LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH GARNER, NDC 8/5/18

Grace Available to All

In the name…

Let us pray…

The governmental landscape in Israel was tough. Perhaps the toughest of any time, and it did not seem to get much better as the chapters go on in 2nd Samuel. David of course abused his power to fulfil his lust for Bathsheba and a chapter later, Amon rapes his half-sister Tamar. Some describe these incidences as the most infamous sins of Israel’s history.

It, first of all, shows the inequity between men and women. We hear about the lusts of the men. David saw Bathsheba and lusted for her and because he was in power, he could do whatever it takes to have his way. Even to the point of indirectly killing her husband. He put him in the front line of battle which reduces one’s ability to survive battle. And he did not. What is mentioned about Bathsheba is “she mourned for her husband”.

Ammon saw how beautiful his half-sister was and he could do whatever was necessary to have her. She was asked to bring food to his room alone and he had his way with her void of any witnesses. In fact, David was the one who asked her to do this. All we hear of Tamar was she tried to ‘resist him and she even names what he was about to do as foolishness. The prophet tells David “You are the man”. After Uriah died, After Bathsheba became David’s , After David tells the story of the rich man who used his position to take a lamb from a poor man. Terrible instances of abuse of power and position, David and Ammon.

Paul writes to the Ephesians admonishing them to live lives worthy of the calling to which you have been called. Nathan was “Harping” on David to do the same, but of course it fell on deaf ears.

Still after hearing the consequences for what he did from Nathan, David admits, “I have sinned against the Lord’?

All the readings this day is certain ways tell of the grace and healing that is available to all, to David to Ammon. Ephesians tells us how we were first loved by the Lord Christ so that our bodies are built up in love. As the epilogue takes place after Jesus feeds the 5000 He tells those who stuck around that what they had eaten was nothing. He is the Bread of Life and those Who come to Him will never be hungry and never be thirsty. And it was available to all the people who were there. It was available for David.

You know we all need grace for whatever reasons. You may have heard of the man who stole Miss Helen a shark from the San Antonio Aquarium. If David’s was the most infamous in in the Old Testament, this is probably the most unusual at least for our times. He took Miss Helen out of the aquarium and placed her in a blanket in a baby carriage and brought her home to replace his shark which had died. He confessed, and even though he needs help still grace is available even to him and Miss Helen is fine and will continue to entertain families who visit her.

David did not just confess “he had sinned against the Lord”, and he wrote the beautiful psalm Psalm 51 asking for God’s mercy, compassion and that God would cleanse him of his sin. We speak a similar confession each Sunday morning and sometimes using the words of David, today we said, “Forgive us of our offenses and cleanse us from proud thoughts and empty desires.” David uses the plant hyssop a mint-like plant used in purification rites, we have our baptismal font by which we can be reminded of our baptisms and God’s continual work in cleansing us of our sins.. David does not just ask for forgiveness, but he asks that God create a new heart within him. And he knows that can only occur as God is presence with him through His Holy Spirit who will continue to sustain David in the joy of salvation that God graciously gives.

David responded in humility, not so with Ammon. Scripture tells us he no longer loved Tamar, he really never did. However, Absolom. Another son of David and Tamar’s full brother , felt he needed to take revenge and had Ammon killed. Whereas David confessed and asked forgiveness, Ammon never did and his story became tragic, Absolom had to flee to exile for a few years, and we know he died tragically in battle. But God’s grace was available to all of them , David, Ammon, Absolom, even those who carried out David’s and Absolom’s orders. God’s grace is available to us no matter Who we are, and no matter What we may have done.

Through God’s grace things can be turned around

Bobcat Goldthwait last night on “live from Here” told a flight he was on where an engine fell off. He said many of the passengers saw it, and panic was ensuing, even two flight attendants up front were sobbing, but the pilot got on the speaker and calmly said “we will be landing in Cleveland in 2 minutes. He said he wanted more drama like the pilot excitedly speaking to them telling them just how serious their predicament was. The passengers certainly were feeling it. Goldthwait mentioned that many of the passengers were special Olympic athletes returning from a competition. A minute later the pilot got on again to say, “when we land there will be foam on the runway and a firetruck at the end of it.” From the back of the plane Goldthwait heard, “A Firetruck, yes” Goldthwait laughed. In his mind he was cleansed of all panic , the firetruck symbolized God’s grace for the boy who said it and Goldthwait. What symbolizes God’s grace for us?

A would be bank robber entered a bank in Bayonne, New Jersey this week and handed a note to the teller to give him all the money in the drawer. Then, he changed his mind and said he wanted to open an account instead. Unfortunately, he did not have prop ID. Somehow God’s great had come to him and he took it upon himself to do something about it.

David in the Psalm not only asked for cleansing, but he asked to be restored to the joy of salvation.

All God’s people, all of us are available to receive God’s cleansing, to receive God’s grace, mercy and compassion , and to receive the joy of salvation.

In the name…