

Sermon *Our King David, Ourselves*
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God-infuse this text and my words with your Holy Spirit so that we may hear and learn something new about you. **Amen.**

One of our greatest Presbyterian traditions is confession...corporately confessing sin and faith. We even have a book full of our confessions of faith...The PC (USA) Book of Confessions that preserves the confessions of Christians from over two millennia.

Each Sunday we worship God through our corporate confession of sin and our affirmation of faith. Some people criticize corporate confession in worship as a mood killer, too traditional and rigid, and unfair for those that hadn't sinned enough to require confession.

But the beauty of corporate confession of sin is that we are also confessing what we believe together with our faith community. By confessing our sin, shortcomings, and brokenness to God we are also confessing our belief in God...God's power, God's righteousness and most importantly, God's love, mercy, and grace.

Today we used a portion of Psalm 51 to corporately confess our sin. This psalm is, like many others, attributed to David, King of Israel and it was penned after his affair with Bathsheba. Now, let us delve into the precursor of this prayer as we listen for the word of God found in 2 Samuel 11: 1-15.

The bottom line is: David's actions reported in 2 Samuel 11 were SINFUL, WRONG, and HURTFUL to God and others. He used his power as king to take advantage of a woman. He used his power as king to manipulate a sticky situation. He used his power to evade responsibility. And he used his power as king to take another human life.

Sometimes when I read the Old Testament, I am shocked at the content...our faith story seems to read like a trashy novel or soap opera. Yet, how many similar stories have we heard from our own world in the past few months: South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford's disappearing act earlier this summer, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's relationships with young female escorts, the prominent church leaders across the globe that have recently fallen into sexual temptation?

The other day my friend, Emma, reminded me that if you take away all the fancy-schmancy theology of the Old Testament what you have left is a very human narrative about real people living real lives and trying their best to follow God. Much like the way we at Columbia Pres are real people living real lives and trying our best everyday to follow God.

And although the story of David's sin we heard today is a very matter of fact account, it does tell the story of a real person like you and me:

- A person who was chosen by God at a young age to lead the nation of Israel.
- A person who was anointed with oil even though he was the youngest and most undesirable of his brothers.

- A young boy who stood alone against the brute Philistine Goliath and defeated him.
- A young man whose circumstances placed him in the household of the king who he would one day usurp.
- A man who grew to love King Saul and his family...to even marry Saul's daughter. A man that was pursued by Saul to the death but survived and did indeed become the King of Israel.
- This real person...David son of Jesse and King of Israel...was a former shepherd boy and a musician who enjoyed a close covenantal relationship with God.
- Through all of this, David wasn't perfect, but he did strive like most of us in this room to do the right thing, to answer God's call in his life, and to maintain a strong relationship with God.
- And then he royally screwed up...And after his initial misstep involving Bathsheba, the great King David continued along a messy path of sin.
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David panicked when he realized that he had lost control of the situation. After he called Bathsheba to his house, his entire household was surely whispering quietly in the corners about the King's actions...but it was when Bathsheba's pregnancy was discovered that David realized that it would be no time at all before all of Israel knew what had happened...knew of his sin...knew that he conceived a child with a married woman...a woman married to one of his top soldiers.

At first, David tried to manipulate the situation in order to produce evidence that Uriah could be the father. When that didn't work David resorted to purposely taking the life of another human being.

This whirlwind of a story from 2 Samuel 11 reveals exactly how sin works...

It begins as a temptation and leads to destruction of human life...it begins with lying to God and leads to refusing to acknowledge God's power and presence in our lives. Most importantly, it ends with us believing that we are in charge and in control of our lives and not God.

By the end of this sinful turn of events it seems that David has completely forgotten about God. What happened to the man who composed songs of praise to his God? What happened to the man that praised God in humility saying, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?"

Friends, what happened to David is what happens to all of us when we do not trust God to be in control of our lives. It is what happens when we stop pursuing a relationship with God. It is what happens when we fail to bow down in humility before our Almighty God. **David's story is our story.**

Just as David was anointed with oil as God's chosen, we have been claimed in the waters of baptism and called children of God. God has a calling for us in this world just like there was a plan for David.

But...inevitably we will mess up because we are human. We will get too confident. We will spin utterly out of control and bring pain and suffering to other human life. And we will for sure fall deep into the trenches of sin and forget about God.

In fact, we probably have already done of all these things at least once in our lives...maybe even once every day. Our sin has and will manifest itself in many forms:

addiction...gossip...manipulation...lying...murder...theft...mistreatment of others...sexual misconduct...abuse of power. Despite all of this we CANNOT forget the rest of David's story...

After David's whirlwind of sin, the prophet Nathan rebuked him and brought him to his senses. It's like David suddenly snapped back into reality...he admitted his sin and then composed a psalm to God.

This is the Psalm that we prayed aloud earlier this morning as a community. We confessed to God our personal sin: "For I KNOW my transgression and my sin is ever before me." We also confessed to God our belief in his righteousness and great mercy and love: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions."

Friends, today's scripture lesson about David shows us ourselves: Our sinful nature, our brokenness, our tendency to think of ourselves as better than God. And David's story also teaches us how to REPENT and how to CONFESS.

Confession is a powerful thing...it is what makes us Christians with the confession JESUS IS LORD. We cannot hide from God and we cannot escape our humanity. Confession is the key to living faithful lives worthy of our calling as children of God. And confession is ultimately what makes us human...by acknowledging our sinfulness, our brokenness...our deep need for God's grace, mercy, and truth that comes in the form of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.