

**+ 2 Samuel 11:26-12:10,13-15 + When I Call Someone to Repentance, I Need... +
+ Preacher: Pr. Em. Kieth Kuschel + 4th Sunday after Pentecost + 12 June 2016 +**

Introduction: If you see your friend hitting another friend, what are you going to do about it. Tell them to stop. Is that easy? Why do that? Damaging relationship with Jesus.

King David was wildly successful. He had been a charismatic figure even before he was king. The crowds went wild about David and his military exploits. After he was king, he stabilized the borders of the land. He fortified cities for the protection of his citizens. And he got everything ready for the construction of the temple. Everybody would have done anything David asked.

There was a down side to all that success. He didn't need to be busily engaged in the daily operations of the various aspects of the government. For example although he was the commander-in-chief of the army, he no longer went out with the army on its campaigns and defensive activities. Most of the other branches of government likewise carried out their needed functions without his direct participation.

Idle time always leads to trouble. While at the palace, he got sexually involved with a beautiful woman named Bathsheba. She became pregnant. David got her husband home from military duty and tried to get him to have sex with his wife, so that the pregnancy would seem legitimate. The husband refused to do that out of loyalty to his commitment as a soldier. So then David had him killed at the front lines, by ordering his fellow soldiers to withdraw from him. He was thus exposed to the enemies.

How does God respond to sin? Same way he responded to Adam and Eve's sin. He promised that a Savior would take away sins. He sent Jesus to die on the cross to take away our sins. He sent Jesus to live in our place to cover us with His holiness so we are acceptable to God. He sent Jesus to rise from the dead so that we might live forever.

How does God respond to sin? He wants people to change their minds about sin, to acknowledge that sin is bad and leads to punishment from God and destruction in life. How do humans minds get changed about sin? God has to act to bring that about. God changes people's minds through His Word. Most of the time His Word is brought to people by other people. The LORD sent Nathan to David. How do you think Nathan felt when God sent him to confront David? Pretty scared. God gave him courage.

We are all Nathans. We are all sent by God to point out sins to fellow believers. Let's use the sins of David as our starting point. Your friend with whom you were confirmed publicly acknowledges that she is sexually involved with her wildly successful boyfriend. You don't do anything about it. Why not? Because you are afraid. You are afraid of losing a friend. You are afraid of being shunned by the successful people in your society. We need God to give us the courage to love that girl by confronting her with her sins so she might be led to repent.

The married person you work with publicly acknowledges that he is sexually involved with a woman to whom he is not married. His marriage after all is less than satisfying. You don't do anything about it. Why not? Because you are afraid. You are afraid of losing a good working relationship. You are afraid of being branded by the rest of your workers as a holier-than-thou busybody. We need God to give us the courage to love that man by confronting him with his sins so he might be led to repent.

Second sin of David was destruction of human life. Your friend with whom you participate in youth group at church uses illegal drugs on a regular basis. You don't do anything about it. Why not? Because you are afraid. You are afraid of losing a friend. You are afraid of being shunned by the party people in your segment of society. We need God to give us the courage to love that young man by confronting him with his sins so he might be led to repent.

Your friend who is a stay-at-home Mom is a closet active alcoholic. She says it helps her cope with her depression which comes from not interacting with adults most of the day. You don't do anything about it. Why not? Because you are afraid. You are afraid of losing a friend. You are afraid of pushing her deeper into depression. We need God to give us the courage to love her by confronting her with her sins so she might be led to repent.

The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "David, you are a very smart man. You wouldn't be so successful, if you weren't a very smart man. How could you be so stupid and become an adulterer and a murderer? Did you forget that God gave the Ten Commandments? You are also a very disciplined man. You couldn't have accomplished all those goals, if you weren't a very disciplined man. How could you be so overcome with lack of control that you had sex with this woman? Did you think that action

would have no consequence? You are a leader of God's people. A man after God's heart. I think you must be some kind of godless hypocrite and unbeliever to do something like this." That's not what Nathan said.

This is what Nathan said: ***"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.'"***

Why did Nathan take this approach? He wanted to tap into David's sense of right and wrong, something that David still had. He wanted to get David upset at somebody who had sinned in a very obvious way. Something that selfish human beings can do pretty easily. It worked. ***"David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, 'As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.'"***

How do we approach our Christian friends? "What is the matter with you? Don't you remember anything we studied in Catechism class? You just want to hang onto a very popular guy, so you have sex to do that?" Or "What is the matter with you? Are you that stupid that you can't see your action is going to destroy two families? What kind of an uncaring person would do that?" Or "Don't you care about your body? I didn't think you would ever be on the same level as a lowlife drug addict. I don't think I want to be seen with somebody like you." Or "What kind of a weak person are you? I would love to be home with my kids. You're just a drunk."

What is going to happen if you take that approach? The person you are dealing with is going to get defensive. Scream back at you. Not listen. How we approach people is based on our goal. What is our goal? To get people to admit that their sins are wrong and separate them from God so that they repent and turn back to Jesus to grab his forgiveness.

So how are we going to do that? Like this. "I heard you saying that you are sexually active with your boyfriend. I struggle with the desire to do the same thing with my boyfriend. I love you and am really worried about your relationship with Jesus." Or "I heard you saying you were sexually involved with someone other than your wife. When things aren't going well at home, that thought crosses my mind too. I love you and am really worried about your relationship with Jesus." Or "I know everybody thinks using drugs for personal pleasure is normal. But our bodies are gifts from God. He wants us to take the best care of them we can. I love you and am really worried about your relationship with Jesus." Or "Life is depressing. I sometimes feel like doing something to escape the pain. Jesus is the only One who has the right to be in control of our lives. I love you and am really worried about your relationship with Jesus."

Nathan did what he was supposed to do because God gave him courage. He did it correctly with tact. What did he actually do? He confronted David with his sin and pointed out his lack of appreciation for all of God's blessings to him. 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 all 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.'"***

David's sinful actions were making a statement. The statement included either all or some of the following. "I don't think adultery and murder are sins even if God says they are. Since I don't agree with God that these things are sins, I don't want forgiveness for them. I think my situation makes it OK to commit these sins even if God law says they are wrong. Since my situation redefines right and wrong, I don't need forgiveness for these actions. I don't think God's blessings in my life, including eternal life, are worth much. So I don't have a good reason to thank the LORD with the way I live."

Nathan's actions accomplished God's purpose. ***"Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.'"*** Immediately Nathan was just as firm and forthright with his response. Nathan replied, ***"The LORD has taken away your sin."*** Although God's gracious forgiveness was immediately applied to David, that didn't mean there would be no consequences for his sin. Nathan was firm about that too. ***"You are not going to die. ¹⁴ But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, 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.'

God expects us to do the same thing Nathan did. We are to call sin "sin." We are to point out that sin is damaging to our relationship with Jesus. Why do we have to be firm? If the person who is sinning doesn't realize what a terrible situation he or she is putting oneself into, there will be no seeking of a solution.

We are to spell out the meaning of the sinful actions because the person most likely isn't thinking about that. Clarity and precision are needed. "Sinful action says to God, 'I don't think what I am doing is wrong. I don't want forgiveness for my actions. Rejection of Jesus' forgiveness makes one guilty in God's sight. The guilty verdict demands punishment. That's why I am worried about your relationship with Jesus.'" We need to remain firm.

We must be just as clear and precise in response to people when they say what David did: ***"I have sinned against the LORD."*** Our response is the same as Nathan's. "The LORD has taken your sins and put them on Jesus. Jesus died on the cross so that his blood has washed away your sin. Jesus lived and never sinned so that he could cover you with his holiness and make you acceptable to God. Jesus rose from the dead, so that you will not die. You will live forever because of Jesus."

Conclusion: LORD JESUS, give me courage, tact and firmness so that when I call someone to repentance, I can give them you, your forgiveness, holiness, and eternal life. Amen.