

## **King David, Paris Hilton and You**

*June 17, 2007*

(Pentecost 3 - Year C)

2 Samuel 11:26-12:10,13-15

*St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Waco, Texas*

Lately, it seems, the world has been in turmoil.

We are at war in Iraq.

Congress is debating the immigration bill.

Global warming is taking its effects.

And, Paris Hilton is in prison.

Most of you, I am sure, have heard that Paris Hilton is now serving her  
23 day prison sentence.

In the past week, there was a frenzy in the media because she had been  
released early.

But now, Paris is back in jail serving out her sentence.

According to the Waco Trib, Paris Hilton spoke candidly last week with  
Barbara Walters.

Paris told Barbara Walters that she has been changed by her experience  
in jail and has found God.

Paris confesses this to Barbara:

“Now, I would like to make a difference.

God has given me this new chance.”

Our Old Testament reading this morning is also about the sin of a  
famous celebrity.

Instead of reading about it in the Waco Trib, we are hearing this story  
from the Book of Second Samuel in the Bible.

And, instead of hearing about Barbara Walters, we are hearing about the  
prophet Nathan.

And, instead of Paris Hilton, we are hearing about the great King David  
of Israel.

The biblical story from Second Samuel is one of the most scandalous  
stories in the Bible, which I am sure would rival the Paris Hilton

saga if these events had happened today.  
The story goes like this:

On a spring afternoon in Jerusalem, King David is walking around on his roof and sees the beautiful Bathsheba, bathing down below in her birthday suit.

Yet, Bathsheba is already taken - she is the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of David's generals.

Ignoring the fact that she is a married woman, ignoring the fact she is married to one of David's closest friends, David summons Bathsheba - and the story gets X-rated pretty fast.

The next thing we hear, Bathsheba turns up pregnant, so David goes into "cover up mode."

After careful scheming, David makes sure that Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, is killed on the battlefield.

Then, David makes an honest woman out of Bathsheba, marries her and their baby is born.

David and Bathsheba would have made great stars in their own reality TV series.

But, Scripture says that the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

So the Lord sent Nathan to David.

Now Nathan was a prophet, a truth teller.

So, in order to get David to tell the truth, Nathan tells David a story:

Nathan tells a story about a rich man and a poor man.

In this story, a rich man has lots and lots of sheep.

But the poor man only has one sheep.

Yet, when it comes time for the rich man to fix dinner,

He doesn't go and kill one of his own sheep.

Instead the rich man goes and steals the poor man's only sheep.

David becomes enraged when he hears this unfair story.

And David says that this rich man should be punished.

With that, Nathan has snagged King David and says to him:  
“You are the man!”

David is caught in his lies.

David realizes that Nathan’s story is really about him.

Because David had everything in the world that he would ever want.

Yet, like the rich man in Nathan’s story who stole the poor man’s only  
sheep, David stole the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

David’s affair with Bathsheba was now uncovered.

So, David confesses to Nathan, saying:

“I have sinned against the Lord.”

And Nathan immediately replies to David:

“The Lord has put away your sin.”

Both Paris Hilton and King David confessed their sins.

Paris confessed to Barbara Walters.

David confessed to Nathan.

And in response to her confession, Paris Hilton sees a second chance  
given to her by God.

And in response to *his* confession, King David immediately hears:

“The Lord has put away your sin.”

All of us need to be constantly reminded that God has put away our sins.

All of us need to be reminded about forgiveness.

For, the God that we worship is a God of second chances, a God of new  
beginnings, a God of forgiveness.

Yet, forgiveness begins with confession.

When my brother and I were growing up, we would occasionally get  
into arguments or would get into trouble.

Sometimes my brother and I would then lie to cover up our mistake.

And we would not come clean on what it was we had done wrong.

My dad would always try to get a confession out of us.

Eventually, he would wear us down, saying:

“Somebody needs to ‘fess up.”

After a while, the whole scene would become almost comical, as he would say:

“All right now, which one of you boys is going to ‘fess up.”

After one of us would finally cave in and ‘fess up,  
my dad would say to us:

“All right - now look ashamed.”

And, we would give to him this fake, sad puppy dog look.

Then, we would all crack up in laughter.

It is an important part of the process of forgiveness to confess our sins,  
to ‘fess up, and to look ashamed.

The Bible calls this having a “contrite heart.”<sup>1</sup>

Having a contrite heart means that we are sincerely sorry and ashamed  
for our sins and that we want to turn around our lives.

Confession - with a sincere and contrite heart - was an integral part of  
the forgiveness offered by God to King David.

David sincerely confesses to Nathan saying:

“I have sinned against the Lord.”

And Nathan, God’s messenger, immediately replies to David:

“The Lord has put away your sin.”

Because confession is such an integral part of forgiveness, we offer you  
a chance every Sunday to make *your* confession to God.

David confessed to Nathan saying:

“I have sinned against the Lord.”

And, on most Sundays during worship, we all pray:

“Most merciful God,

We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed.”

In place of the prophet Nathan, the priest then gives the absolution by  
basically saying:

“The Lord has put away your sin.”

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<sup>1</sup> See Psalm 51:17

In the New Testament, in the First Letter of John, the writer says:  
“If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our  
sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”<sup>2</sup>

Confession is an integral part of forgiveness and reconciliation.  
Confession is so important that we offer it, in a group setting, on  
Sundays during worship.

And, private confessions can be heard by me at any time.

All you have to do is to make an appointment with me to go through the  
private service of The Reconciliation of a Penitent that is in The  
Book of Common Prayer.

Forgiveness of sins is one of the cornerstone beliefs in the Christian faith  
and life.

Because the good news, the gospel, is that we are forgiven by God’s  
mercy and grace.

If you have served prison time like Paris Hilton,  
If you have committed adultery like King David,  
If you lie, cheat, steal, hurt, cuss, covet, pollute,  
If you confess your sins with a sincere and contrite heart,  
Then hear now these words of good news:

“The Lord has put away your sin.”

AMEN.

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<sup>2</sup> 1 John 1:9