is utterly wrong, it's hideous, the language of violation, it's outrageous, the pain, the crying, it's so strongly condemned and maybe you're here and actually maybe something like this happened to you in the past.

I have no idea what that's like, but I hope you feel that it's an outrageous, terrible thing that happened to you, that's what the passage says, it's the shame, the hurt, God knows, God understands and you had nothing to do with it and it just happened to you and God wants you to know that he knows, he cares and all the past and shame he's taken care of through Jesus and he will bring justice to what happened to you.

God wants you to know that or maybe something like this, actually maybe something like this is happening to you, you know, it's a regular thing now, I don't know, work, family, I don't know, someone you know using force to control you, to make you do things you don't want to do, doesn't have to be sexual, it could be any kind of abuse, I hope you see that this is, that's wrong, you need support, you need to talk to someone about it and actually if maybe, I don't know all of you, maybe there is something happening, thank you, God, God is really against you if you're doing any of this and you need to repent or you'll be condemned forever.

It's not the main point of the passage but it just needs to be said because we don't say it often enough and the second half is no better, right? Absalom, he now hates Amnon because of what he did and he waits two years and he plans and then, yeah, he organizes a party and invites the royal family, David, can you come to my party?

[17:23] Yeah, sorry, I'm busy, I can't come. Of course, Absalom knew that exactly because that was the whole plan. Well, can Amnon come then? Well, does he have to? Well, please, okay.

So, Amnon goes to the party, verse 28, then Absalom commissioned his servants, Mark when Amnon's heart is merry with wine and when I say to you, strike Amnon, then kill him.

Do not fear. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant. It's a cowardly, deliberate murder and you can hear all the responses, right?

Verse 31, that the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the earth and all his servants who were standing by tore their garments. Later, verse 36, and as soon as he'd finished speaking, behold, the king's sons came and lifted up their voices and wept and the king also and all his servants wept very bitterly and the king mourned day after day.

That terrible, the weeping, the mourning because a favored son had been killed. I mean, both parts, it's such an awful picture, right? It emphasizes how wicked these acts are, the terrible consequences, this poor girl mourning for the rest of her life, this family with a dead son and so dysfunctional.

[18:49] what a terrible world. The thing is, these are not isolated incidents. They don't come from nowhere. They have consequences, but actually, the sins themselves are consequences.

I mean, where do they come from? They come from David's sin last week. Right? Because that is what happened. David, he saw a beautiful woman and took her, even though she was married already, had her husband murdered and then God confronted him and warned him of the terrible consequences.

And what did he say in chapter 12? Well, you've killed Uriah with the sword and so, verse 10, now the sword will never depart from your house.

And there will be violence and death in your family as a result. And in a way, that is what's happening now, right? That is what we see in chapter 13. In a way, you even see it from the sins themselves.

Because what do these two sons do? It's basically the same sins as their father, right? David, there was a woman and he wanted her but he couldn't have her, took her anyway and then he had someone murdered.

[ 19 : 58 ] What do we see here? Exactly the same thing. Right? This is like father like son. It's very clear. It's all for David's sin.

It's just, you know, here's David, he influenced his sons and his sons did the same thing as him. As a consequence of sin. It seems a bit weird. Usually we think of the consequences of sin as suffering.

But one consequence of sin is just more sin and more suffering. Right? That's what we see here. These are not lovely boys and it's awful, right?

Look at these chapters and it's not just for the boys, their sons. It's a threat to the kingdom. Because David is the king. This is the royal family. And in chapter 14, Absalom is going to grow really bitter. Chapter 15, he plots to get rid of David. We get a coup. We get a civil war. All of that just from David's sin. Right?

[ 20 : 57 ] It threatens all God's people. It's very clear, right? David, sin affects so many people around you. Many people think, oh, it doesn't matter. I can decide how I live, right?

That's just my thing. It doesn't affect others. No. Right? David's sin affected his sons and then the rest of his family and the whole nation. And maybe you're not the king, but, you know, it will affect those around you.

It will affect your family. Sin affects everything, but especially the higher up you are. Right? If you're a company CEO and you cheat or whatever.

Do you see sin as that serious? Right? Do you see this and think, wow, I'm not living God's way, living our own way, doing what we want. It's terrible.

We're not all as bad at this, right? Don't think there's many rapists and murderers here. Although then again, Jesus says, well, actually, in some way, we're all like that, right? You hate someone in your heart.

[ 21 : 55 ] Jesus says, well, it's like you've already murdered them in your heart, right? In a way, none of us are what we should be. But sin is this serious? Right? Do we believe that? That it's so awful and it leads to suffering and we shouldn't downplay it and, oh, Jesus took care of it.

Don't worry about it anymore. Sin is awful. I guess it makes you want to stay away from sin, right? Maybe this week you're tempted. You're tempted to watch something that you shouldn't watch, tempted to do something you shouldn't do and you're kind of, you're weighing it up in your mind. What shall I do? Let this chapter tell you don't do it and be afraid of the consequences. I mean, ideally we don't want to sin because we love Jesus so much.

But that's not a reality for most of us. We need maybe more basic motivations. Look at the terrible consequences, right? God knows your sin.

You can't hide it. Don't do it. The only thing is, of course, we are sinners, right? Just telling us not to sin is not going to work. Actually, this chapter has more to say, right?

[ 23 : 09 ] Stopping sinning is not a solution. Rather, there's a deeper point. Sin has terrible consequences but not always. When not? Well, when is sin so terrible?

If it is not dealt with. Second point. Sin is terrible if it's not dealt with. If it's not dealt with, it will grow, it will fester, it will cause more damage.

And that is the problem here with David. Because how does all this play out? Well, David doesn't do very much. So, after the rape, verse 21.

When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. But Absalom spoke to Amnon. That's all David did. David, he was very angry. Now, that's good, but you'd expect a bit more, right? He was a rapist. He deserves the death penalty. He's the king. He should bring justice and righteousness. This guy should be executed. But David doesn't do anything.

[ 24 : 10 ] He's just angry, but he doesn't do anything. Right? Maybe, probably because it's his favorite son and he doesn't want to do anything to his favorite son. If he had done something, then that murder wouldn't have happened and all the rebellion after that, all of those things wouldn't have happened.

But David didn't do anything. So, Absalom took matters in his own hands. Afterwards, yeah, after Absalom's murder, Absalom runs away, right? He flees to his mother's family abroad. And what does David do? He does nothing. It's not very clear, verse 39, the spirit of the king longed to go out to Absalom. Yeah, to go out to do what?

To reconcile or to get him and arrest him? That's not clear, but you read chapter 14. Well, David does, he's really fallen out with Absalom. But again, he doesn't do anything.

I mean, he could have shown mercy, right? Absalom, I'm really sorry. I should have done something after what happened to Tamar. I didn't. So, even though it was vengeance, hey, I forgive you.

[ 25 : 13 ] The rest wouldn't have happened. Or, he could have said, yeah, sorry, I know what Emlyn did was wrong. You can't take vengeance. He should have done something.

He didn't do anything. In chapter 14, we didn't read it, but basically, David keeps doing nothing. Right? I mean, chapter 14, it ends with the return of Absalom.

All the way at the end, verse 33, then Joab went to the king and told him, and he summoned Absalom. So, he came to the king and bowed himself with his face to the ground before the king and the king kissed Absalom.

It looks, okay, Absalom is back, it's all fine, but it's not. This chapter covers five years and Absalom and David, they don't speak. Absalom is hiding.

Joab, the general of David, he sees that as a problem, right? It's not good for the kingdom if the heir of the kingdom is somewhere else and what if something happens to David? So, he tries to get David to accept Absalom again, but David doesn't want that, so Joab does some scheme.

[ 26 : 19 ] Basically, it's a bit like Nathan the prophet. He sends some woman to come up with a story and this woman comes to David and says, oh, king, I've got this problem, I have two sons and one killed the other and he fled away and now I don't have an heir.

Okay, I understand the problem, he can come back. Nothing will happen to him, you swear, nothing will happen to him. Oh, but king, you have two sons and one of them killed the other and he's, hmm, did Joab send you?

Oh, king, you're so wise, yes, yes. Okay, tell Joab Absalom can come back. But David needs to be persuaded and even then, he doesn't actually have Absalom back because Joab is happy, brings back Absalom, but then 14 verse 24, and the king said, let him dwell apart in his own house.

He's not to come into my presence. Yeah, I don't want to see him. He's back, but I won't see him. And so Absalom lives in Jerusalem for two years and he grows more and more bitter.

And verse 32, why have I come from Geshur? It will be better for me to be there still. Now, therefore, let me go into the presence of the king. If there's guilt in me, let him put me to death.

[ 27 : 33 ] Right? Do something, David, and either, yeah, either forgive me or if I've done something, kill me, but do something. Don't leave it like this. But that's the whole problem.

Right? So for, in the whole, all of this, these two chapters, David is passive. He does nothing. For seven years, all we read about him is that he sits on the throne and people push him and those kind of things.

He does nothing about the sin, about the consequences. He just sits there. And that's the frustration. And I think that's the point, right? And that's why David nearly loses the kingdom because Absalom, he's grown too bitter.

He will plot a rebellion. It's not just his sin with David and Bathsheba. Yeah, he initially repented and he was forgiven, but his heart was not yet right.

Right? You can see that his heart isn't what it should be. He doesn't have the same view of sin anymore that he used to have. He leaves it. I'm not saying I know what he has to do, justice or mercy for Absalom, but he had to do something, but he did nothing.

[ 28 : 42 ] And it festered and it grew worse and worse and here's the result. I think the message is clear, right? Sin needs dealing with. Sin, you can't just leave it.

It will just get worse. You need to do something, either with mercy or with justice, but something needs to be done about it or it will just get worse. Right? And that's the rest of the book.

God is going to deal with David's sin. He is going to deal with his heart and he's going to suffer. But this chapter says why. Look at what happens if you don't do anything. It's a bit like some of those advertisements you sometimes see on the MTR and they want to tell people, don't do drugs, stop doing drugs.

Right? You see an addict lying in the gutter and basically the message is you don't want this, right? So stop it. Do something about it. Something needs to be done and that is this chapter, right? You know, sin needs to be dealt with. Illegal drugs, they're terrible. Don't do anything. Sin is terrible. Deal with it. On a human level, I think we know that, right?

[ 29 : 50 ] If there's a conflict in a marriage or in a church or something, well, if you just leave it and you don't talk about it, it will just get worse, right? It will just, people will grow bitter, it will just get worse.

You need to do something. Either forgive or confront but do something about it or it will just get worse. Right? That's an obvious application. Yeah?

I know that's hard but leaving it is worse. Parenting. I think it's very easy to be like David, right? Your child does something wrong and the only thing you do is be angry and you shout and that's it. You don't actually discipline. You don't actually talk about it. Well, this chapter says what's going to happen is just going to get worse. You need to actually do something about it, right? That's difficult. It's easier to just shout and leave it but you need to do something otherwise it will just get worse. But I think ultimately this chapter is not on a human level, right?

[ 30 : 50 ] Think about the original readers. Why did the kingdom fall? Why does God need to restore it? Well, because sin needs to be dealt with. There's no other way.

Look what happens if sin is not dealt with. So I guess that's, you want to accept that, right? You can see from this chapter, man, sin needs dealing with. You can't just leave it.

You need to do something. God needs to do something. Again, you go to another GP and finally he tells you, well, this is wrong with you and the prognosis is not good but you can do this medicine or we can do this surgery and that will solve it.

And you don't want that but yeah, you listen to the prognosis. Okay, I want to do something about it. Right? Okay, yeah, I accept it. We need to do something. And I think that's the point here.

Accept that God needs to deal with your sin. I guess that can happen in different ways, right? I guess one obvious way. Accept it when God addresses your sin.

[ 31 : 53 ] Right? God, he loves us. He wants us to change. He doesn't want us to leave us like this. But the thing is, we need to change. We don't just need forgiveness. We need heart change.

And so God will speak to us. God will address us. So maybe you're reading your Bible every day and the same sin just keeps coming up. What do you do?

It's easy to close your Bible and don't listen. Or maybe someone in your CG speaks to you because they've noticed something in your life and they want to talk to you about it. I guess if you see this chapter, you think, man, okay, I know this is hard and I know I'm too busy.

I don't really have time, but man, sin needs dealing with, right? So I want to listen. I want to be humble. I want to seek repentance and change because this really matters, right?

You can accept it. Sin needs to be dealt with. Accept it when God disciplines our sin. Right? Sometimes we don't listen and so God has to mess up our life a bit.

[ 32 : 55 ] He has to make us feel the consequences so that we will hopefully turn away. It's easy to get bitter. God, why are you messing on my life? That's for a good thing, right? God wants to turn you from your sin.

He wants you to be free from this. He wants you to come back to him. So that's what he's doing. Will you listen? Will you accept it and listen? Though ultimately, thirdly, if people don't listen, accept it when God judges sin.

Right? Sin needs dealing with and God, he's not going to leave the world as it is. He's not going to leave any of our sin as it is. Same with Absalom.

I mean, Amnon got what he deserved. Absalom is going to be punished. It's a tough truth. Right? Judgment. We don't like it. It's sobering.

It is embarrassing to talk about, but we have to accept it, right? Because you see chapter 13, and again, you want something to be done. Right? You see what happened to Tamar and you want justice.

[ 34 : 00 ] Right? You want it. We know the world needs to change. And for God to just leave the world as it is, all the sin, all the violence, and just leave it, that'd be wrong. And so God is going to do something.

But yeah, the thing is, it affects all of us. All of us hurt other people. No, we're not as bad as these guys, but in so many ways, we hurt other people.

And so I just read this. Oh yeah, I deserve judgment. We all deserve judgment. And that is the problem, right? Because we know judgment is good. We can see it here. It needs to happen. At the same time, we want mercy. How can we have that? How, because some people asked me that last week. You know, it seems so easy for David. He was forgiven. Shouldn't he be punished for what he's done? Well, the thing is, on a human level, a human king can only do one thing. David could show mercy or judgment, but not both.

[ 34 : 59 ] But God did something amazing. He sent his son to die on the cross. And actually he, as we've been singing, he took the judgment that we deserved.

Our sin was judged. Justice was served. But it fell on Jesus. And that is how the cross works. The cross is not just a symbol that God loves you. Something happened there. Our sin was judged, punished, crushed. And that is what we need. So sin happens. And God is just and merciful. Sin is punished, but we get mercy. That is the beauty of the cross. And we need that, right? If you're here, and you're not a Christian, you're visiting, I hope you see how serious sin is. And that judgment needs to happen. But, what are you going to do with your sin? And Jesus says, come to me. I'll pay for it. I'll take care of it. I'll deal with it.

[ 35 : 59 ] Come to me, and be free. And if you have that, as we just sang, right? Jesus, thank you. It doesn't make you thankful. Yes, our heart still needs dealing with.

God needs to address our sin. And sometimes we will face the consequences of our sin. Our sinful decisions and terrible things happen to us. But how about the eternal, huge judgment consequences of our sin? They've been taken care of. Jesus took that for us. And that makes you so thankful, right? And then you can listen to God. You can, if God wants to deal with your sin, if he wants to address you, you will listen to him, right? Because you can trust him. Because he loved you so much. He did this for you. And not just us here, right? There's many people outside, and Hong Kong has lots of problems, right? People are hopeless, and unemployed, and stressed, and overworked. Biggest problem, they're sinners, and God is going to come and deal with sin. And then, yeah, the only way for them to have mercy, is if they hear about Jesus, and respond to him.

[ 37 : 07 ] Hey, isn't that worth sharing? Again, this is not a comfortable passage. It's not an easy passage. It's dark. It's bad news. But that should lead us, to the good news.

So let's just reflect for 30 seconds, and then I'll pray, as the music team comes up. Let's pray. Father, Father, we see this chapter, and we see that the world is not what it should be. We are not what we should be. And we know that's a problem. We see that's something you need to deal with. Thank you that you are good and just, and you will deal with sin. But thank you so much that you did that on the cross, for those who trust in Jesus. And if we come, if we trust in him, yeah, we will not face what we deserve. Make us thankful. Make us joyful, even, that this terrible thing has been dealt with, that you are now working in our lives, to change us, to turn us away from sin, in your love.

[ 38 : 42 ] Help us to see your love, in the midst of this darkness, that we would turn to you. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.