

The Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

June 16, 2013

Amazing Grace Lutheran – Pastor Chip Wilke

2 Samuel 11:26-12:10, 13-15

When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. 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. 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. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, 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. "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." David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." 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. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. 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. 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.' 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. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die." After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. (NIV)

What did he do? This account in the life of King David perhaps leaves us asking this question almost more than any other place in the Bible. It is one of the most well-known sins of all time. Psalms are written describing the emotions and consequences of what happened here. Most Sunday school students could tell you about how David saw this beautiful woman named Bathsheba bathing and committed adultery with her. Most of us recall in vivid detail the ugliness of the whole account of how David tried to cover up his sin when he finds out Bathsheba is with child and how when that didn't work he murders his faithful soldier Uriah. As we look back on all this, as we see the Lord send the prophet Nathan to show David what he has done, I want us to look again today with awe and even some shock at what takes place as we ask the question: **What did He do?**

Again the details of what David did are familiar to many of us. Idleness led to lust and lust to adultery and adultery to lies and murder. And we are left asking: what did he do? Isn't this supposed to be God's chosen one? Isn't this King David who is

described as a man after the Lord's own heart? What did he do? Our text begins: "***When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. 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.***" It is no mistake that the Holy Spirit moved the writer to describe Bathsheba here as Uriah's wife. David had taken what wasn't his to take. He committed adultery and murder. What did he do? He displeased the Lord. The Lord was not happy with him to say the least. The Lord wanted David to know that he did not get away with anything.

So the prophet Nathan was sent to David. Nathan tells David a story about a poor man who has his one little lamb he loves very much. He grew up with this lamb, ate & drank with it, slept next to it, even treated it and loved it like part of the family. Certainly David the former shepherd could relate. But then a rich man who had many sheep and cattle has a visitor to feed. Heartlessly, the rich man steals the poor man's beloved sheep, kills it, and prepares it for his guest. Hearing this story: "***David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."***" What did he do? David's anger visibly burns and he says that this man deserves to die.

"***Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"***" Do you see what the Lord did for David here? He quickly changed it so that David's thinking went from "what did he do?" to "what did I do?" David realized now what he had done. ***Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."*** That is all David said. What else could David say? No more lies, no more cover ups, no more trying to hide his guilt – it was all there right in front of the Lord. Now David confesses, now David admits what he had done. What did he do? He had sinned against God.

My prayer for each of us is that we admit the same thing. This account makes it all too easy for us to simply say: what did he do? We might read about what happens here and start to be filled with pride as we talk about how we have always been faithful to our spouse. We might be quick to point out that we have never murdered anyone. But perhaps we have never had the opportunity or the same in our face temptation (and thank God for that) to be unfaithful to our spouses. And last I checked none of you are King. None of us have David's power or understand what it is like to walk in King David's shoes. But I can say that you and I have fallen for even lesser temptations than David faced. Have you kept all your thoughts pure? For Jesus says even looking at another woman lustfully means you have committed adultery with her in your heart. Have you ever been so angry at someone that hate filled your heart – maybe even toward your own husband? Then you too are a murderer. Our sins displease the Lord. The Lord wants us to turn from thinking about others "what did he do?" to "what did I do?" We have sinned against the Lord.

So what did He do? Now comes the part that leaves us standing in awe even more than David's sin of adultery. What did He do? Now we see an act much more shocking even than the cover up and murder of Uriah. For now we focus on what He did – the Lord – in this whole account. What did He do? First of all, the Lord did not want David to think his actions were acceptable. Nor did the Lord want him to live with his guilt forever. So what did He do? "***The LORD sent Nathan to David.***" In love the Lord sent Nathan so that David might see and confess his sin. That is exactly what David did.

Then what did He do? Listen carefully dear friends: "***Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."***" This is worth repeating: "***The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."***" David thought that rich man who took the one sheep from the poor man should die. In fact, David thought he should have to pay four times over for what he had done. How much more should David have to pay for what he had done! How much more did David deserve to die! Yet, just like that the Lord tells David his sin is taken away from him. Just like that David's sins were covered. Just like that his sins were forgiven. Like that the Lord took all his guilt away and assured David that he was not going to die. What did He do? Isn't that beyond amazing? Isn't that much more than astounding? Isn't this grace!

Yes, David still would suffer some earthly consequences of his sin. His very son born to him would die. But not to pay for sin – the Lord already took his sins away. The Lord was able to take all David's sin away because the Lord would send him another son. From this son would come the One who would be David's Son and yet David's Lord. About one thousand years later from the line of David Jesus was born. Jesus, unlike David, never fell for any of the devil's temptations. Jesus kept all His thoughts pure. Jesus never hated his brothers but loved everyone. Jesus deserved to live, but instead He died. The cross is where David's sins of adultery and murder were punished and Jesus suffered the whole load. That includes our sins too. What did He do? Jesus became sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. What did He do? Jesus died so that we might live. What did He do? Jesus lives again so that we will never die.

It is important to see what He, the Lord, did here for David for the Lord does the same for you and me! What did He do? Let us turn to the Psalms to hear what He did from David. "***Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered....I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"—and you forgave the guilt of my sin.***" (32) "***Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...Cleanse me...and I will be clean; wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Create in me a pure heart, O God and renew a steadfast spirit with me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will turn back to you.***" (51)

Dear friends, as many times as we hear this account, as well as we may know what happened here, I pray we never lose the awe and shock as we see what He did. Not David, for although his sin was great, what the Lord does here is much greater. For where sin increased once again grace increased all the more! The far more shocking thing is what He did – by taking all David's sin away. What makes us stand in awe even more is what He did – shedding His blood on the cross so that all our sins are covered. What did He do? Go tell others about it! Amen.

