2 Samuel 12:7 Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man!”

 I am going to guess as you heard the opening words of our text, **“When Uriah’s wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him,**” that you immediately recognized this as the history, the sordid history of David and Bathsheba. I know, I know that whenever you see this made into a movie that movie always portrays this as if it were one of the great love stories of the world. It is not. It is a horrid, damning history of sin and at the same time it is the wonderful and awesome reminder of God’s grace and love.

 How did all of this start? With David on a sleepless night going up to his roof top, a rather common occurrence in that day. From his rooftop David could look down on the next roof top of the Home of the Mighty Men where his top soldiers were put up and housed. It was a fateful night. For on that night there was Bathsheba on the roof bathing. In all probability she was standing, the servants pouring water on her and sponging her down. Most likely there were screens, but because of the angle of David’s view he saw everything.

 Oh David, so far, faithful and very blessed King of the Lord. Don’t look! Don’t look and be filled with lust and want! Don’t feed that horrid beast of sin that dwells within us all. But that is not how King David conducts himself. He looks and lusts. He sends for information. He sends for Bathsheba. He in a great moment of weakness and denial of the Lord God sleeps with this woman who is the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

 As if all of this was not bad enough the woman becomes pregnant. David, come clean! Confess your sin and fault before the Lord! No, at this point David’s heart is darkened and it is evil and foolishness that takes over. David tries to make it look like the baby is Uriah’s, but Uriah, faithful, devoted, honorable Uriah for noble reasons just won’t cooperate. So David, evil hearted, in the throw of despair, to proud to admit his wrong and seek the help of the Lord, David plots and carries out murder. The King orders his general to engage in battle and then to withdraw so that Uriah is killed. So it is. And it is at this point that our text picks up and we hear how all of this will end. Our theme will be: **A GOD OF MERCY. 1st. The Horror of the sin. 2nd. The Call to Repentance. 3rd. The Mercy of God.**

 I don’t know if you ever noticed, but you should, that in our texts, until everything is said and done properly in the Lord’s eyes, that this woman is not called Bathsheba but rather is referred to as “Uriah’s wife.” It is one of the small ways, the numerous small ways that the Lord lets us know what is made so absolutely clear in chapter 11:26, **“But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.”**

 Isn’t that a scary line? The Lord was displeased. I don’t know about you, but I can’t think of a single thing more horrid than to hear words like that, especially if those words were aimed at me. No wonder the Lord was displeased. We have a case of lust, adultery, deceit, and murder. All of this laid on the shoulders of David. I can’t explain it other than to guess, but don’t you find it interesting that in all of this Bathsheba is not addressed as a sinner or as one who needs to repent. I believe it is because in reality, she had no choice. Her King, the mighty King David had summoned her and wanted her. What choice did she have? I think that is why none of this is laid on Bathsheba but everything is laid upon David. David is at fault. David has turned away from the Lord and his ways. David has denied the faith and His Lord and I have no doubt that had David died during this period David would surely have gone to hell.

 Surely the debt and weight of sin is something seen and grasped by all. Oh, I am sorry, do you feel that since you have not done all that David did, well therefore you are not as bad or as worthy of God’s wrath and anger as David was? Do you forget what it is that we confess and believe, what the Book of Romans so clearly states and shows us? Romans 3:9-12 says: **”What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."**

 Well, now, that doesn’t leave us any room to declare ourselves better or less sinful than David! And in truth we know it. We know that for even one itty bitty sin the Lord our God declares that our fate will be eternal hell and damnation. We are called upon by the Law of God to be perfect and holy. Not almost! Not “I got close!” Not, “I am not as bad as that one!” The law clearly shows and declares that each is a horrid sinner and worthy of nothing but death and damnation. Such is the power of the law. Such is the truth of our lives. We, everyone, is just like David. We are filled with sin and filled with the guilt and weight of what that sin brings. We are all sinners in need of the Lord.

 So it was in David’s life. I want to tell you that this history is not really written in a timeframe style. Why do I say that? Because most would agree that following the sins of David in this history we have a period of maybe a year to a year and a half before Nathan is sent to David. In that period of time the Lord God tried to get David to repent and come clean, but David resisted and turned from doing what was right. Ever read the words of Psalm 32? In this Psalm of David, David talks about this period of his life and what it brought upon him. He says, **“When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through all my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.”**

 That’s what un-repented of sin can do to us. It crushes our spirit, causes us to groan and feel as if we haven’t the strength to do anything at all. When sin weighs us down it is a crushing load and spiritually drives us to the depths of despair and darkness. Because we don’t and can’t live the way God wants us to, because we have souls and often shattered spirits we because of our faith can recognize the horror of sin in our lives and turn to the Lord in repentance. That to me is always the key. We turn to the Lord in repentance. We hear God’s plea to come clean. We are motivated by the Lord to confess our weakness and need for him and his strength. With humility and humbleness we ask the Lord for strength and help that we might overcome and get past whatever it is that hinders us and keeps us down. And God will help!

 Do note that God tried to bring David to repentance and when David continued to resist and ignore the Lord, the Lord then took action. The Lord sent His prophet Nathan. With great skill and with the wonderful help of the Lord Nathan came and laid out a tale of injustice and great harm to a neighbor. The story was so skillfully crafted that David had no idea it was really about him until that memorable and soul shattering announcement of Nathan, **“You are the man!”**

 God’s Word had its affect. With horror and with humbleness David accepted the Lord’s judgment against him. Please note all that the Lord said. **“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. 8 I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. 9 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. 10 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.' 11 "This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"**

Please note the implications of finding that the Lord is “displeased” with you! About the only thing I can say is that in today’s day and age, because it is a new and grace filled covenant, the Lord does not work this way. In other words, don’t go thinking that this or that is happening in your life because somehow God is punishing you as he did David. You are not King David, public servant of the Lord, and public representative of God Almighty. You have not had God speak with you and visit you on a personal level, nor are any of us found to be filled with the Word of the Lord as David was. I do want you to know I think this instance of David’s very public punishment was because as our text says, David was the public servant of the Lord. In other words, God used David as an example of the horror of sin. I do not think that today, because of Jesus, God works in the same way, although I do not have and know the mind of the Lord in all circumstances.

 One think I do know for sure. As the depth of his sin hits home, David clearly confesses, **“I have sinned against the Lord.”** No excuses. No passing of the buck. Clear and simple confession of sin.

 And Nathan responds, **“The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the Lord show utter contempt, the son born to you will die.”** Here is David’s final judgment. The son, this child now maybe one year old or so, that boy was going to die. But the good news, the greatest news was that David was forgiven, that David himself was not going to die. In this particular case, I believe the Lord is telling David he would not eternally die for his sin. In other words, David’s confession and the Lord’s grace restored David’s status as a child of God and an heir of eternal life.

 Dear people, I believe here is the greatest thing we need to learn in this text. To learn that God because of his grace will forgive us and will keep us from the eternal fires of hell. To learn that God, with love and because of the future Savior, will not eternally punish us for our sins but will always, with love, forgive us and restore us as His children and heirs of eternal life.

 God does this because of Jesus. Jesus is the one who paid for our sins, yes, even for the sins of David. Jesus is the one who suffered, died and then rose from the dead to let us know that in Him and with Him there is forgiveness and with that forgiveness the gift of eternal life. True, in today’s world your sin may have earthly consequences, (you may still be pregnant, still have an std, and still go to prison for your crime, etc.) but please note that your sin because of Jesus will have no eternal consequences. That is the message of our faith.

 Faith understands our need for Jesus. Faith grasps that God has sent Jesus to be our Savior and when we sin, faith, this wonderful gift of God, leads us to repent of that sin, to have the attitude to hate sin, even that sin and to have the grasp that in Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven. That’s faith. That’s the Christian faith. That we need Jesus. We need him because most of us are in many ways just like David, filled with sin and in need of God’s words to call us to repent. And repent we do. I have sinned. We all are sinners. And to all of us, in Jesus we are told, “Your sins are forgiven. You are not going to die.” May we know this truth and be guided in your ways O Lord. Amen.