



“Dynasty – UriahGate

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
Saturday and Sunday, August 4 – 5, 2018

All Services

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2 Samuel 11:26-12:13a; John 6:24-35

Grace and peace be to you from our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

I don't know about you, but every single week I have so many decisions that I have to make, ethical choices, responsibilities to carry out in all areas of my life. Just this past week I had to decide if I going to let my college age daughter keep the kitten that she found on the side of the road or was somehow was this cat going to be in my house. I met with a member of our congregation and encouraged him to participate more fully in leadership in the life of our congregation. I met with another member of our congregation who was struggling with a health care decision. And then on Monday I had to make a decision do I go to the Steelers training camp even though it's threatening to rain. I decided to stay home and then at three o'clock the sun came out in Latrobe Pennsylvania, a beautiful day there. It never ends, there are always choices to be made, important choices in different areas of life: family, relationships, church, work, prayer, exercise, marriage, food, clothing, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, values, priorities. What do we do? Should we even try, maybe it would just be easier to go home and turn on Netflix and watch dystopian, end of the world, alien invasion movies all day?

But to be human is to be confronted with ethical decisions and morality. Ethics is what helps our life be beautiful, purposeful, righteous and good. Ethics is nothing less than a life livable in peace, justice, and the love of God.

Nobel laureate Albert Schweitzer said *“Ethics, too, are nothing but reverence for life. That is what gives me the fundamental principle of morality, namely, that good consists in maintaining, promoting, and enhancing life, and that destroying, injuring, and limiting life are evil.”*

In our reading from 2 Samuel today, we see part two of last weeks story of Bathsheba and King David. Last week we heard that kings go out into battle. . . except David who decides to lounge around on his roof in the Palace. His Palace sat high above the rest of the city, a sign not only of his authority, but also responsibility, and his protection of his people. But we heard in that story that David saw Bathsheba and decided to “take her” and to violate her and then to cover it up and finally on his orders killed Uriah, her husband. What's amazing about that story to me is the complete lack of moral reflection from David. We see one sin leads to another, desire leads to adultery or

worse, which leads to coverup, which leads to murder, which leads to an uncovering an accusation and finally busting of David.

It's Uriah-gate well before all of the other gates that we know about, Iran-gate or Travel-gate, or Deflate-gate, or even the original Watergate. And in this gate, we see the ugliness of human sin. We've seen it before in kings, in elected officials, sports figures, movie stars, producers, even pastors and priests and other good Christian people. David did it in the words of a former president, because he could.

Or in the words of Walt Disney's young Philosopher/Poet/King, Simba from *The Lion King*:

<i>Oh, I just can't wait to be king?</i>	No
<i>one saying – do this</i>	
<i>No one saying -be there</i>	No
<i>one saying -stop that</i>	No
<i>one saying -see here</i>	Free to
<i>run around all day</i>	Free to
<i>do it all my way!</i>	

Sounds Like David, Doesn't it? Sounds like us.

David has let betrayal and violence loose in his household and family and in the household of Uriah; and like so many sins. . .when you let them loose, you may not be able to get them back into their cage.

The thing that David had done displeased the Lord, and David's method of enlightenment would be the prophet Nathan, that same prophet who was David's "Yes Man" only a couple of weeks before with the building of the temple. He becomes the one to confront the king which was always a very difficult proposition. Prophets who took it upon themselves to confront kings risked losing their lives and sometimes they did. But Nathan decides to offer this to David as a learning moment for his king, rather than confronting him directly, instead he offers the parable much in the same way that Jesus would do thousands of years later.

It's a story of a rich man who takes a sheep from a poor man and David who is used to being judgmental and offering pronouncements, steps in with righteous indignation – "As the lord lives", he says, "The man who has done this deserves to die." And in a moment of supreme drama, perhaps the best dramatic moment in all of scripture, Nathan, perhaps with his finger extended points at David and says. . ." You are the man."

Nathan declares that David has despised God's word. If you think about the Ten Commandments, David has probably broken about four of them, coveting, stealing, adultery, murder, just to name a few. In the Torah the Law of the Bible there were particular expectations and restraints on the king. And by breaking them David has undermined his moral authority, he is nothing less than a hypocrite whose crimes deserve death!

God loved David, but he hated what David had done. God does not turn a blind eye to our sin. Sometimes people these days say it doesn't matter God will loves us anyway, we can do whatever we want.

But David doesn't find that it works that way. Because God loves him, God judges him and lets him know it.

Like a parent who feels betrayed by a child's behavior, God launches into "after all I've done for you David! Why David? Why?"

How do you respond when confronted with your sins? Do you make excuses, (oh, I didn't mean to), or place blame, (well I got such a bad rap from society?) Do you ignore it, (well I don't care), do you argue, (not me), or do you acknowledge it (I have sinned against the Lord)? That's what David does.

Ethical behavior begins with self-reflection, looking in to your own self, your own thoughts, and beliefs and actions, and seeking to learn and to grow from your mistakes. Reflection leads to discernment, and discernment leads to deliberation. In other words, turning thoughts into action, shaping how you live your life, not just what's the next thing that you're going to do.

To an Israelite confession means facing and acknowledging the facts. "I have sinned against the Lord!" David says.

And there is no such thing as personal sin, individual sin that doesn't touch another person, sin touches everyone.

When a CEO gets greedy sometimes we find our whole country going into recession. When a husband or wife commit adultery, two families suffer. When a drunk driver gets behind the wheel, lives can be destroyed, and when people buy drugs in America, there are children dying in shootouts in Mexico. How many other examples can you think of?

We are in a relationship with each other. We are connected like a web, when there is movement on one end it sends a wave to the other. We are human beings in relationship with a living and a loving, and a demanding God. We cannot be Christians on Sunday and then non-Christians the rest of the week.

What you think, what you say, how you act matters to God and to the people who are around you. And if left to ourselves, our human nature with unrestrained desire and lust for power, the world, our lives, would be an absolute and complete mess! But God won't put up with it. And we see through history the fall of those who try to get away with it. Sin has consequences as David experiences firsthand.

But, God also has mercy on David, and God has mercy on us, because that after all is in God's nature. May we turn from our sin and live to God. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

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