



Saint + Sinner

This Sunday Morning's Message

Title: "Saint + Sinner"

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Smythe Street Church

What Do You Think Endearred David to God?

If you're not familiar with the story of the man who would be known as King David, he is a pivotal person in the Bible. Dare I say that aside from Jesus, and Abraham, he is the person that is probably among the most significant in the Scriptures.

Jesus is called 'the Son of David' as a reference to him being a descendant of this great king. And God gave David a promise that his heir would be a ruler that would rule forever. Pretty big stuff.

But why David? Outline David's Life

- Started as Shepherd in the fields
 - Worshipper
- David vs. Goliath
 - Was it his great trust in God
- His treatment of King Saul
 - Playing his harp to appease him when troubled, even when attacked
 - Not killing him in the cave
 - Mourning his loss, even when he was promised the throne
 - Was it his honourability

All these are good things, each of which could be enough to talk about for a message or longer, but this week something struck me in the story of David. Something in an unlikely spot, that I think reveals something of David's heart, and has a lesson for us all, and it comes from a time David probably wished he could have lived over.

David's Unwise Choice

In 2 Samuel chapters 11 & 12

- David stayed home
 - Saw Bathsheba (taking a bath)
 - Called her to his chamber (remember the power dynamics at play here)
 - She gets pregnant
 - David tries to cover his tracks by calling her husband back from the battlefield
 - Husband is honourable, doesn't want to enjoy time with wife at home when other men are in the field

- David arranges to have his commander leave Uriah vulnerable in the battlefield, essentially commanding his general to have him killed.
- He then takes Bathsheba in his home, and thinks it is all over.
- Nathan the Prophet shows up in 2 Samuel 12.
 - Tells him a story, which is a creative illustration to expose David's sin.

David's reaction is what caught me.

2 Samuel 12:13 (NIV84)
Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

His response is what impresses me.

- No excuses
- No explaining
- Honest realization of what he had done, and that it was wrong. He had done wrong before others, and done wrong against God.

One of the more famous chapters of the book of Psalms was written by David, in response to Nathan the Prophet calling him out.

Psalm 51:1–4 (NIV84) – A David Psalm
 1 Have mercy on me, O God,
 according to your unfailing love;
 according to your great compassion
 blot out my transgressions.
 2 Wash away all my iniquity
 and cleanse me from my sin.
 3 For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is always before me.
 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned
 and done what is evil in your sight,
 so that you are proved right when you speak
 and justified when you judge.

David was more concerned about the condition of his heart, than looking right and protecting his hide.

Psalm 139:23–24 (NIV84) – a David Psalm

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24 See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

The Honest Origin of the Message:

Perhaps the response of David stopped me short, because it wasn't what I was looking for when I began my quest in study this summer. The origins of this message was in me wrestling with how to handle revelations about a famous pastor I have looked up to for years.

When we focus on the questions about how we can handle or measure the sinfulness of others, it is a distraction.

The question we have power over, is, "What is the condition of my heart?"

We can spend so much time bemoaning our thoughts about the morality, wisdom and lives of our celebrities, politicians, leaders and even our friends, yet we are so unwilling to examine and lay bare the contents of our hearts before God and ourselves.

Isn't this What Jesus Taught Us?

Matthew 7:1–5 (NIV)

1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

This not to say we don't need to be discerning with others, or that when someone does wrong there are no consequences, however,

JESUS TEACHES THE SIN I MUST BE MOST CONCERNED WITH IS MY OWN.

And all of us have our own, sin.

Isaiah 53:6 (NIV84)

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Being Honest about our Own Sin and brokenness Opens us to God's Help

Psalms 51:10–12 (NIV84)

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

We need God to do a work in our heart.

Create – is not just transforming something there, but creating something new in us, a new creation.

Coming Clean Before God Makes Us Useful to Others

Psalms 51:13 (NIV84)

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will turn back to you.

Recognizing our sinfulness helps us love other sinners.

We don't ignore it, but the mature response to sinfulness in others is compassion, mercy, forgiveness.

What Would Happen If We Were a People that Humbly Examined Ourselves Before God

When we are acutely aware of our own sin, we can honestly extend grace towards the 'specks' in the eyes of others.

The cure to judgemental attitudes is not to try to stop judging, it is to start paying attention to the plank in our own eye.

Condemning others rarely draws them toward God, but sharing how God has met us in our pain, that inspires people towards Jesus.

Saint + Sinner

We are all **sinner**s who if we turn to Jesus are **saints** in progress.

When I was preparing my message, I struggled to find an image to use to promote it, until I did some searching and I found this. Image of the word sinner, which is ambigram. It is sinner, but when you flip it over, it is the word Saint.



I think this is the perfect image, because in reality we are all just sinners, that look to God to turn us around and make us saints.

There is no one who is written off in God's eyes. And none so righteous that we shouldn't be humbled that God would send his son Jesus to give his life for us.

Maybe you are a believer in Jesus that came here for the 1,000th time today. Let us guard our hearts, seek to discover our own planks, our own besetting sins rather than stand in judgment at the world around us.

Maybe you came here discouraged and beaten up, because you don't need someone to tell you things are not right in your life, even though sometimes people have. God does not give up on people easily. He didn't give up on David. His actions had consequences, but God still kept his promises to him. And his heartache became a Psalm that has endured for thousands of years and helped us to pray. God wants a relationship with you.

If you've never turned to God and acknowledged Jesus as your lord today would be a good day.

Discussion Starters:

1. Look at the ambigram pictured below. When you see this picture, how does it make you think about your own life as 'sinner + saint'?
2. Read Psalm 51 together. What parts of the passage stick out to you? Have there been times you have wanted to pray a prayer like this in your life?
3. Pastor Chad said, "Jesus teaches the sin I must be most concerned about is my own." Why do you think we struggle to look at sin in our own lives and find it easy to comment on it in the lives of others? (Feel free to read Matthew 7:1-5 in the discussion.)

