

2 Samuel 12:1-9

In our scripture reading for today, we see the prophet Nathan condemn King David for his scandalous, immoral, greedy actions. With amazing clarity, Nathan exposes King David's sin, and cuts him to the bone. It is utterly astounding - that with all of the blessings that God has given him, King David should steal another man's honor and treasure - and then murder that same man, while the man is serving to defend the King's country.

It is a series of acts so low, that everyone who hears it wants to cry out with Nathan, "You are the man!" You are the despot! You are the criminal! You are the sinner! "You are the man!" We all feel the righteous passion of Nathan. And rightfully so, it is a healthy instinct for justice.

And yet, there is a sense in which the evil actions of King David simply illustrate the Human Condition written large. That is, King David was so powerful and so wealthy, that he was unfettered by the limitations that most of us regular human beings experience. You may not have the power to command the favors of any woman that you see (like King David did) - but pornography is pervasive throughout our society.

You may not be able to send a man to die on the front lines of battle to cover up your sin (like King David did). But when our national pride was injured, we did start two wars - and now we are clamoring for another one. Many soldiers have died so that we may remain the proudest nation of them all.

Your greed may be limited, so that you are not able to steal another person's one precious possession (like King David did). But your greed makes you want the lowest possible price on all of your food and clothing and toys - so that children in China and India and Indonesia are forced to work long hours in dangerous conditions to provide you with this amazing abundance that you eat and wear and are entertained with.

Now, don't get me wrong - King David was illustrating the worst sin imaginable. He was right to be condemned. But when you and I move into the role of righteous prophet, just remember, that you and I also live in the midst of this human condition of sin. And the condemnation that we so easily hand down, may well be the condemnation that, in some ways we deserve.

A couple of weeks ago, two teenagers died when they were driving too fast and lost control of their car on Impounding Dam Road. I understand that they might not have

had the best of personalities - and were out long past curfew. And yet, just a little while ago, an upstanding, well-liked young man - a landscaper and contractor in our area was killed in a similar way while driving intoxicated. And I myself can remember the days of my youth, when I myself found me and my car firmly planted in a ditch. "There but for the grace of God, go I."

Sinfulness is intricately woven into the human condition - and even the feeling of righteous condemnation of your neighbor or coworker or close family member.... That self-righteousness is part of the human condition. How many of you have at one time or another said, "Well I never would have done that."

Maybe, maybe not - if the circumstances were reversed. Certainly there are times when you would choose your welfare or the welfare of your children over that of another. Just increase the stakes and you have the justification for anything from the Russian invasion of the Ukraine to Assad's war against his rebels.

Sinfulness is the human condition - and every one of us is subject to its failings - and its condemnations.

And so, God came into the world. The Word of God took on human flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus came to live and die - so that you and I might clearly see - that we humans

- in our self-righteousness and in our sinfulness.... left to our own devices, we will kill and we did kill - the Son of God.

So Jesus came to reveal your sin - but then Jesus forgave you. Jesus knows that you will not be perfect. Jesus knows that you cannot be perfect. And so, along with all of those people that you or I might condemn.... all of those people anywhere, that you might look down upon.... Jesus forgives you, and me, along with all of them.

Now that you and I are forgiven - we are also humbled. Now you can have mercy and understanding. Now you can share this forgiveness and grace of God - even with those who illustrate the worst of what we can be.

I don't believe that Jesus is saying to turn a blind eye to murder and corruption - but I believe Jesus IS saying that you should be humble - even as the sentence is passed on those who stand condemned.

Sinfulness is the human condition - And the way that God has chosen to deal with our human condition - is with the actions of love... the actions of mercy and forgiveness... the judgment of grace... in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Amen