

You Dirty Son Of Death
II Samuel 11:26-12:10, 13-14
Trinity Lutheran – Kearney, Missouri
June 16, 2013 – Fourth Sunday After Pentecost



In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. What a great text for Father’s Day? We have David stealing a man’s wife, getting her pregnant and then killing off the husband. I can think of few other texts better suited to Father’s Day. Hey, what reading should we pick for Father’s Day? I know. Let’s pick part of the story of how David, as a father, messes up his whole family for years to come. That sounds great. Well, this text wasn’t picked for Father’s Day so I guess the folks who did the choosing have a good excuse for this coincidence. However, I am the one who picked this text for our sermon—mostly because I’m a bit ornery and like the irony. I find it interesting that oftentimes the texts chosen do have a way of fitting into Father’s Day or Mother’s Day or some other holiday for which they were not originally intended, and this is one of those occasions.

Okay, here we have the prophet Nathan confronting David with his sin. Just in case you’re not familiar with the story I’ll sum it up. David had a good friend and loyal soldier, Uriah, who was married to the daughter of another good friend and the granddaughter of a very trusted advisor. While her husband, Uriah, is away fighting a war for King David, the King takes his wife and gets her pregnant. Then to try and “fix” things he calls Uriah home from the war so that he can sleep with his wife and cover up things. The problem is that Uriah, unlike David, has a highly developed sense of honor and loyalty to his friends and fellow soldiers. He refuses the comfort of his bed while his friends and comrades are struggling. So David sends Uriah back with a message to the general saying, “Put Uriah on the front lines and then retreat a bit so that he’ll get slaughtered.” So as brave and mighty as Uriah might be and after I’m sure he defeated many enemies in a spectacular fashion, he died; murdered by the sword at the command of his friend and King, David.

What David did in secret was no secret from the Lord. The Lord sends Nathan to confront David with his sin, and I must admit it is a very good and creative way to confront him with his sin. He tells him a story, something that Nathan has probably often done as he’s taught the King the Scriptures. The rich King David hears how a rich man abuses his power and shows no mercy to the poor man who has very little. David’s a smart guy. He gets the point. Now here is one of those

times where I wonder if I this might be the last time I’m allowed to preach here. In the translation we have David says, “As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die.” This translation is fine, but it could be translated a little differently. In modern English it would be like David saying, “That dirty son of a ____.” It would be translated something like, “As the Lord lives that bringer of death, he shall restore the lamb fourfold etc.” And David was indicating he’d be happy to bring death to this rich jerk. Translating it as “bringer of death” would make it a bit harder for us to understand so that’s why we translate it the way we do and that’s fine. But, just like our expression “son of ____” is common to us this might have been a common off color phrase in David’s day.

David is the bringer of death. He has welcomed sin into his life and lived in this sin. He has wielded his sword of power and brought death to an innocent man. His very eternal life is hanging by a thread. The wages of sin is death, and he most certainly deserves it. Yet here death does not fall on him. Instead death falls on his soon to be born child, and as any parent could tell you this event probably haunted David the rest of his life. Also the Lord declares that the sword shall not pass out of his hand. David chose to bring death and so he shall continue to do so for life. He will be a man of war and will not know peace.

At this point many of you may be thinking, “Man, I thought David was a good King. I thought God loved David. How could God love this guy? How could God say, ‘this is a man after my own heart’?” I’ll tell you how. God could love David because God is the rich man who shows mercy. God is the King who brings peace to his people. God is the King and rich man who releases the poor from their great debt to him.

As the enormity of his sin comes crashing down on David Nathan even says, “The Lord has also put away your sin; you shall not die.” Where God has every right to destroy David, He shows mercy. David had even pronounced his own death sentence. Where God has every right to take away everything that He’s given to David; palace, wives, riches, children and more, He shows mercy. God shows himself to be the King of life and the King of mercy that David ought to have been.

Now some of you might be wondering, “Didn’t Pastor Brackman say this text worked okay for Father’s Day? I don’t see it.” Well, let me dazzle you with my homiletical skills and pastorly tricks. The prophet’s name is Nathan. At this point some of you know that I named my own little boy Nathan. One of the reasons I picked this name was because of this story and the prophet Nathan. He’s honest, straightforward and bold. He does what our Lord calls him to do. Good traits that any father would desire for his son. I also chose Nathan after Nathaniel, one of our Lord’s Apostles, and I just like the name.

Nathan means “Gift of God” or “God has given.” While I certainly view my little one as a gift of God, the real question for us is, “What did Nathan give to David?” Now don’t go jumping ahead and saying, “Jesus,” or “Forgiveness.” Those are correct answers, but he gave him something else first that is necessary to receive the gift of forgiveness. Nathan gave David the gift of repentance.

We don’t generally think of repentance as a gift, but it is. Repentance is where we have sorrow over our sins and admit to doing wrong, and I have yet to meet anyone who enjoys any of those things. Yet repentance is still a gift. Repentance is brought about by the Holy Spirit bringing the Word of God to bear upon us. He shows us our sin, makes us mindful of our sins, and makes us realize that we deserve all kinds of punishment for our sins even eternal death. Just as David in our text realizes the enormity of his sin, so too we realize how our sins deserve God’s wrath. We receive the gift of repentance. We confess our sins. We do this in private by ourselves. We might do this in private with our pastor. We do this together as God’s people here on Sunday morning.

Nathan says, “You are the man.” We can compare this to Pilate saying of Jesus, “Behold the man.” Our Lord was condemned for our sake and for the sake of King David. Here David is the bringer of death, and so Jesus took his death away even as He has taken away our death. Nathan then gives to David God’s forgiveness. “The Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die.” Just as we receive from our pastor the Lord’s forgiveness. You shall not die but live. Your death has been removed, and you have been given new life.

In our story we are seeing how King David messed up. As a consequence for his sins we see how royally he messed up his family. He has one son rape a daughter,

others kill that one and then one of his sons tries to overthrow him and does just what the Lord says will happen in our text here of sleeping with his concubines out in the open instead of in secret.

Since it is Father’s Day this can show us something. It shows how capable father’s are of truly messing up their families. We moan and groan about the state of our society. In many ways this can be traced back to men being boys instead of fathers. As the spiritual head of your family you have a great responsibility, and all too often this responsibility has been abysmally fulfilled. Yet, we’ve focused on sins enough for one sermon. I don’t think I really need to list a bunch here. You already know most of them in your heart anyway. Instead I will close out telling you how God has made you a man after his own heart and how He has made you a Father like unto Him.

You are a father. Our Lord has seen fit to bless you with children to raise in His name and to walk in His ways. Teaching our children the Lord’s Word and ways is a blessing. He allows you to show them His love. How are you a man after God’s own heart? Because our Lord has removed your sin from you. He has removed your failures from you. He has put them away in the death of His Son. He has called you to be like Him, and He gives you what you need to fulfill this calling. He gives you Himself. He gives you life, and He gives you the lives of your children. He shows you what it means to be a Father. He first gives you gifts so that you can give to your children. He first shows you love so that you can love your children. He gives you the gift of repentance by His Holy Spirit so that by that same Holy Spirit He can give you forgiveness and continued life. You reflect even this with your children. You forgive your children. You show them where they have made mistakes and you forgive those mistakes. As your Father is patient with you so you are patient with them. As your Father shows you mercy so you show them mercy. As your Father leads you so you lead your children. You wonder if your heart is truly good enough. As you already know none of our hearts are good enough. He has given us a new heart and has created a right spirit within us. From our Father above to fathers here below; we are a reflection of our heavenly Father. This is a great gift for you, me and our children. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the one true faith unto life everlasting. Amen.