

Sermon 1 Sam 12 / 18. Nov 2018

“Have **mercy** on **me**, O **God**,
according to your **steadfast** love;
according to your **abundant** mercy
blot **out** my **transgressions**.

Wash me **thoroughly** from my **iniquity**,
and **cleans** me from my **sin**.
For I **know** my **transgressions!**”

These are the **words** of a **man** who has **seen** the **truth**.
He **has** seen **truth**... **Nasty** truth.
The **nasty** truth that **you** and I know **all too** well, **too**.
In our **honest** moments, at **least**.
“For I **know** my **transgressions**.”

What a **statement**.
What a **bold** statement.
It takes **guts**. Real **guts**.
It takes **guts** to name **that**
which **everyone** knows
but **never** dares **speak** about.

Yes. Our **brokenness** is **real**.
Your brokenness is **real**.
My brokenness is **real**.
And I **know** it.
And **you** know it.
But **normally**... we don't **want** to know it **together**.
We want to **know** it all **alone**,
buried deep inside,
where **no one** will **find** it.

Why is that?
Why... **is** that?

You **know** we all **know** that **none** of us is **perfect**.
I **know** we all **know**.
So **why** do **we** so **rarely** dare **speak** about it.
Why **is** that?

I **think** there is **one** word that **names** WHY.
SHAME.

We are **afraid** of what **people** will **think** about us.
And **therefore**: We are... **ashamed**.
And **why** do I know **that**?
Because I do it **all day myself**.
I do it **all day long**...
Feel **ashamed** of **myself**.

I think: **shame** on **you**, Jonas, **for** saying **this** or thinking **that**.
I think: **shame** on **you**, Jonas. **Who** do you **think** you **are**.
I think: **shame** on **you**, Jonas, for **fearing** this or **desiring** that.
I do it **aaaaall** the **time!**
I am **ashamed**.

But now **should** I **be**?

Well, **sometimes**, sure.

There's a **reason** why we say "**he** was **shameless**" as something **negative**.

What we **mean** is: He did **not** respect the proper **boundaries** that **enable** our **life** in good **communion** with each **other**.

But **that's** not the **type** of **shame** that I'm **talking** about here **today**.

I'm **talking** about that **dark** and that **dirty** kind of **shame**.

The **one** that **makes** us feel **inadequate** all **day**.

The **one** that **makes** us **worry** about **ourselves** all **day**.

The **one** that **sucks** the **life** out of every **living** cell **within** us.

THAT kind of **shame**...

The **kind** that **makes** us **feel** like **we'll** never **ever** be **happy** ever **again**.

THAT kind of **shame**.

That's how **David** must've **felt**.

When he **realized**.

When he **realized** what he had **done**.

YOU ARE THE MAN, says **Nathan**.

Yes, David.

You are the **man**.

What a **brehtaking** realization.

But **let's** back **up** a **bit** and go **through** the story of **Nathan** and **David** together **again**.

We **all** know the **basics** of **David's** life **story**.

A **little** boy from **Bethlehem**, David was **destined** to be **king** from a **young** age **on**.

He's **not** exactly a **muscular** fighter...

He's **musical** though, and played **harp** for **King** Saul.

He was **smart** which he **demonstrates** in that **epic** battle we **all** know **so** well:

David and **Goliath**.

With **brilliant** technique he **finishes** the **warrior** Goliath with **just** a **stone** and a **slingshot**.

When **Saul** dies in **battle**, **David** is then **crowned** king of **both** the **Northern** and the **Southern** kingdom of **Israel**.

It's **kinda** like that **Drake** song...

you **know**:

"**Started** from the **bottom** now we **here**."

"Started **from** the **bottom** now my **whole** team *AHEM* **here**."

You **know**... that's **David**.

He's riding **high**.

And **eventually** it **does** get to his **head**...

And **that** is where our **text** comes in...

“And the **LORD** sent **Nathan** to **David**.”

So **God** sends his prophet **Nathan** to talk some **sense** into **David** who has given **in** to **grave** sin, yet **still** is **high** on his **righteousness**.

But **Nathan** does not **shout**. He doesn't **argue**.

He **tells** a **story**:

“There were **two** men, one **rich**, one **poor**. The **rich** man had **all** the **herds** in the **world**. But the **poor** man had **nothing** but **one** little **lamb**, which he **raised** with his **children**.”

The **lamb** was **treated** like **family**.

The **text** says: “It was like a **daughter** to **him**.”

If there's a **right** way to **treat** your **animal** – **this** is **it**.

But the **rich** man had **visitors**, and he **felt** all **bad** about **slaughtering** one of his **flock**.

So to **avoid** the **pain** and the **loss** of **his** own **flock**, he goes and **slaughters** that **poor** man's **lamb** and **offers** it to the **guests**.

And now **check** out **David's** reaction:

“Then **David's** anger” it **says** “was **greatly** kindled **against** the (rich) **man**.”

So he **says** to **Nathan**:

“As the **LORD** **lives**, the **man** who has **done** this **deserves** to **die**!

He shall **restore** the lamb **fourfold**, because he **did** this and **had** no **pity**.”

Oh **yes**, that feels **good**, doesn't **it**?

That **righteous** anger!

Being on the **right** side of **history**!

Caring for the **weak**. For the **downtrodden**. For the **poor**!

Doesn't that feel **good**?

Doesn't it?

Oh **yes**, it **does**.

And **David** is all **over** it.

But **here** it **comes**.

In **four** simple **words**.

“**You** are the **man**.”

“**You** are the **woman**.”

“**You** are the **human** who did this.”

Oh **boy** when truth **hits** you – it **hits** you **hard**.

“**You** are the **man**.”

And he **knows** it.

David... knows it.

He **knows** it **right** away!

He liked **Batseeba** and sent her **husband** out to **die** in **battle**...

just so he could **take** her as his **own** without having to lose **face** in **public**.

What a **coward**.

What... **a...** COWARD!

What a **coward**.

“**Thus** says the **LORD**, the **God** of **Israel**:

I **anointed** you **king** over **Israel**,
and I **rescued** you from the **hand** of Saul;
I gave you **everything**.
And if **that** had **been** too **little**, I **would** have **added** more.
WHY have you **despised** the **word** of the **LORD**
and **done** what is **evil** in God's **sight**?"
Nathan truly **does** not **spare** David.
Nathan **gives** it **to** him **straight**.
He is **bold** and **daring** and he's **truthful**.

And the **truth** sets **David** free...
He knows **better** than to **lash** back at **Nathan**.
He **knows** that he's **telling** the **truth**.
And there's **nothing** more **disarming**
than the **truth**..
the **whole** truth...
and nothing **but** the **truth**...
And **Nathan** hits **David** hard:

"Thus says the **LORD**:

I will **raise** up **trouble** against you from **within** your own **house**;
I will **take** your **wives** before your **eyes**, and **give** them to your **neighbor**, and he
shall **lie** with your **wives** in the **sight** of this very **sun**.
For **YOU** did **it** in **secret**; but **I** will **do** this **thing** before **all** Israel, and **before** the
sun."

WHOA...

That is **pretty** much the **worst** thing you could **imagine** in that **patriarchal**
society: **ALL** your wives **taken** away and **crossing** lines to your **enemies** in the
brightest of **days**. And **David** **knows** he **deserves** it.
So he **says** to **Nathan**: "I have **sinned** against the **LORD**."

"I have **sinned** against the **LORD**."

Now **THIS**, I think, is the **key** to this **whole** story.

Not the **sin** is the **key**.

But **recognition** of sin **IS**.

Because **that** recognition **is** the **birth** of **repentance**.

It's like **anchor** Will **McAvoy** says it **in** the **show** "The **Newsroom**":

"First step in **solving** a **problem** is **recognizing** there **is** one."

And **David** does **recognize** that **there's** a **problem**.

"I have **sinned** against the **LORD**."

Now **that's** bold.

That's **just** as **bold** as **Nathan's** truth **talk**, if **not** even **more**.

Speaking truth **to** someone **else** is **one** thing.

Recognizing that you **yourself** are the **problem**,
that is **infinitely** harder.

Because it **requires** a **real** and **true** recognition **of** our **brokenness**.

The **brokenness** we **hide** so **well** because we're **ashamed** of it.

Noticing that **brokenness** is the **first** step to **restoring** our **relationship** with the **one** who **gave** us **life**:

Jesus **Christ**, our **Lord** and **Savior**.

For **as** we **read** in the **psalms**:

Have **mercy** on **me**, O **God**,
 according to your **steadfast** love;
For I **know** my **transgressions**,
 and my **sin** is **ever** before **me**.

Against **you**, you **alone**, have I **sinned**,
 and **done** what is **evil** in your **sight**,
so that **you** are **justified** in your **sentence**
 and **blameless** when **you** pass **judgment**.”

David **knows** he **deserves** it. And he **knows** he can't **solve** the **problem** with the **same** kind of **self-righteous ignorance** that **got** him **into** this **mess** in the **first** place. David **knows** he **needs** to **change**. So we **read** in his **psalm**:

“**You** desire **truth** in the **inward** being;
 therefore **teach** me **wisdom** in **my** secret **heart**.
Put a **new** and **right** spirit **within** me.
 and **sustain** in **me** a **willing** spirit. **Amen**.”

Now **that's** more **like** it.

“**First** step in **solving** a **problem** is **recognizing** there **is** one.”

And **David** has **recognized** it.

So **Nathan** says to **David**:

“the **LORD** has **forgiven** your **sin**; you **shall** not **die**.”

“the **LORD** has **forgiven** your **sin**; you **shall** not **die**.”

It is **such** gracious **mercy** and God's **forgiveness** that **frees** us to **live** as Paul **asks** in these **epic** words in **Ephesians**:

“**lead** a life **worthy** of the **calling** to which **you** have been **called**,
with **humility** and **gentleness**, with **patience**,
bearing with **one** another in **love**,
making **every** effort to **maintain** the **unity** of the **Spirit** in the **bond** of **peace**.”

There is **one** body and **one** Spirit,
just as **you** were **called** to one **hope** of your **calling**,
one **Lord**,
one **faith**,
one **baptism**,
one **God** and **Father** of **all**,
who is **above** all
and **through** all and **in** all.”

“**Each** of **us** was given **GRACE** according to the **measure** of Christ's **gift**.”

Grace is the **answer**.

Grace defeats **shame**.

Grace sets us **free**. **Amen**.