

2 Samuel 13:1-39 | “Family Feud”

*Preached on October 9, 2022 by Pastor Matt Brown*

Turn in your Bibles to 2 Samuel 13. *[pause]*

Every family has issues.

I have yet to meet one family who hasn't experienced some sort of family drama, either in their immediate or extended family. *[pause]*

For some of you, whenever you have a family reunion or holiday gathering, you are wondering, “OK, is there going to be any drama this time?”

If a certain person shows up, or if a certain topic is brought up, you know something is going to go down. *[pause]*

Is Uncle Mark going to bring up politics again this year?

Is my nephew going to get under the skin of his cousin once again?

Is grandpa going to say something offensive?

Is grandma going to get upset at somebody and do the silent treatment? *[pauseeee]*

Every family has some sort of conflict at some point, and many of our families are messes. *[pause]*

This certainly isn't a new phenomenon, for we will see today that even King David's family was a mess, as they had major issues. *[pauseeee]*

In 2 Samuel, we recently went over David's sin of adultery and murder, and we read about how there were consequences for his sin.

Well as we look at 2 Samuel 13, we see those consequences start to play out in full color.

**Look down at verse 1. *[READ VERSES 1-14]***

Here we are introduced to 3 of David's children.

If you remember, David has many wives, and so Amnon and Absalom are actually born to different women.

You have Amnon, who is his first-born son, and Absalom is his third born son.

And we find that Absalom has a beautiful sister named Tamar, and Amnon loves her. *[pause]*

So right away, we are told something that should not be: Amnon loves his half-sister.

You see, Amnon knew that the Old Testament Law was clear about how you could not be with your sister,<sup>1</sup> so this caused him to be love sick over her, for he couldn't be with her.

Kinda weird right? Yea, that's the point. *[pause]*

**So what's going to happen?**

Amnon's cousin, Jonadad, hears of why he's so haggard and comes up with a plan where Amnon pretends to be sick to be alone with Tamar.

So the evil scheme goes as planned, and tragedy ensues when Amnon takes advantage of this situation by grabbing a hold of Tamar, and telling her to sleep with him.

Yet Tamar puts up a fight, first with her words. *[pause]*

She gives many solid reasons why Amnon shouldn't do this to her.

First, she points out what he would be doing to *her*.

**He would be violating, humiliating, and disgracing her.**

If he really loved her, would he do such a thing to her? *[pause]*

The next reason she gives to him is how "outrageous" it was of what he planned to do.

It was something that's not done in Israel, for it was such an appalling, wicked, disgraceful thing.

By saying this, she was trying to get him to come to his senses to see the wicked nature of his intentions. *[pause]*

Thirdly, she explains what the social consequences would be.

**She would have great shame, and carry it with her everywhere, and he would be considered a wicked fool.**

No longer would he be seen as a young, promising crown prince, but he would be looked down upon with disgust.

**Did he really want that for her and for himself? Did he want to ruin *both* of their lives?** *[pause]*

And then I believe that her final reason was said in desperation in order to get out of the situation.

She states that if he asks the king, he wouldn't withhold her from him. *[pause]*

I don't believe that he actually would, for as the Law stated, brothers and sisters couldn't be together.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Leviticus 18:9, Leviticus 20:17, and Deuteronomy 27:22.

Yet sadly, after all of these well-founded reasons, Amnon foolishly and wickedly does the unthinkable - he rapes his sister. *[pause]*

He wasn't thinking through his actions, as he was driven by his desires rather than what was right.

Sounds a little like David with Bathsheba, doesn't it?...Seeing, taking, and being with someone he shouldn't be with, using his power for evil.<sup>2</sup>

Like father, like son. *[pause]*

What's going to happen next?

Let's find out in verse 15...*[READ VERSES 15-19]*

As soon as the sinful act is done, Amnon goes from quote-on-quote "love" to hatred.

Why? Because this wasn't truly love, this was lust.

And as soon as he gets what he wants, he wants nothing to do with her.

He knows that what he did was wrong, and the sight of her is like a mirror reflecting back to him what he has done.

So he sends her away, and treats her horribly, not even calling her by name, but says, "Put *this woman* out of my presence and bolt the door after her."

She's like nothing to him, and Tamar takes this hard. *[pause]*

Now for many of us, Tamar's response to being sent away doesn't make any sense because we think that for us, we would want to leave as soon as possible to get away from him.

But I want you to put yourself back in this time period and in Tamar's shoes.

Back in this time, if a woman was no longer a virgin and she wasn't married, she was essentially tarnished and not many men would want to marry her, if any.

So her future was bleak, and even if you look at verse 20, it tells us that she ends up living with her brother Absalom as a desolate woman. *[pause]*

Her life was ruined, and especially for a woman back in that day to not get married and have kids was one of the worst things to happen to you.

So because of this ruining of a woman's future by sexual assault, the Bible actually added in a way for a woman to have a future. *[pause]*

---

<sup>2</sup> See 2 Samuel 11.

The Old Testament Law in Deuteronomy 22 says that if this happens, the man was to pay her father money, and then take her as his wife, and he could never divorce her.<sup>3</sup>

So her future as a wife and mother could be secured. *[pause]*

This is why when Amnon sends her away, he's basically saying, "I don't want to be with you ever," and that meant that Tamar's shame was permanent and her future wrecked.

So she tears her robe and leaves sobbing. *[pauseeee]*

But will all of this remain a secret, or will people find out?

People find out, for just look at verse 20...*[READ VERSES 20-22]*

Absalom hears what happens and tells her to be quiet about it.

He doesn't do this to sweep it under the rug and never deal with it, but rather, as we will find out, he does it so that he can get revenge in his time and in his way. *[pause]*

And then her father finds out and what does he do?

You would think the great, godly King David would stand up for his daughter and execute justice for her, but he doesn't.

He rightly gets very angry, but then he does *nothing*. *[pause]*

This family is a mess!

There's rape, now there's animosity, and injustice, what else is next?...Murder.

Verse 23...*[READ VERSES 23-29]*

Absalom gets his revenge two years later.

He sets it up that Amnon is with him and their brothers at this festive sheepshearing event, and that's when he strikes.

He tells his servants to wait until Amnon is drunk, and so they do, and they kill him.

The rest of Absalom's brothers flee because they are probably thinking that Absalom is out to get them all. *[pauseeee]*

So Absalom has finally gotten his revenge, and he does it by making someone drunk and then killing them.

Sounds like David, who got Uriah drunk to try to cover his tracks, and then later he killed him.

---

<sup>3</sup> See Deuteronomy 22:28-29.

Like father, like son. *[pauseeee]*

In the next little section, David hears a report that all his sons are dead, so he becomes distraught.

Yet we find that it's a false report, for only Amnon is dead, as Jonadab comes back onto the scene and tells David not to worry. *[pause]*

Finally, the rest of David's sons show up, and David is relieved, yet still upset over the death of Amnon. *[pauseeee]*

So this family has rape, injustice, and murder happen in it, and now finally estrangement as Absalom flees and lives with his grandfather for three years.

And you thought your family was bad! *[pause]*

What else does this chapter show us but that...

### **I. Sin is atrocious and ruinous.**

You can't help but read this chapter and be thinking, "This is a mess! Sin is horrifyingly wicked!" *[pause]*

You see, the Bible is realistic, it doesn't sugarcoat reality.

It shows us the utter depravity of mankind and the appalling results of sin. *[pause]*

In fact, the Bible shows us the grim reality of the world even more accurately than our culture does.

Our culture will say, "There's good in everyone," and be utterly shocked when horrible crimes happen, and yet they act like the Bible is the irrelevant one.

No, we know where this sin comes from and the extent of how bad it can get. *[pauseeeee]*

This chapter also shows us that there are consequences for our sin and it impacts others.

David's sin of adultery and murder impacted his family, as he's seeing his sins repeated in the behavior of his sons. *[pauseeee]*

Sin is also seen as outrageous and foolish.

Sin causes us to not consider the consequences, but to only be driven by our immediate desires.

It causes us to do the unthinkable, and leads to regret. *[pause]*

Amnon received a small amount of pleasure, but absolutely wrecked his own life and the life of Tamar.

Was it really worth it? *[pauseeee]*

When we let our sinful desires drive us, it's a recipe for disaster.

So this should motivate us to fight sin even more with God's help.

Ask God for help, and think through the consequences.

Is the temporary, fleeting pleasure you get really worth it to ruin your life? *[pauseeee]*

Many people believe that they are thinking straight when they give into sin, but they aren't.

Sin twists things and causes us to not think straight. *[pause]*

Amnon *thought* he loved Tamar, but his love was synonymous with mere lust. *[pause]*

This is actually what our world tries to push on us.

It bombards us with images and inappropriate things, and tries to deceive us into thinking that that will bring us satisfaction and that is true love - but it's a lie. *[pause]*

There's a number of TV shows that demonstrate this.

They may put the word "love" in the title of the show, but it's anything but love, for it's merely a bunch of people looking for the wrong things and only driven by shallowness.

It's trying to teach you that love is only sexual desire, lust, and attraction. *[pause]*

Just consider the popular shows, "The Bachelor" and "The Bachelorette".

The shows are meant to bring two people together to find true love and get married.

But the shows are just rampant fighting among contestants, and are driven by a predominance of sexual attraction. *[pause]*

*The New York Times* even wrote an article back in March of this year that said this....

"According to the numbers, perhaps unsurprisingly, that "process" — a weeks-long mass courtship in front of cameras that is meant to end with a proposal and, presumably, a marriage — is not very effective at yielding long-term relationships."

It goes on to say that there are only 6 couples who are currently married, and that is out of 44 combined seasons of the two shows.<sup>4</sup>

That's only about a 14% rate of effectiveness, yet our culture is drawn to shows like that, looking for "true love" and being duped into thinking that this is what love looks like. *[pauseeeee]*

That is further proof that God's definition of love only brings satisfaction!

---

<sup>4</sup> Blumberg, Perri Ormont. "How Married 'Bachelor' Couples Make It Work. Yes, Some Are Still Together." *The New York Times*, 30 Mar. 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/30/style/married-bachelor-couples.html>.

It's sacrificial, committed love that wants the best for the other person that truly lasts. *[pause]*

Amnon didn't have that for Tamar.

Instead, his sin hurt himself, but more importantly, his sin hurt Tamar. *[pause]*

He ruined her life to please himself.

In that moment, he was the only one that mattered as his desires became his master...

...And yet so many people are duped into following the world's values of loving yourself and doing what you want to do above all. *[pauseeee]*

When our sinful desires rule, others are hurt. *[pause]*

Recently, we witnessed Hurricane Ian come through and hit Florida pretty badly.

And we saw the pictures and heard about the stories of hurt and ruin left in its wake, as people died and buildings were toppled.

Well that's what sin does in people's lives.

It flies in like a hurricane and in the aftermath there is great hurt and wreckage. *[pause]*

You don't think that your angry words hurt your spouse?

You don't think that your nasty attitude towards your kids affects them?

You don't think that someone who gossips in a church hurts others and ruins lives?

It truly does and often sin leads to division. *[pause]*

That's what Amnon's sin did in David's family.

We saw the fruit of his sin, which was: animosity, bitterness, resentment, and conflict, so much so, that it led to revengeful murder. *[pauseeeee]*

Anytime that sin is let go, there will be division.

You may have seen this in your family.

This can happen in a church or in a friendship.

And ultimately, there is estrangement, like Absalom being estranged from his family. *[pause]*

Family members no longer talk to each other, friendships are broken, relationships marred beyond recognition.

Sin creates a wedge in between people if it's never dealt with. *[pause]*

And all of this leads to sorrow.

We grieve what was lost and what's ruined, as we walk away like Tamar, life torn up, and crying aloud as we go.

Or we grieve the bitter results of sin, as we lay on the floor like David in great sorrow. *[pause]*

**What a miserable thing that sin is! It corrodes as it goes.**

Truly, to turn away from God's ways wreaks havoc, so deal with sin right away!

**Fight it! Resist temptation, turning to God for help!**

Don't let sin's lures deceive you, for it's a trap that looks like a delicious meal, but once you bite down, its poison spreads. *[pauseeeee]*

So we see in this passage how sin is atrocious and ruinous, but what do we see with God?

*Now God isn't really talked about in this chapter, yet reading between the lines, we see that...*

## **II. God is faithful and gracious.**

Consider how God is faithful to His Word in this passage.

**He promised David that the sword would not depart from his house,<sup>5</sup> and here we see the sword at play with the killing of Amnon. *[pause]***

The Lord's promises always come true, even the ones that aren't pleasant to us. *[pause]*

**This reminds us to always take God at His Word.**

If He promises an outcome, we must be aware of that, and take it to heart.

**When He shows us the right way, we are to follow that way. *[pause]***

This is important, especially when he talks about eternity.

**Jesus' words about Hell are not jokes or empty threats - they will come to be for those who reject Him.**

Since God has said that all who do not believe in the Son of God are condemned already, then that is 100% true.

**But the good news is that He has also said that all who believe in the Son of God are not condemned, and that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.<sup>6</sup> *[pause]***

---

<sup>5</sup> See 2 Samuel 12:10.

<sup>6</sup> See John 3:16-18.



What God says will be, will be.

He's always faithful to His Word - so trust His Word and see it for what it is - the truth. *[pause]*

Clearly, God's faithfulness to His Word is shown in this chapter, but there's more faithfulness and love in this passage than at first glance. *[pause]*

Think about whose family this is - King David's, and they are an utter mess.

I mean, this is the king of Israel's family, who is supposed to be a model for the people, and they have more drama than a daytime soap opera. *[pause]*

But now zoom out a little bit from this chapter to see something.

Back in 2 Samuel 7, God promised David that he would build him a house, and he would establish his kingdom, so that even one of his descendants will have an eternal throne.

So get this: even though God's faithful to His Word about the consequences of David's sin, God is *also* faithful to His Word about His promise of blessing to David. *[pause]*

What I mean is this -- even though David's family is a complete mess, God's promise of David's kingly line wouldn't falter!

David's sin and the sin of his children wouldn't ever completely cause God to go against His promise.

Solomon was still alive - he wasn't killed by Absalom, so the promise was still alive! *[pauseeee]*

I want you to listen to this: God's love is not extinguished by the darkness of sin.

Even amid our great sin, His loving promises move forward.

Even though we, God's people, are messes - His love won't leave us. *[pauseeeee]*

Just think of how God still loved David after all that he did with Bathsheba and Uriah.

Just think of how God still promised to use David's line, even though he knew that some of his sons would commit rape and murder. *[pause]*

God's love is truly remarkable; it's extraordinary.

How many of us would have given up on David and his family by this point?

Yet God's love endures and goes on, even amidst this sin-caused wreckage. *[pauseeeee]*

So also, God's love in choosing us and still loving us amidst all of our sin and shambles is extraordinary.

Even through every failure, every weakness, every sin - God still loves us and wants to use us!

Why? Because God is so *faithful and loving*.

He shows us what true love looks like!

It's not lust, like Amnon.

It's not revenge, like Absalom.

It's not passivity and injustice, like David.

Instead, it's active and sacrificial love like Jesus Christ, who died for us, while we were still sinners.<sup>7</sup> *[pause]*

If Christ was like Amnon, then in selfishness he would have abused us, and thrown us to the side after getting what he wants from us.

If he was like Absalom, we would have already been killed in revenge for all that we did to Him.

And if he was like David, he would have sat back and did nothing.

But he left Heaven, laying aside all his rights, and came to die, even a death on the cross!<sup>8</sup>  
*[pause]*

*Undeniably, we see that...*

**Our sin is atrocious and ruinous, but God is faithful and gracious!**

This chapter shows us that even King David and his family were not the hope of Israel, instead, there was a coming One, who would be perfect - Jesus Christ. *[pause]*

He's our only hope for salvation.

Only He is the sinless, perfect Leader that we need.

Only He is the One who could bear our sins upon the Cross, and rise again, defeating death.  
*[pauseeeee]*

You see, we are rightly upset about what happens to Tamar, and we want justice done...

Yet how much more serious and horrific is the fact that we each have sinned against the One and only good, perfect, and holy God?

Now that's injustice!

Yet out of love, God has sent Jesus to forgive us and for justice to be done by him paying our penalty. *[pauseeeee]*

---

<sup>7</sup> A reference to Romans 5:8.

<sup>8</sup> A reference to Philippians 2:5-8.

Our sin is atrocious and ruinous, but God is faithful and gracious!

Now that's good news.

So in all of your sin, weakness, and failure - run to the throne of grace, which God the Father sits on, and you will find mercy and grace in time of need.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> A reference to Hebrews 4:16.