

I.N.I.

Fourth Sunday in Pentecost
July 2, 2017
II Samuel 11:26-12:10, 13-15

In Christ Jesus, the only cure for the disease of sin that infects us all, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

"Idleness is the devil's workshop." What does that mean? It means when we are not doing anything in particular, our mind is free to wander and often Satan leads it to wander into areas it should not go. When there is high unemployment in a certain area, very often there is more crime in that area because people have more time on their hands and get into more trouble. A bored child, often is a naughty child. A busy, active child usually stays out of trouble.

Well we find out what happened to David when he was idle. It was springtime, time for war, but David stayed behind in Jerusalem. He sent his men out to fight but did not lead them in battle. He remained at home and it was there on that sleepless night that Satan led his eyes to see Bathsheba bathing on her rooftop and the rest is history.

So the Lord God sent His faithful prophet Nathan to confront the king with his sin in order to lead him to repentance. Nathan told David, "**David, YOU ARE THE MAN!**" He was the man that had sinned against God and committed adultery and murder.

Did David know he was the man? Yes he did. He knew that he had not gone off to war to lead his soldiers as he should have. He remembered that night when he walked on the palace roof and his mind wandered, wandered away from the Lord when he saw a beautiful woman bathing. He knew he should have looked away, but he didn't. He knew he shouldn't have sent to find out who she was, and when he found out she was "Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah," he knew he should not have sent for her to come in to visit with him. He knew he should not have let his lust take over his heart and lead him into adultery. He knew that he should have confessed his sin and sought the Lord's forgiveness.

But instead, he tried to cover it up. When David found out that Bathsheba was expecting he ordered his faithful soldier Uriah, her husband, back from the war for a furlough to spend time with his wife. Everyone must think that this baby is Uriah's. But Uriah is such an honorable soldier that he refuses to go home to eat and drink and sleep with his wife when all of his other soldier brothers are camped in the open fields in tents.

Did David know he was the man? Yes he did. He knew that his plan to have Uriah put in the front of the battle in order to be killed was nothing but murder on his part. He knew that his taking Bathsheba into his home and taking this widow as his wife was nothing more than a sham, a cover up. He knew all of this and yet he did it anyway.

WHY? Because once David let sin rule in his heart in desire it took over in deeds and he was a helpless victim to sin. James writes, **BUT EACH ONE IS TEMPTED WHEN HE IS DRAWN AWAY BY HIS OWN DESIRES AND ENTICED. THEN WHEN DESIRE HAS CONCEIVED, IT GIVES BIRTH TO SIN; AND SIN, WHEN IT IS FULL-GROWN, BRINGS FORTH DEATH.**

But thank God that David found out that

CHRIST IS THE ONLY CURE FOR SIN.

David tried to cover up his sin, he tried to make it look innocent, he tried to forget about it and not acknowledge it, he tried to ignore God and a guilty conscience but nothing worked. Our first point this morning is very important:

1) OUR MAN-MADE CURES FOR SIN ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE.

Home-made remedies for illnesses and diseases sometimes are fine, but sometimes end up with disastrous results. Well home-made remedies to cure sin always end up disastrous. David admits that in the words of Psalm 32, **WHEN I KEPT SILENT, MY BONES GREW OLD THROUGH MY GROANING ALL THE DAY LONG. FOR DAY AND NIGHT YOUR HAND WAS HEAVY UPON ME; MY VITALITY WAS TURNED INTO THE DROUGHT OF SUMMER.** No matter how David tried to make it look to the rest of the world, his sin brought sadness, pain, guilt, and hurt to him. Month after month David tried to ignore the LORD. But his sin gnawed away and ate at him like a cancerous growth in his heart. As David tried to live his life apart from his heavenly Father, he had no

peace. Not all of the gold in the royal treasury, or all of the pleasure and privilege of being king and living in a palace of luxury could bring peace to his heart and soul.

Out of love for this lost soul, the LORD sent the prophet Nathan to confront David with his sin. What a simple yet profound illustration the LORD used to proclaim law and gospel to David. The rich man was heartless. His heart was cold, hard and dead. Instead of taking one of his countless sheep, he took the poor man's only little lamb and prepared it for his friend.

David immediately saw the evil in this act. This heartless man should die for doing such a thing. We read, **DAVID'S ANGER WAS GREATLY AROUSED AGAINST THE MAN.** The Hebrew expression implies that his anger was visible. Perhaps his cheeks were flushed, neck muscles swelling. With royal rage David was ready to lash out at the man with righteous wrath and punishment. Death would not be too severe a penalty for a person so cold and hard-hearted.

Do you think David had any idea this story was about him, any inkling that Nathan had come to confront him? The very next words the prophet spoke struck David harder than any physical blow Nathan could have given. It was like a mighty sword cut into his heart. **"YOU ARE THE MAN!** David, you are that heartless, cold, evil man whom you have just said deserved to die. You own everything, all a gift from your God. You have been blessed beyond measure. Yet you took away from poor Uriah the one thing that was his, his wife. And then **YOU KILLED** Uriah with the sword of the Ammonites."

The law crushed David's heart like a jack hammer. Like a laser beam it went straight to his guilty soul, blasting away any excuses, or rationalizations, or clever word games or cover-ups David might have used to escape the blame. He was left utterly despairing and spiritually naked before his God.

Despite all of David's attempted cures and cover-ups for his sin, God saw it all. That is our second point:

2) GOD IS SERIOUS ABOUT SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT.

The result of David's sin was that other heathen nations would mock the LORD, Jehovah. When they would see the gross wickedness of this man of God, they would become bold to heap up insults and blaspheme the LORD. David's sin would do harm to the immortal souls of stubborn unbelievers. "If that's the way believers in Jehovah live, what kind of God do they have?"

What kind of God do we have? A God of justice who will not be mocked. The sword would never depart from David's house. The baby that would be born to Bathsheba would not live. His own son Absalom would rebel against him and would be killed in battle as David's enemy. God would clearly show that He was aroused to anger over against David's public sin.

What kind of God do we have? A God also of mercy and grace! When David, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in repentant anguish cried out, **I HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LORD**, the LORD was quick to reply through Nathan, **THE LORD ALSO HAS PUT AWAY YOUR SIN; YOU SHALL NOT DIE.** What precious, refreshing good news of unconditional love and complete forgiveness to a condemned sinner. Yes, **THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, BUT THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.** The LORD, Jehovah washed David of his sin so that he too could rejoice with Isaiah in these words, **THOUGH YOUR SINS ARE LIKE SCARLET, THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW; THOUGH THEY ARE RED LIKE CRIMSON, THEY SHALL BE AS WOOL.**

David knew in his heart that **HE WAS THE MAN** that not only had sinned against the LORD but **HE WAS THE MAN** who was washed in the blood of the coming Messiah. That through Jesus' shed blood all of his sins would be blotted out. The Messiah would cleanse and purge him of every spot and stain, so that he could stand before God in purity and righteousness, not his own, but His Savior's. And that is our third point:

3) GOD'S CURE IS PERMANENT AND COMPLETE!

Let's bring this lesson closer to home. In our day and age lust is not condemned but condoned and even encouraged. Our society and media is ripe with lustful images on T.V., the movies and in magazines. Illicit affairs and adulterous unions are the kinds of things that tantalize and sell. Satan is quick to whisper in our ears: **"GO FOR IT! YOU WILL NEVER HAVE A BETTER CHANCE THAN NOW! NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW!"** How many people who would never be seen at an x-rated movie in a theater find it acceptable to carry one home from the local video store? How many people who would never think of an extra-marital affair, get swept up into unfaithfulness by fooling

around or flirting at work with members of the opposite sex?

Satan tempts people to think that lust is only a harmless indulgence of the eyes, not of the heart. If you are involved in pornography you are only fooling yourself if you think it doesn't hurt anyone. It hurts you and your relationship with others. If you are married and you take part in flirting with someone who is not your spouse, it is not harmless at all. Lust is a deadly, soul-destroying poison. Solomon found that out also. He wrote in Proverbs that we should **KEEP (away) FROM THE EVIL WOMAN, FROM THE FLATTERING TONGUE OF THE SEDUCTRESS. DO NOT LUST AFTER HER BEAUTY IN YOUR HEART, NOR LET HER ALLURE YOU WITH HER EYELIDS...CAN A MAN TAKE FIRE TO HIS BOSOM, AND HIS CLOTHES NOT BE BURNED? CAN ONE WALK ON HOT COALS, AND HIS FEET NOT BE SEARED? SO IS HE WHO GOES IN TO HIS NEIGHBOR'S WIFE; WHOEVER TOUCHES HER SHALL NOT BE INNOCENT... WHOEVER COMMITS ADULTERY...LACKS UNDERSTANDING; HE WHO DOES SO DESTROYS HIS OWN SOUL.** Lust is like an infection festering in the heart, just waiting for that horrible opportunity to break out and spread in actions.

Even if no one else knows, you know and your heavenly Father knows. Then Satan will change his tune and his invitation to indulge becomes his accusation of sin, **YOU ARE THE MAN! GOD WILL NEVER FORGIVE YOU FOR THIS!**

Thank God that He through His Law works repentance in our hearts to acknowledge that, **“YES, WE ARE THE ONES GUILTY of sins in thought, word and deed.”** Thank God that He leads us to repent of our sins and to believe that He alone can cover our sins with the blood of the Lamb who was slain for us. God's undeserved love for us means permanent and complete forgiveness. God's love also may mean painful discipline, but its only intent is to yield the sweet blessings of spiritual life and salvation.

May each of us take a good, long, hard look into our own hearts and lives with the unrelenting and ever revealing light of the Law of God. See what evil lives in our hearts. Not just sexual lust and immorality, but pride, selfishness, laziness, lies, hatred, worry, covetousness and greed, arrogance, self-pity, bitterness, revenge, anger and on and on. **Are YOU THE MAN? Am I THE MAN? Are WE THE ONES?** Yes, we are all guilty of countless sins, but thank God He has taken away our sins, paid for them in full with Christ's shed blood. And thank God that out of love He disciplines us, guides us and strengthens us with His Word.

We close our sermon this morning with some of the words of David that he wrote after Nathan had confronted him with his sin. May these words also be our words of repentance and confident trust in Jesus:

THE ONLY CURE FOR OUR SINS.

We read selected verses from Psalms 51 & 32.

HAVE MERCY UPON ME, O GOD, ACCORDING TO YOUR LOVINGKINDNESS; ACCORDING TO THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR TENDER MERCIES, BLOT OUT MY TRANSGRESSIONS. WASH ME THOROUGHLY FROM MY INIQUITY, AND CLEANSE ME FROM MY SIN. FOR I ACKNOWLEDGE MY TRANSGRESSIONS, AND MY SIN IS EVER BEFORE ME. AGAINST YOU, YOU ONLY, HAVE I SINNED, AND DONE THIS EVIL IN YOUR SIGHT...PURGE ME WITH HYSSOP, AND I SHALL BE CLEAN; WASH ME, AND I SHALL BE WHITER THAN SNOW...RESTORE TO ME THE JOY OF YOUR SALVATION. AND UPHOLD ME WITH YOUR GENEROUS SPIRIT. THEN I WILL TEACH TRANSGRESSORS YOUR WAYS, AND SINNERS SHALL BE CONVERTED TO YOU...O LORD, OPEN MY LIPS, AND MY MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH YOUR PRAISE. FOR YOU DO NOT DESIRE SACRIFICE, OR ELSE I WOULD GIVE IT; YOU DO NOT DELIGHT IN BURNT OFFERING. THE SACRIFICES OF GOD ARE A BROKEN SPIRIT, A BROKEN AND A CONTRITE HEART--THESE, O GOD, YOU WILL NOT DESPISE...BLESSED IS HE WHOSE TRANSGRESSION IS FORGIVEN, WHOSE SIN IS COVERED. BLESSED IS THE MAN TO WHOM THE LORD DOES NOT IMPUTE INIQUITY, AND IN WHOSE SPIRIT THERE IS NO GUIL.

Amen.