

## Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

July 7, 2019

Christ the Rock Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Farmington, New Mexico

**2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:10,13-15** 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** 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 must 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 all 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 shown utter contempt for the Lord, 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.

### "The Pieces of An Implosion"

On the outside, things looked great. He was an all-star. A small town kid who came from humble roots, showed extraordinary bravery, managing to maintain amazing levels of humility as his success and popularity grew. Throughout his rise to the top he never wavered in his integrity. He never compromised his principles or lost his morals while he conquered enemies. But it all came crashing down and all that was left was flaming wreckage, like a sports car driving dangerously on mountain roads. David's rise to become king of Israel and spread out prosperity captures imaginations and spawns legends. But it came down suddenly, at least from an outside perspective, in a dramatic implosion.

It was almost 5 years ago that our world lost the comic genius of Robin Williams. His movies made us smile and his comedy spread contagious joy. But what none of us he only knew him by his performances could see was a deeply troubled man. Beneath the surface, underneath all the antics, Robin Williams was not what he appeared to be. It had been months since David's implosion had begun. But on the outside, things still appeared great. Beneath the surface, things weren't ok, sin was eating away at David. Sin undetected and unaddressed leads to absolute ruin. Nathan came to show God cared enough about David to confront his sin.

Let's back up and take a look at what led to this tragic downfall. Let's identify three key components of David's implosion: 1) Isolation; 2) Boredom; 3) Pride

Let's take a look at isolation first. Isolation itself doesn't seem so bad. Some of us really appreciate our time alone, precious as it is. But if we look at the beginning of 2 Samuel chapter 11, we see some clues about David's isolation. 2 Samuel 11:1 starts out: **"In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel."** This is simple, but key. It was spring time when kings wage war. It was spring for David, but he was not on the battle field. He sent Joab, his best commander and most trusted advisor, away from the palace. Joab was the kind of friend who was willing to challenge David. He wasn't intimidated by the aura surrounding him or his royal power. If we keep reading in 2 Samuel we see Joab is more than willing to question David's actions when they would damage the kingdom (2 Samuel 19) or come from a place of sinful pride (2 Samuel 24).

David should have been more dedicated to God, more grateful, more energized to serve God's people because of all the blessings he enjoyed. But instead, peace and prosperity became dangerous. People who would have confronted him and been brutally honest with him weren't around the palace or the capital, they were out doing the things David should have been doing.

Then when we keep reading in 2 Samuel 11:2, we see how that isolation took a darker turn: **"David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house."** Doesn't sound so sinister, does it? But basically David was allowing his boredom to get the best of him, looking for something more, not being satisfied

Think about it this way. Unfaithfulness in marriage doesn't usually start with a desire to destroy a family. It begins with dissatisfaction over what God has given you. Then it shows itself in befriending that old flame from high school on social media or letting your browser gravitate toward models and celebrities no normal person can really imitate or watching a few too many home remodeling and home decorating shows that highlight a home environment outside your reach. Simple boredom, right? But at the root of unsatisfied boredom is a contempt for God. Thinking someone else, something else, some better experience can satisfy you in the way God currently isn't.

David could have reversed course. Not just that he could have been out on the battle field with his commanders and troops. He could have seen Bathsheba on that roof and turned

away, the way we need to turn the channel when impure thoughts rise up in us when we watch certain programs. He could have come down off the roof the way we need to turn off the computer or put down the phone when we start coveting what we can't have on our screens. He could have taken the hint of his messenger who came back to him telling him she wasn't just an object, she was Bathsheba; she wasn't just someone to satisfy his lust with, she was the daughter of Eliab; she wasn't just one half of two consenting adults doing what they want in the privacy of their own homes, she was the wife of Uriah. But there was something that prevented David from reversing course and plunging straight toward his own implosion. Pride.

If you want to see what pride looks like, just review the story Nathan told to David. This rich man Nathan told David about had so much. He never would have noticed one sheep or the reduction of one side of beef from his vast livestock herd. But he couldn't bring himself to see a slight reduction in his riches, so he deprived his neighbor who was barely scraping by of his most cherished possession. There is irony in this parable is that David rightly shows righteous anger because this wealthy citizen showed no pity. But the Bible uses the same term that caused him to deprive his neighbor. The rich man literally pitied his own animals more than he pitied the poor man. He thought so highly of his own possessions that he had no regard at all for the neighbor next to him.

Entitled feelings toward what you want. Ingratitude over what you have. Failure to properly appreciate God and his holiness causes us to lose a sense of feeling. We just stop caring. Pride shows itself in hypocrisy. Notice how easily David was able to spot the injustice in Nathan's story? How appropriately he showed moral outrage and holy indignation? It was easy for him to spot in someone else, but he was blinded from seeing it in his own life.

Justice, vengeance, and fairness are all concepts that appeal to us. We cheer when the bad guy gets it. We smile when the Nazis are defeated on screen or when the murderer gets sentenced in the news story. We love to see justice served. Except when the finger is pointed at me, at you, at us. When Nathan says: **"You are the man!"** (2 Samuel 12:7)

We like to play what if games. What if I hadn't into that car accident? What if I had moved to Phoenix and taken that high paying job? But there is another species of what if we need to ask about our own spiritual lives. What if we had gotten away with it? What if no one called us out on our sin? David had continued in his sin for 9 long months. He had gone almost an entire year without repenting. What if his affair with Bathsheba had never been discovered? What if God had allowed him to continue living under divine judgment without coming clean? What if his eternal salvation had stayed in jeopardy? What if God hadn't cared enough to do something about his spiritual implosion?

We looked at the key components contributing to David's implosion. But the verses we have here today show us how to pick up the pieces after an implosion. Here are the three key ingredients: 1) Humility; 2) community; 3) Dependence

It's so easy to see when someone else deserves retribution. But it takes incredible humility to realize justice should be turned against me. Nathan came to David and helped him gain

some clarity on the situation by telling him the story about the rich man and poor man. When David could clearly grasp the injustice, Nathan didn't hold back. He looked straight at David, pointed his finger, and delivered the knock out punch: "**You are the man!**" (2 Samuel 12:7) And David, to his credit, didn't offer excuses. We hear no reasons for his little mistake. No qualifiers for bad behaviors. No justifications for what he had done wrong. Just a simple, clear admission of guilt before God. A rebellious heart acting out against God. It takes humility to confess like David. But there will never be any picking up the pieces without it.

Christianity isn't a single player game. It's a team sport. God gathers you into a community of people who believe what you believe, who hold to the same biblical standards, who are guided by the same principles so we can work together. God gives you people who will be honest with you and speak the truth to you for your own good.

Who is your Nathan? Who is that person who isn't too intimidated by you to tell you the truth? Who is more concerned for your soul than worried about hurting your feelings? God puts you into a community of faith so you can have someone who cares about you enough to confront you with your sin. God doesn't want to play the what if games with your soul. He wants you to be aware of the dangers of your isolation, boredom, and pride. He gives you fellow Christians who can be honest, brutally honest if necessary, to warn you about your soul's eternal danger. God places you into a church so you have a group of people who have faith enough to tell you not to follow your own heart, don't do what feels right. God gives you community for your good. You are that community for spiritual welfare of your brothers and sisters.

Humility and community are key components in picking up the pieces after an implosion. But the one key piece is dependence. When David confessed his sin, Nathan was able to announce immediate pardon and unconditional forgiveness. No exceptions. No strings attached. God's grace in Christ is the sinner's only solution.

The more God's people grow in faith, the more we see confession as a staple of our Christian life. Confession of sins isn't just an entryway into faith that we leave behind as we get deeper into the truths of the faith. Confession isn't just reserved for the great and scandalous sins that threaten to bring us down. We grow in faith and continue to struggle with sin. As we live more under God's grace and closer to his Word, we see the presence of sin in our lives more clearly and develop a greater degree of comprehension for God's holiness. Daily, constant, regular confession gives us a new heart toward God.

That new heart isn't possible by trusting our feelings or following our hearts. It's only possible through death. Putting to death our own hearts filled with our pride and desires to be satisfied in our way and impulse to be left to ourselves. Dead to sin and alive in Christ. Alive because of a God who cares enough to be honest and confrontational. Alive because God's own Son went to his unfair execution for you. Alive because Jesus took on himself all the sin that leads to eternal death. "**The LORD has taken away your sin,**" because he put it all on Jesus. (2 Samuel 12:14) Alive because Jesus didn't let sin and death have the last word. Alive because Jesus defeated death to give you life.

Dependence on God is the goodness you can't find anywhere else. For all your restless wandering, depend on your God who's love to you is infinite. For all your flirtations with what you feel entitled to in life, depend on God who satisfies you with eternal riches. Depend on your God who rewrites your story of tragedy and turns it into triumph. Your gracious and forgiving God picks up the pieces of your implosion. He brings you the best gift, a lifelong and even infinite relationship with him. Amen.