

Wesley United Methodist Church

July 26, 2015

“The Miss, The Kiss, The Mess, The Rest.”

2 Samuel 11:1-15

A few years back, I read about a group of three burglars in Vang, Norway, who tried to open a large safe in a small factory. They attached a small explosive device to the door of the safe and then hid in the next room until it went off. The explosion was so powerful that it demolished the whole building and left them buried under a pile of rubble.

The ironic thing about it was, the safe had never held any money. The company money was kept in a cash box in an unlocked desk drawer. But what they did keep in the safe was the company's product. Nitroglycerine.

I nearly fell out of my chair laughing when I first read that. Those poor guys didn't know how explosive the situation could be. The passage from 2 Samuel is very similar to the story of the three burglars.

I doubt David knew what he was getting into or how explosive the situation he was getting into could be. I don't think he realized how volatile his desire for Bathsheba was. But once the fuse of his lust was lit, David found himself buried under the rubble of the explosive consequences.

And what we wind up with is a story that will rival any Hollywood movie or daytime Soap. This story is filled with romance, passion, deceit, confrontation, court intrigue, misunderstanding, and murder.

Here's David, the charismatic Biblical hero and King of Israel. He was a child star who slung his way to fame and suffered the wrath from a jealous King Saul. David was forced to take to the hills and became a Robin Hood type character who unified the small mercenary groups into one. David was favored by God and pulled off the coup of the century.

After Saul and his son Jonathan, who was David's best friend, died in battle, David is crowned king and unites the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, which had been fighting a bloody civil war for years. David was blessed by God—everything and everyone was on David's side.

And that brings us to the Miss. David has it all. He has fame and fortune, popularity, love, you name it, he has it. He's the King. And “it's good to be the King.”

One day after successful opening season at war, he's home, exhilarated by his success, riding on the crest of his popularity. He plans to jump right back into the middle of it as soon as he takes care of some of those kingly things they pay him to do. It's evening; he rises from a short nap and his eyes are drawn to a scene in a courtyard not too far away. It's an innocent scene. One that probably took place 1,000 times before. A scene that took place in almost every courtyard of every house in Israel at the time. But only the King could look down from his palace into the courtyards of his people. There in the courtyard was the Miss. Bathsheba, bathing with the shades up. We don't know a whole lot about Bathsheba except that she could have been Miss Israel 1000 BC.

And there she was, with nothing left to the imagination. She was Uriah the Hittite's wife. And Uriah was one of David's faithful warrior lieutenants. So surely, David had seen her before. But probably never in the altogether. The minute he did, his eyes popped out, his tongue hit the floor. There was only one thing on his mind and it wasn't gin rummy.

And, of course, the Miss led to the Kiss. Now, if it had all ended that moment, the Bible would be a couple of chapters shorter. If David would have said, “Hey, Lord. I'm not sure what's come over me, but I sure could use your help right now,” things would have been different. David would have faced the temptation, overcome it and gone onto who knows what else.

One of the things we learn here is that Temptation is NOT a sin. Temptation is Not a sin. So many people think, “Well, I've already thought it. That's just as bad as doing it, so I might as well just go ahead and do it.” It's NOT sinful to have temptations or to be tempted. Everybody is tempted, especially Christians. It comes with the territory. Even Jesus was tempted. But like Jesus, we don't have to give in.

Martin Luther put it this way. "You can't keep the birds from flying overhead, but you CAN keep them from nesting in your hair." In other words, you CAN say NO to temptation. It's best to say NO! to temptation because temptation always invites us to take one step too far.

We underestimate the power of temptation over us. We think we can always get back. That's what David did. Just a little desire. One step over the line, then jump back. He could have said NO! He could have said, "I'm God's man, God's king and God's people don't act like that." He could have turned away from the window. Instead, he stepped over the line and the only place left was down. And he slid into sin.

And that's what caused the Mess. And what a mess it was. Daytime TV has nothing on this story. David has his fling and forgets about Bathsheba until the day the Western Union man delivers a telegram which reads, "Oops! He's gonna have your eyes."

This is where David muddies the water even further. David orders Uriah home on pretense of needing first hand news from the war. David then tells Uriah to go see his wife, thinking that will cover everything up. But Uriah is one of those leaders who cares more about his troops than himself. His men didn't get to spend the night with their wives, so neither did he. David tries twice but to no avail. David's cover-up failed, just like most cover-ups. Somebody always finds out. The next thing David does is send Uriah back to war. And not just to any part of the war but right to the front lines, leading the charge in the worst skirmishes. And sure enough, Uriah falls to enemy fire and the Mess gets worse.

You see, David, in trying to cover-up his adultery compounded the Mess by committing murder. David's once great life was suddenly a wreck. Maybe not on the outside. Nobody else knew, yet. But David did and it began to tear him apart. That's because that's what sin does to us. It eats away at us from the inside out. We run on fear not faith. Fear that we will get found out. Fear that we will get caught. Fear that we'll have to suffer the consequences. Fear that we could never be forgiven.

And that leads us to the Rest...and in my opinion, the Rest is the Best part of the story because the story isn't really about the Miss, the Kiss, or the Mess. It's about the Rest. The picture we have of David in this chapter is not David the King, the hero, the boy wonder, the magnificent musician and poet. No, the picture we have here of David is despicable. He's broken at least six of the Commandments. You want to slap him and say, "How could you be so stupid."

And you expect God to whack him up along side the head and boot him out on his backside. Nathan, the prophet comes on the scene and confronts David. And you're thinking this is it. But then David does something completely unexpected. David confessed to being the reason for the whole Mess. He confessed kissing the Miss and making a Mess. And the best part, the Rest is God forgave David. Oh David had to live with the consequences of his decisions. They don't just disappear. God doesn't take them away. We have to deal with the consequences of our actions. If we break the law, you have to pay the penalty. If all that God wanted was justice, David would have been struck down and the story would end.

But thanks be to God that God is a merciful God who can still use even the most broken life to bring glory to God. Dr. Grady Hardin once said, "God is always using sinners because there's no one else to use. Besides, then God gets all the credit."

The Rest for us is that God can take the worst situation possible and use it as a means to show the fullness of forgiveness and grace.