

"The Great Announcement"
2 Samuel 11: 26 - 12:10, 13-15

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Emmett, Idaho
Pastor Michael L. McCoy

2 July Anno Domini 1995

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.
Amen.

Simply standing up and telling someone or a group of people that an announcement needs to be made doesn't get the job done. Declaring that an announcement needs to be made puts people into a position where they are actually expecting the announcement to be made. Then, when it is not made, people begin to wonder what is going on. It doesn't really help until the announcement is actually made. It's like a messenger who knocks at your door and tells you, "I have a telegram for you" and then walks away without giving you the message. It's like going to the doctor who tells you that you need to hear what's wrong with you and how it can be taken care of, but then not being given either the diagnosis or the treatment. Such a situation could be downright physically dangerous, perhaps even leading to death if we didn't ever get the message.

When it's an announcement from God, we really need to hear it because the LORD not only deals with the physical but also the spiritual and death is not only physical in this life, but possibly spiritual death for an eternity. Please listen to a part of the Old Testament Reading once more and hear ...

... The Great Announcement!!

David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child that is born to you shall die."

Thus far the Word of the LORD our God.

When you hear of King David, what comes to your mind? Maybe you picture the shepherd boy who would become king -- who defeated the giant, Goliath, or who played music to sooth the tormented Saul. It could be, after the Father's Day sermon, your image is of a weak father whose children were out of control and the family suffered the consequences of the lack of fatherly discipline. Perhaps the emphasis is on the office of king and you think of a man who commanded respect -- a man of prestige and dignity -- a king who wore the royal robes of the palace. He was a man of God who had power, and he used his power to run and to control his kingdom.

In any case, God had made him King of Israel and Judah. The LORD had guided this man and his nation to great military victories over his enemies. David was given so many possessions -- wealth,

land, even people. God had also promised that one of David's descendants would be the One Who would deliver His people -- the Messiah -- the Christ of God sent to be the world's redeemer. David was a special man -- a man who was the leader and who could possess anything that he wanted.

Indeed, he had done just that. David had seen Bathsheba, had desired her, and had committed adultery with her. He was the king and she was a part of his kingdom. When David learned that she was pregnant, he ordered the woman's husband home from the war so that he would sleep with her, thus making the pregnancy appear to be by her husband. When this did not succeed, David arranged to have the husband "accidentally" killed in the fighting. Everything was then covered up -- Bathsheba was now David's wife since her husband had been conveniently eliminated from the scene. On the surface, everything appeared to be just fine. David had what he wanted and he continued about his business of being king and the daily activities that involved. Things were running quite smoothly.

Each one of us want our lives to be the same way. We have a certain style or pattern that we would like to have. Whether at home, school, or work, each one of us strives hard to achieve it. Our time is precious to us since the more time we are able to direct to our wants and desires, the quicker we can get them.

But sometimes things get in our way. For young people, it often happens that they feel they are being too restricted by their parents. Perhaps there are some places they have not been allowed to go, or, some things they are not permitted to do. Places or things that their parents believe would not be good for them. So, a young person will sneak out and cover himself by telling a lie or two.

For those of us who are older, perhaps the things that are wanted require money or power or achievement -- lots of it. So, a great amount of time and emphasis are placed on acquiring money or position. After all, if you don't make it while you can, some other guy will. And if you hurt a few people along the way, well, that's business isn't it? It's a dog eat dog world out there and if you are going to get ahead, sometimes it is necessary to step on a few people.

We maneuver people and things to suit us; to make our lives smoother and the way that we would like them to be. That is what King David had done and, on the surface, things were paying off -- things were going quite well for him.

When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she made lamentation for her husband. And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD. And the LORD sent Nathan to David.

Paying off -- doing quite well ... until God's prophet Nathan came to David. Now Nathan was not only a fearless man, he was quite wise. His task was to expose David's sins of covetousness, murder, lying, stealing, adultery, and bearing false witness, as well as the violations of the first three commandments. If he were to confront the king directly with these charges, Nathan could have been quickly and permanently dismissed by the king. Consequently, Nathan uses a parable in order to have David pronounce himself guilty. David is not aware of this, evidently thinking that Nathan was asked for some wise advice of the king ...

And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds; but the

poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his morsel, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

David was outraged and he condemned the other man. He figuratively pointed his finger at this "other man" and said that this "other man" deserved to die. When confronted we quickly find fault elsewhere. It started with Adam who said it was the woman who was at fault. You and I are the same way. It is always easy to find the fault of the other person -- it is quite easy to condemn the "other guy." The Pharisee in the gospel Reading condemned the woman, know to be a sinner, who was anointing the feet of our Lord. Finding guilt and condemning the other person is easy to do.

King David had also condemned the "other man." But Nathan, in one short sentence, pronounces the accusation on David -- You are the man! "Look your majesty, I have not been telling you the account of lambs and the other guy; I have been telling you about Uriah's wife and you." You are the man! David had already stated the sentence -- death. According to the Law of God, death was the penalty for murder and the penalty for adultery. Now, David found out that he had just accused himself. There was no escaping the situation -- David stood accused.

We stand accused as well. God's Law says, Thou shalt be holy for I, the LORD, your God am holy. God says to His people, You observe that which I command you. The Law requires that you and I always do the right thing and never break any of the Commandments. Yet, since we can never fulfill all the requirements of the Law, the Law of God initially serves to show us our sin. It acts like a mirror to make us see where we have gone wrong. It accuses us just like it did to David.

David had lived for about one year without repentance and forgiveness for the sins he had committed. He had done so, being an example for the rest of the nation. As King, he was to be one of the spiritual leaders of the nation. He had failed; he was apart from God. He had put aside the forgiveness that he previously had by faith in the promised Messiah. Without God as his salvation, David was not only accused, he was guilty.

As Christians, we are in the same position as David. We have the same capacity to an impenitent life as he did. Without Christ as an active part of our lives, we put aside the forgiveness that we so desperately need. Without this forgiveness that is only available through Christ Jesus, we have turned our backs to God. We have said "NO" to Him and there comes a time when you say "NO" once too often. In such a case a person has taken himself or herself out of the state of grace, just as David had done.

If we remain in that spiritual condition, one of two things will happen:

1.) A Nathan comes into life. This could be in the form of another person, the listening of the Law as it condemns us, or something that happens in our lives that shakes us up spiritually -- like the death of a loved one, a physical ailment of our own, or whatever. In any case, it is God's action of bringing us to a point where we are sorry for our sins and look to Christ as our Savior; or, the other thing that could happen is this ...

2.) No Nathan comes into our lives, or, we reject the Nathan that does. If that happens, we will be

confronted by Jesus, apart from His grace and mercy, on Judgment Day. It will be too late; He will say, Depart from Me; I never knew you.

Hearing the words, You are the Man, David was guilty. For him, there was nowhere to go, nothing to explain. This prophet of God had cut him right down to the heart. No excuses would prove satisfactory. He could only rely on God for forgiveness and he thus makes his confession, I have sinned against the LORD. It is not a long confession, recounting all of the details. It is a simple, yet sincere and heart-felt confession, I have sinned against the LORD. He did not say, "I have sinned against Bathsheba, or , against her husband, or, against Nathan, or even the nation." They were God's Laws that he transgressed -- His that he broke.

Each sin that we commit is the breaking of God's Law. All are committed against the LORD. If you have cheated your neighbor, told a lie about someone, are holding a grudge, or any number of other "little," as well as big, things, you have not sinned against your neighbor, you have sinned against God.

David was a penitent man at that moment. He was truly sorry for what all the grievous, horrible things he had done. He looked to the LORD for forgiveness and His salvation. He felt the burden of his guilt and trusted in the LORD to take the load away.

Then comes The Great Announcement! Please note, dear people, that absolution or forgiveness is announced immediately. There was not a long period of time when David had to make himself worthy to receive absolution. David did not have to make any form of satisfaction; doing something to help make up for what he did. And upon this, David's confession, Nathan, as a Called prophet of the Word, announce the grace of God upon him, and in the stead and by the command of God, Nathan made The Great Announcement! The LORD has put your sin away, you shall not die.

The Hebrew word for putting sin away also has the meaning of transferring, forgiving, and sending over. The LORD had put away, had sent over, had transferred David's sin. As Christians like David, we rely on the same transfer. Our sins, like David's, have been transferred to Christ. On the cross, our sins were sent over to Him. Christ's death paid for all of the sins of the world. They were all transferred to Him.

Now surely David did what he could to remedy any situation that was within his power, just as we would want to do whatever we could to ease the hurt or pain that we may have caused someone else as a result of our godlessness. That is what the LORD expects the Christian to do. David also had to live with the consequences of his actions. Death, grief, family uprisings, pain, and sorrow would follow. The LORD takes away the guilt and proclaims forgiveness; but the consequences must be lived out in this life. We simply thank God that we are permitted to live them out under His cover of grace and be about that which is pleasing to God. Indeed, the greatest and highest response, good work, and fruit of faith for the Christian is to continue trusting in and hearing, The Great Announcement! -- in other words, to hear the Good News announced by the called servant of the Word -- The LORD has put your sin away, you shall not die. -- in other words, to live in God's gift of Baptism; to feast at the Lord's Table, and to hear the Word announced in the Absolution -- namely, you are forgiven in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.