

Pentecost B-9, King David Series  
August 6, 2006

2 Samuel 11:26—12:13a  
Title: Truth

Hell-o, I'm David. I'm a sinner!

I invite you to find in the Lutheran Book of Worship page 196, the Service of Individual Confession and Forgiveness.

Look to the bottom of page 196, about an inch from the bottom, there you would see the words I confess before God that I am guilty of many sins, Especially I confess before you that....

The confession is made

For all this I am sorry and I pray for forgiveness. I want to do better.

At the top of page 197 is a section of Psalm 51 attributed to King David who has admitted his wrongdoing and understands the gravity of his sinfulness... Even to recognize that God could cast David away from his presence.

The pastor then asks: Do you believe that the word of forgiveness I speak to you comes from God himself?

Assuming the one making confession says Yes, then the pastor administers the absolution: God is merciful and blesses you. By the command  
Of our Lord Jesus Christ, I, a called and ordained servant  
Of the Word, forgive you your sins in the name of the  
Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
AMEN!!

Any persons raised in a faith tradition where you regularly went to confession?

I'm jealous. In spite of all the abuses of individual confession, the Protestant church has for generations neglected the great gift it provides. Our forebearer Martin Luther never intended to rid the church of confession. In fact, Luther suggested that it was the closest thing to a third sacrament.

Have you heard of the Augsburg Confession? It's a synopsis of 28 statements of faith by the early Lutherans. One of the articles says that the important element in confession of sin is the absolution—

--the words of forgiveness.

Some of you might remember that during Lent for a few years we held a service of confession and forgiveness. It provided an opportunity for folks To unburden their hearts. Those who participated found it Life giving.

What a real miracle it is to  
Speak whatever is weighing you down  
And to have someone not reject you for it,  
But offer you the best words there are—

God is merciful and blesses you.

We can safely assume that King David knew where page 196 was in the Hebrew Book of Worship. And that David felt no need to turn there. Uriah the Hittite has been killed and the beautiful Bathsheba became his wife. Case closed.

Except for Nathan! Who catches David in his sin.  
It's safe to say that someone as powerful as David wouldn't Cotton to being told by Nathan you need to turn to page 196.  
That's too risky.

So the parable of the rich man absconding with the little ewe lamb of the poor man is the bait allowing Nathan to say to the King:

You are the Man!!

This could well be the greatest passage in the Bible!! There are moral norms which even the most powerful cannot abrogate.

And Nathan is hard on David:

You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword.  
And have taken his wife to be your wife,  
And have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.

Which is to say---guilty, guilty, guilty.

Nathan finally says it like it is. He's not soft on sin. This is a matter of life and death for David.

What do we do with the judgement of God?  
Is God keeping a list of every time we are naughty  
And not nice? Occasionally zapping us with a  
Jolt of punishment, delighting in bringing us to our knees?

OR

Is God just this sweet, nice insignificant wimp who  
Doesn't care what you do?

Ask Nathan? Ask David.

God's judgement is an instrument of God's mercy.  
It's a course correction for us in the direction of life and salvation. Any  
parent know that correcting and restoring a child with proper discipline  
Is for that child's best interest.

In Elementary School like many my age I enjoyed  
Comic books. One day while at the store there were  
Two comic books I wanted to purchase. I had enough  
Money for only one. Instead of putting the one I couldn't  
Afford back on the shelf, I took it to the counter  
Tucked inside the one I intended to purchase.

The person behind the counter wisely asked, "How many are  
You purchasing?" "One," I responded.

"Are you sure it's really only one?" she inquired.  
"Yes, I'm sure."

"Are you really sure?" At which point I had been exposed. Being found out  
can be a gift. It can save your life. Next time it may not have just a comic  
book.

"I have sinned against the Lord." Nothing God loves more than a repentant  
sinner. What may really matter is to be given the space to  
look into your own heart and discern the sin embedded there.  
To be able to say I am the man!

Last year playwright Edward Albee came to Raleigh  
Interviewed by the local paper Albee was asked about  
The themes of his plays. He said he had one theme:

“My plays are always about the fact that people don’t live their lives fully.  
They sleep their way through them; they skid their way through them with  
the basic concern of being rich and comfortable, and not being upset.”

Repentance is about waking up. It’s about not skidding  
Through life. Confession of wrongdoing lies at the  
Heart of Biblical faith.

Whatever happened to sin?

Unlike so many leaders we could name, what made King David great is  
His admission of sin! David did not hide from the truth and he was set free  
by it.

Richard Foster once set aside three days to sort out the trail of the serpent  
In his life. One day for his childhood; one day for his youth; one day for his  
Adult life. And Foster wrote everything he could that burdened his life

This autobiographical confession

Foster then took to a confessor.

And he offered it to that person....and heard a word of  
Forgiveness.

Foster wanted to keep this journal. His confessor refused.

Instead he took the pages and slowly tore them up.

Whatever happened to sin?

Create in me a clean heart O God and renew a right spirit within me.

It is a sign of strength to admit when you have been wrong.

Faith formation involves being dependent on the mercy and grace of Christ.  
Recognizing our need for mercy is without a doubt a great act of faith....

Our Lord Jesus Christ was called the Son of David. That’s no coincidence.