

Sermon 10.21.18 Pastor Jordan Gades 2 Samuel 11:1-5, 26-27; 12:1-9

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Oh boy, it's the story of David and Bathsheba. Is this why people don't like the Old Testament? Bloodshed, lust, coveting; People sinning in just all sorts of horrible ways. Heroes are built up and yet are still just sinners thinking that they are above the Law. This type story is where the best soap operas get their material. Intrigue and lies. There is some deep troubling things here. A lot we just don't want to have to talk about, even today. Probably because they are too relevant still.

Today it's a mirror that is held up to our own lives. David is that perfect hero. That messianic figure. The embodiment of God's covenant with God's people. Might and invulnerability made incarnate. The shepherd king who faced down lion and bear and stood against Goliath. The king who won a hundred battles and made the Promised Land safe. The savior king of God's country who at the height of all his power and glory, still fell into deepest sin.

The mirror that is held before us isn't one saying we coveted, or we lusted, or that we murdered (though we probably done all three of those by Luther's standards) but rather that you too need to repent. In all of David's career he is blessed. God is with him. God never leaves his side. And David knows that. At every step he's thanking God and Praising God and giving God the credit. He keeps the Law. But even for David, the lowly shepherd, the stout warrior, the sturdy disciple, this power eventually goes to his head and he sin's and he sins and he sins.

We tend to follow that same trend. And by "tend" I mean we follow that trend to the letter. But, we try to follow the law, both those given by our earthly authorities and also those given by God. Sometimes we do an ok time of it. Things start going well and we think that it's all us. We think we are doing such great things. We start reflecting back and thinking we have succeeded at work, in our families, in the public eye. How great are we! And then we think since we are doing so great, we should get special privileges.

For David, those special privileges manifested itself in several ways. David should have been with his armies, but he wasn't. That's where the leader was supposed to be. Another way his supposed self-importance came to bear was by demanding a woman, one of his loyal serving subjects, to come and lay with him. There has been this common trope for who knows how long about calling Bathsheba a harlot and enticing David. But we never get to hear her side of the story, which kind of matters a lot considering the circumstances. From everything we do know she was taking a ritual bath that the law demanded and the king saw her and called for her. What kind of choices does she have? Did she want to go to see him? Did she want what happened next? So much pain followed. And maybe it could have avoided. But it wasn't. All because David let his pride get ahead of himself.

Great news right. But there is still some news in the story of David after this. Because David was a good disciple and good leader. Because David cared about living in Law of the Lord. Because David listened to Nathan when he was told that what he had done was so wrong. Slept with Bathsheba, killed Uriah, abused what God had given him. David repented. David took this fact that he had done wrong to heart and wholly repented.

Psalm 51:

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;  
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.  
17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart  
you, God, will not despise.  
10 Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
11 Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.  
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

There is the part of the Law which we don't like. The part that corrects us. The part that accuses us rightly with what we have done wrong. The part of the Law that brings us back to God. Because in the knowledge that we have sinned we come again to the awareness that we need God. Come again to the knowledge that God never left our side. Come again to lean into this loving embrace that we are freely given.

Freely given. But so it may not seem that way to us. Us, who over and over again go through this process. It's exhausting. We lose faith. We lose the ability to bounce back. We lose the ability to take the critique that sets us back on our way to God. And if we lose that that critical point, this pivot, this point where Nathan comes to David and says he did something wrong. If at this point David didn't believe him or said I am above the law. Disaster happens. Pain and suffering happens. Injustice happens. We are all subject to the law equally. We are all subject to sin equally. And we are all subject to Mercy equally. It is Never beyond our grasp. The freedom of forgiveness through our God.

And so the story of David and Bathsheba goes on in each and every one of our lives. This story of injustice and correction, repentance and forgiveness. This story of God's redeeming action and God who is with us, working for our good all the time; every time. No matter what. Amen.