

Westwood Baptist Church *Grounded. Growing. Going.*

Worship Guide for February 4, 2024

Sermon Notes

The Hound of Heaven Catches the King

2 Samuel 12 (pew Bible pgs. 263-264)

*Fear knew not how to evade as Love knew only to pursue. Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace, Deliberate speed, majestic instancy, Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat— 'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter in Me.'*

Francis Thompson shares his own personal story in the poem *The Hound of Heaven (1890)*. Thompson studied to be a priest, but never finished. He studied medicine, but flunked out of medical school. He joined the military, but was let go after one day. Eventually he became an opium addict, was homeless and struggling to survive in the darkest parts of London. But he couldn't get away from God's persistent love for him.

The Hound Of Heaven is a beautiful poetic picture of the God who never gives up on his own. Our merciful God wills and works to ensure that nothing sustains us, nothing satisfies us, nothing shelters us when we are foolishly running and hiding from God.

While not to the extreme as we saw last week, every earth-bound disciple goes through the battle we saw in David's life - the battle he lost and lost badly – the battle against fleshly desires and the will to be autonomous. We also lose those battles, and we go through those times and seasons where God seems far away from us; where his grace is just a word from a song; where his mercy and love seem to be absent from our life – missing from our world.

In 2 Samuel 12, David is in one of those seasons. He is in that dark place where sin takes us. It is by God's grace that he is visited by Nathan and through that encounter comes to the realization of where he is away from God, of who he is as a sinner, and of who he is as God's beloved son. In a passage where David is sending men to fight, sending men to take another man's wife, sending to have that man killed, and sending to lie and cover up to hide the mess...God is the one who sees it all, declares his disdain for what he sees, and *sends* his prophet on a mission of mercy to save David from himself and his sin.

A Restless & Miserable Man (Ps 32:3-4)

Our Relentless & Merciful God (2 Sam 12:1)

A Revealing & Crushing Parable (2 Sam 12:1-7)

The Real & Costly Consequences (2 Sam 12:7-12)

A Repentant & Forgiven Man (2 Sam 12:13-15; Ps 32:5, Ps 51:1-12)

A Rescued & Restored King (2 Sam 12:16-31)

Life Group Preparation Guide

"Let the *Word* of Christ *dwell* in you(all) *richly*
teaching and *admonishing* one another in all *wisdom*..."

- *Colossians 3:16a*

Focus #1: GOD

1. What does this passage reveal about the character or nature of God?
2. What does this passage reveal about God's eternal plans and purposes?
3. What does this passage reveal about how God interacts with his creation?

Focus #2: ME

4. How does this passage reveal sin in my own mind, heart, or life?
5. In what ways does this passage help us to see how we need to be aligned with God's will?
6. What is one tangible and measurable way that the Spirit is leading me to respond to his Word?

Focus #3: OTHERS

7. What is one truth that I can share meaningfully with someone, and with whom?
8. How can I specifically encourage someone or everyone in my Life Group from this passage?

Three contributions (reflections, questions, observations, etc.) I plan to include in our next Life Group discussion:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Westwood Staff

Gerald Hodges: Lead Pastor
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FEBRUARY

4 CentriKid Camp Deposit **DUE**
9 Membership Class @ 6pm
10 Sportsman's Banquet @ 6:30pm
17-19 Student Winter Retreat
23-24 AHG G.R.I.T. Lock-in