

## The Ambassador God Uses

### 2 Samuel 11-12

#### Introduction

When I was in college I thought about a career as a Foreign Service Officer. Foreign Service Officers work at American embassies all over the world.

The head of each embassy is called an ambassador. Ambassadors are the highest-ranking representatives of their governments in the countries in which they serve. Ambassadors are granted the authority to speak in that country on behalf of the President—and by extension, the American people.

In a moment, turn to the person next to you. Take a guess as to how many ambassadors the US has to foreign countries right now.

Here are some clues: There are approximately 196 countries. We don't have ambassadors for some countries, like North Korea. Some smaller countries may share an ambassador. Some positions are vacant. Okay, now turn to the person next to you.

Here's the answer: Right now, the US has 188 ambassadors to other countries.

**[Transition]** In God's kingdom, in God's eyes, every person who places their faith in Jesus Christ is an ambassador, an ambassador of Jesus Christ. This is true whether we are 7 or 107, it's true whether you are married, divorced, or single.

As ambassadors, we are called to further God's plan of salvation. God's plan began in Genesis 3:15 and it continues today. God calls us as ambassadors to act and speak in ways that bring people into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

We all want to be a part of what God is doing. We want God to use us to further His plan. We know God want to use us but when we look at our lives, we also know we sometimes struggle to follow God. We make mistakes. We follow our own plans. We SIN.

The question in our minds changes from "Does God want to use me?" to "Will God use me?"

**[Focus]** What kind of ambassador of Christ will God use to fulfill His plan of salvation? Who does God use to further the gospel? This morning we are going to look at a time in King David's life that answers that question.

**[Set the Stage]** When David was alive, God had one primary ambassador: the king of Israel. The king was the primary instrument through which God fulfilled His purposes. Israel knew this and had a desire to know what kind of king, what kind of ambassador, God would use.

David was Israel's second king. Israel's first king was Saul. Saul as an ambassador also, but God stopped using Saul after he sinned—for what we might consider lesser crimes than those we will soon discover David commits.

**[Preview]** It's in the context of David's first failure as king that we discover what kind of ambassador God will use to fulfill His plan of salvation.

**[Passage]** To find the answer to that question let's open our Bibles to the book of 2 Samuel...It's in OT between Joshua and Kings...2 Samuel chapter 11.

**[Movement]** As the story opens, King David sends his commander, Joab, and Israel's army to fight the Ammonites. Operation Besiege Rabbah is successful. David, however, remains home—sidetracked with his own plans to attend to.

**[Read]** Read with me verse 1

**[Transition]** King David's plan begins to take shape.

**[Movement]** He wakes from his afternoon nap. He takes a stroll on the palace roof. He looks around the city. As he looks toward Uriah's house—make no mistake, he knows where Uriah lives—he sees Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, bathing on the roof. David sends a servant to confirm it's her. Confirmed. David's plan is very common among ancient kings: Assert authority over a possible rival by sleeping with his wives. David has Bathsheba brought to him. He sleeps with her. He sends her away. But there's one problem: She's pregnant.

**[Read]** Verses 2-5

**[Transition]** With Bathsheba pregnant, our ambassador-king finds himself in an unexpected predicament. How is he going to get out of this?

**[Movement]** Our worst fears are realized: David resolves to murder Uriah through "legal means." His first strategy: entrapment. David calls Uriah back from battle. They talk about the war then David says, "Hey, Uriah, go enjoy some time with

Bathsheba.” Marital relations are strictly forbidden in wartime. If Uriah complies, he is liable to receive a death sentence. Uriah leaves, and David’s plan looks like a success until we learn of Uriah’s integrity. He sleeps not with his wife, but in the servant’s quarters.

**[Read]** Verses 6-9

**[Transition]** David is 0-for-1 but he has another plan.

**[Movement]** The next day David again tries to persuade Uriah to go see Bathsheba. Uriah responds in the way a military veteran would appreciate: “Absolutely not. My men are living in tents, fighting for the Lord. I would never do that.” David responds, “Ok, but let’s hang out tonight and have a good time. I will send you back tomorrow.” After partying the night away, Uriah sleeps in the servants’ quarters.

**[Read]** Verses 10-13

**[Transition]** David is now 0-for-2. Now David decides to try a different tactic.

**[Summarize-Without-Reading]** David sends Uriah back to the battlefield with a note. Uriah doesn’t know it, but it’s his own death warrant. In the note David instruct Joab, to put Uriah on the front lines and then pull his me back, ensuring Uriah’s death. David’s *plan* succeeds.

**[Read]** Verses 26-27

David’s cover-up is complete. His image is intact.

Yet we are left to wonder, “*Is this the kind of ambassador God will use to fulfill His plans?*” Someone who abuses his power, covers his tracks and gets away with it? Where is God in all this? Let me assure you, God has seen what happened. He is not happy. Look at the end of verse 27: “But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.”

**[Summarize-Without-Reading]** God sends Nathan the prophet to confront David. Nathan tells him a parable-in-disguise: “Hey David, I have a story for you. I want to get your thoughts on it. There are these two men, one is rich and the other poor. The rich man has everything. The poor man has nothing except a little lamb. He loves the lamb. He treats it like family. One day, the rich man welcomes a visitor. However, the rich man doesn’t want to feed the visitor from his own flock,

so he steals the poor man's lamb. He cooks it and feeds it to the visitor. David, what do you make of that?" (12:1-6)

David is furious at the rich man. He condemns him. His behavior is outrageous.

**[Explain-As-You-Read]** Let's pick up at chapter 12, verse 7: "Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"

**[Movement]** Nathan continues. "David, this is what God says to you: *You are my ambassador*. I made you king. I anointed you with the Spirit. In return, you spurned My grace. You despised My word. You murdered Uriah and took his wife as your own.

**[Read]** The second half of 12:7-9

**[Transition]** It's at this point we discover *what kind of ambassador God will use to fulfill His plan of salvation. We discover who among us God will use to further the gospel.*

**[THT]** We discover that God will use any ambassador to fulfill His plan of salvation. He will use us to further the gospel, even if we've gotten sidetracked by sin, if we repent—if we will turn back to Him. But keep in mind: Sin brings discipline.

**[Movement]** We see this as David responds with *repentance*, and Nathan assures him of God's forgiveness. But *discipline* remains.

**[Read]** 12:13-14

**[Explain]** David did the one thing that Israel's first king, Saul, would not do: *repent*. He gave a half-hearted apology, but David *repents*. God forgives David which implies *God will still use him*. But he cannot escape God's *discipline*.

**[Summarize-Without-Reading]** Soon God's *discipline* hits home. The child is born. David pleads with God but on the seventh day, the child dies [12-15-23]

**[Movement]** God surprises us. God goes beyond implying that *He will use His ambassador*, King David, to further His plans. He proves it. Solomon is born, the one who *fulfills* the next step in God's redemptive plan. Israel, like us, can have confidence *God will use a sinful, sometimes wayward, ambassador like King David, to fulfill His plans.*

**[Read]** 12:24-25

**[Summarize-Without-Reading]** In the verses that follow, God demonstrates His willingness to use us again, as He empowers Israel to complete its victory over the Ammonites [12:26-31].

**[Transition]** We have a great God, do we not? Our hearts should be filled with joy that we can have confidence that God *will use us*. We can get down on ourselves. We can feel like we are the only one we know with our particular struggle. Yet, God's *willingness to use us* is less about which *sins sidetrack us* and more about our willingness to own up to them. To *repent* and return to Him.

It is also a good reminder that God *disciplines* us because we are His children and He loves us.

**[Buy]** Some of us may feel, "I'm glad to know that when I fail to trust God, He will use me to *further His plans*, if I return to Him. The problem is, I don't know if I can trust God, if He *disciplines* people the way He disciplined David. That's scary."

I'm with you. It would be frightening if God *disciplined* everyone like that. The good news is this passage doesn't suggest, or even hint, that God would *discipline* us in the same way.

David was a unique person in a fairly unique situation at a different stage of *God's plan of salvation*. God sees the big picture, and sometimes He acts in ways that are impossible to understand.

God knows you, too. He knows your unique situation. He cares for you—deeply.

**[Review]** We have seen this morning that *God will use us, His ambassadors, to fulfill His plan of salvation, but sin brings discipline*.

It takes a lot of work and money to become a United States ambassador. I doubt any of us will have the opportunity to become a US ambassador, but everyone here under the sound of my voice are invited to become an ambassador of Christ. No special skills are required. Only a willingness to repent of your sin and place your faith in Jesus Christ. If you have not yet entered into a full-time faith commitment to Jesus Christ, do so today.