

2 Samuel 11:1-17; 26-27; 12:1-9

I decided that we'd handle this reading together today. It's a very familiar story; we all have a handle on it. But it also has gaps and silences that one may fill more or less unconsciously, to make it make sense to us, and that's why I'd like to kind of crowd-source this text. I have some questions, and you have the text in front of you, and I do have a closing thought, so let's see what we make of the story of David and Bathsheba.

1. It's the time of year when kings go out to battle, but David doesn't. Not only that, but he's apparently napping in the afternoons (vs. 2). How do you make sense of his behavior?
2. Bathsheba is identified for David as someone's daughter and someone's wife. If he knows she belongs to somebody, and he takes her anyway, why did he ask?
3. Uriah is a Hittite, but he's concerned about the ark and his men, and he behaves in an exemplary fashion. Why do you think the narrator tells us so much about him?
4. How are we supposed to think about Bathsheba and her role in this story?
5. Why do you think David reacts so vehemently to Nathan's parable?
6. What would be the moral of this story, if you had to find one?

I have lots of thoughts about this story, but the new one for me this time around was how sort of listless and self-indulgent David seems. I thought about his shirking of his duty in battle, and how he used to be such a badass as a young man, playing Robin Hood out there in the wilderness and even allying himself with the Philistines. Is he sick of war? Or sick of being king? Or is he just complacent and insulated from the real needs of his kingdom? For sure, he is insulated and isolated. He doesn't seem to have any friends or confidants, and only Nathan will

talk to him about what matters.

I wonder if David would have responded to this blog post from Tumblr:

I want to be asked to come over and help put my friend's kids to bed as casually as they might text their spouse and ask them to pick up milk on the way home.

I want to stop and pick up milk for another friend because I know their spouse hates the grocery store.

I want to buy fruit that I don't like because it's on special and I know people who do.

I want to pass lemons over the fence and to take my neighbours' bins out when they forget.

I want group chats instead of rideshare apps, calls in the middle of the night because someone's at the hospital, lonely or hungry or both.

I want to do the dishes in other people's houses, extra servings wrapped in tinfoil and tea towels so it's still warm when you drop it off, a basket of other people's mending by my couch.

I want to be surrounded by reminders that 'imposing' on each other is what we were born to do. [queerspacepunk.tumblr.com]

We need to be needed, and we need to remember that other people do too. David did a terrible, monstrous thing. I think the abuse of power is a symptom of disconnection from other people.

Let us pray:

God, although you forgave David, he never made it up to Uriah or Bathsheba. This is such a troubling story, because we've seen versions of it ourselves. Amidst bewildering brokenness, we ask that you would equip us and grace us to foment connection, so that your face might be recognizable to all people in the faces of our neighbors. Amen.