

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Des Moines, WA June 14, 2015

2 Samuel 11:26-12:10,13-15

Repent

Hymns: 186 – *Thy Word* – 256 – Closing: 190 v. 1,2

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

²⁶ When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. ²⁷ After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.

12: ¹ The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³ but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

⁴ "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

⁵ David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."⁷ Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. ⁹ Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

¹³ Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.

¹⁴ But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die.

¹⁵ After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill.

Introduction:

The burn of sour nervousness was making it hard to look comfortable—not guilty. His shoulders seemed too heavy for him to do anything but slump as he walked next to the shopping cart with his mother. "It was just a dollar," he thought, trying to convince himself that she wouldn't mind anyway. But then she asked him, "Where were you a couple minutes ago?" So he answered her quickly, "Oh, nowhere." He shrugged as he said it as though that would make it seem like it was truth. "Well, I saw you go over to the front of the store. What were you doing over there?" So he tried to make it seem even less harmless and injected a half truth, "I just went to get a soda but it wouldn't accept my dollar." But her next question ripped away any chance of getting away with what he had done. "Where'd you get a dollar from?" "I...I uh...I took it from your purse when you weren't looking." And now he was pinned to the wall. The sensation in his stomach grew ten-fold as he awaited the response. "Why would you do that? You just wait till we get home and we'll see what your father has to say about this." Great thought the boy—life is over. The shopping was finished too soon and the ride home went too quickly. Unfortunately when they got home, his father was awake earlier than usual, too. But after talking with his parents and confessing to stealing the dollar and apologizing once more, his parents forgave him. Sure, he still was sent to his room with a sore backside but that was it. It wasn't brought up ever again. It was gone. In fact, I'm not sure my parents even remember that story. But that's the first thing that came to my mind when I read the account of the prophet Nathan rebuking David.

Confession is never an easy thing for us. We often try to avoid it and hope that it will go away on its own. We see that attitude displayed by David as he tried to cover up his sins of adultery and murder. But God's call came to him just as it comes to us: Repent! And we discover with David that, although the confession is painful, God's forgiveness is soothing.

I. Confession is Painful

As you listen once more to the first portion of our first lesson, keep this question in mind: Does David look familiar? (Read v.26-12:6) So what does he look like? For starters, he's a great cover up artist. To give you a little background: Uriah's wife was Bathsheba. David had had sex with her while Uriah was out fighting in a war for his noble king. When she became pregnant David called Uriah back home in the hopes that he would lie with his wife and then it would be thought that Uriah was the father. But Uriah would not spend time with his wife. In an act of camaraderie, he withheld himself from anything his brothers in arms could not have during battle. So when that failed, David sent him back with a letter to give to the commander, which essentially ordered Joab—the commander, to make sure Uriah died in battle. Joab was obedient and Uriah died. So now, pure as an angel, David waits for the proper mourning period to end for Uriah's wife and then takes her as his own. And no one was the wiser.

Yes, David took her into his home and all was well. His sin was as good as gone. For all anyone else knew, Bathsheba had merely conceived and had a premature child, a son, for the king. But Scripture is clear on the fact that David had not covered his sin from everyone. "But the thing David had done displeased the Lord." So the Lord sent Nathan to David.

When Nathan arrives he tells him the story of a rich and poor man. The rich man has many flocks and cattle and the poor man has only a small ewe-lamb. It was his closest companion and grew up with his children much the way you would picture a loyal, lovable, family dog. But listen now to what Nathan says happened to that poor man's friend and what David's reaction was. (verses 4-5) What does David look like now? A hypocrite? You bet! Without blinking he passes judgment on the rich man and does not for a second see the parallel that has been drawn to himself.

I ask again: Does he look familiar? He should. He should look extremely and uncomfortably *too* familiar. Because he looks just like you and I look. We fancy ourselves to be great cover up artists. That great question: If a tree falls in the woods and no one's there to hear it does it make any noise? Well, I don't know about trees and noise; but if no one sees me sin then it can't be a sin. If no one gets hurt where's the harm? Where's the trespass? And if someone attempts to pry into our life, well, we all know that little white lies aren't all that bad. So we can go on as though all is well. If all my neighbor or friend or spouse sees is a saint, well then surely I must be one! But our parallel with King David isn't through yet.

Sure, no one might come to us like Nathan went to David and ask for our judgment, but that doesn't mean we can't give it. I can gossip and slander about others, but how dare they talk about me?! And it's perfectly fine for me to admire the opposite sex but my significant other dare not even hint at infidelity. It was not without reason that Jesus tells us to take care of the plank in our own eye before admonishing the speck in our brother or sister's. That's exactly what we do! But God's words cut right through everything.

Transition: When we stand up in haughty, self-righteous judgment of others, his law cracks right down and says, "That's exactly what you yourself do!" We are condemned by our own mouths just like David as Nathan says to him, "You are the man!" We are the ones who have despised God's word. We are the ones who deserve death. The cover has been pulled off of our sin and our guilt. All is not well as we had imagined. Judgment has been passed. But this time it's not the flimsy judgment that we like to pass on each other. This time it's the perfect judgment of our perfect God. Completely broken by that judgment we can say no more than David said: "I have sinned against the Lord!" And as we sit there in our shame, our guilt—our sin, we hear something so utterly amazing, so comforting—so soothing to our pain. It's as though the weight of all the world had just been lifted from our shoulders. You hear in Scripture the same words David heard: "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."

II. Forgiveness is Soothing

Nathan was pointing David to the promised Messiah, the one who would remove the curse of eternal death from God's people. You and I are pointed to the same. The only difference is that we have the words of that prophet made more certain because we have heard with our ears and seen with eyes of faith all that Jesus, the promised Messiah did for our Salvation. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, who takes away your sin, who takes away my sin. That is the forgiveness which prompts tears of overwhelming joy, tears like that of the woman in our Gospel lesson who wept so much at the feet of her Savior that she washed his feet with them. "Go in peace," Jesus told her. Nathan offers the same peace to David and to you and to me with the words "you are not going to die."

That is the greatest peace you can have. You are not going to die forever. On the contrary, through faith in Jesus you will live! In this world you will live *for* your Savior as you share that news of peace with others. Not condemning them for what you see them do, but turning them to the same Savior who saved you from the same sins! And in eternity you will live *with* your Savior God as you forever thank and praise him for all the kindness and faithfulness he has

graciously shown you. You have peace with God right here, right now!

That's important to remember so that you don't confuse consequences of sin with the permanent judgment of God. As a result of his sin David saw the child Uriah's wife bore to him become sick and pass away. But this was not a mark of God's eternal judgment against David. Nathan assured him it was only a consequence. His sin was taken away. He would not die eternally. Our sins have consequences, too, some worse than others. We might sometimes like to jest about lighter issues that "oh, God's just paying me back for this or that." But let's be careful not to take that into issues involving sin. If I lie to a close friend and lose that person's trust for a long time, if not for good, that is only an earthly consequence of my sin of lying. The judgment of God against that sin was carried out on the cross when Jesus nailed it to the wood with his hands and feet. God's verdict for you and for me is "not guilty." When you receive his body and blood listen to his promise. This is for you for the forgiveness of all your sins. That eternal punishment you're worried about because of some consequences you're facing right now: forget it. I have taken it away. You are not going to die eternally!"

Conclusion: Let David's ordeal then be both a lesson and a comfort to you. Confession won't ever be an easy thing to do. That is quite simply how we are as imperfect human beings. We are afraid to admit our failures and shortcomings. But when the time comes for you to turn to God and confess, don't let that fear keep you away from your Savior. Turn to him and confess. For no matter how great your offense or how heavy your burden, with the Lord there is forgiveness. Jesus has taken away your sin. You are not going to die!