

What Have You Done?

At the end of the book of Judges, we read this verse: "*Judg. 21:25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.*" That time in Israel's history was a dark and chaotic time. There was no king to enforce the law, because there was no king. And we turn the page from Judges to 1 Samuel, looking, waiting for a king who would set things straight. Our hearts rise when we meet Saul. He starts out so well. But so very quickly he turns from the LORD and ends up committing suicide on Mount Gilboa. Then we meet David. David crushes lions. He crushes Goliath. Then he crushes all the Israelites enemies on every side. Would David then be a king we could trust? Would he be the king we could put our hope and trust in? And then we reach the part of David's life which we read about this morning.

David was in his palace overlooking his city. He saw a beautiful woman bathing in her courtyard. And, even though he has a number of wives, he wants *this* woman. And so, he has his servants get her. And he sleeps with her. Here is where our hearts drop. We were looking for a king who was *not* like Saul. We were looking for a king who would fear, love and trust in his LORD above all things. Instead, we find a man who lusts after another man's wife and then takes her. Our hearts cry out: David, what have you done?

We want to go to David and show him his sin. But David isn't done yet. David kills Bathsheba's husband, Uriah. And then he brings Bathsheba into his home. David had thought he had done an efficient job of covering up his sin *his* way. But, after all of this, the LORD tells us that what he did did not please the LORD. And our voices cry out once again: David, what have you done?

And, as if the adultery and murder weren't enough, we see a flood of pain cover every one around David. His servants were terrified of him. And, how many nights did Nathan spend agonizing and praying for David? How much pain did he bring to those who loved him! Oh David, what have you done? Can't you see what you are doing to yourself and everyone who loves you? But David was running *away* from the LORD. And he was running *over* anyone in his way.

Our hearts cry out: "what have you done, David?" But my heart could just as easily cry out: "what have you done, Steve?" There have been times, when like David, I thought about things which were not mine. And I wanted them. And when my stupid, sinful yearnings were brought into the light, I lied. I played the cover-up game, just not as ruthlessly and efficiently as David did. And when I was caught, I made a huge mess, just like David did.

That is a question which pierces our soul when we preach it to ourself: What have you done? Haven't we all thought, sinned, lied and then made an even greater mess by trying to cover it up. That is a question that corners us and crushes us. But, there is another question we ask in these words. We don't just ask: "David, what have you done?", we also ask: "O LORD, what have you done?"

Just picture David's life. He is so busy dealing with sin *his* way that he loses sight of what the LORD has done for him. He is so busy dealing with sin *his* way that he finds nothing in his life but sleepless nights and painful days. Then the prophet Nathan comes. And Nathan tricks David. He tells him a story about a ruthless rich man who steals a poor man's only sheep. David is jealous and angry. He says that that wicked man who stole the lamb must pay for it five times over. And Nathan says those simple, yet cutting words: "you are the man."

David is so weary of the sleepless nights and so weary of the painful days without peace. And he spoke words that made the angels in heaven sing in joy. What were those words? David simply said: "*I have sinned against the LORD.*"

And in return, what did Nathan say? Did he say: "Well that's nice David, but you're not sorry enough, and you definitely haven't done enough to earn the LORD's forgiveness." No, the faithful prophet says those beautiful words: "*The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.*" There were no hoops or hurdles for David because there is an answer to the question: "LORD, what have you done?" Nathan clearly said with all confidence: "*The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.*" He did this because he knew that there would be one who would come who would crush death. He said this because the one who would crush death would come from David's own family line.

We ask that question: "O LORD, what did you do?" And we find the answer to that question in Jesus. Jesus is David's greater son. Jesus is the one who gave Nathan's words their joy and life. Nathan said: "*The LORD has taken*

away your sin." What makes those words true is the fact that Jesus never lusted, never hated and never lied. He took away David's sin by being the only one who was tempted and never sinned.

And then, after that, Nathan said: "*You are not going to die.*" And Nathan had every right to say that. Nathan had every right to assure David and let him know that when he died he would live with the LORD forever. Nathan could say this with every confidence because Jesus died for him.

"O LORD, what did you do?" Jesus never lusted or lied. Jesus died so that we could say those words of forgiveness to each other: "*The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.*"

And so, we have the answer to the question: "LORD, what have you done with my sin." But immediately after that we need to answer another question: "LORD what have you done with the *consequences* of my sin?" David sinned against the LORD. And his sins were forgiven. But there were earthly consequences of that sin which still endured. And so, David's son died. His kingdom was torn from him for a time. His wives were stolen from him, just as he stole Bathsheba from Uriah.

These were the earthly consequences of his sin. He was definitely forgiven. But the consequences of his sin endured. We find the same pattern in our lives. The man who pulls the trigger on the gun is forgiven by God above and maybe even by the family. But, the person he kills remains dead. The woman who chain-smokes until she gets emphysema, is forgiven in the sight of the LORD through Jesus. But, it doesn't take away the damage she has done to her body. And it doesn't take away the pain her loved ones have at seeing her pain.

And so, what does the LORD do about that? What does he do with the reminder of the sin that remains decades after the sin is done? What does he do with the painful consequences of that sin? In Psalm 51, David answers that question: "*Psa. 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. 14 Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.*"

Although these consequences of his sin were painful, what did the LORD do with them in David's life? David says these words: "*I will teach transgressors your ways.*" David was able to speak about the dangers of sin and the treasure of forgiveness in a new way. He was able to say: 'Look how stupid and rebellious I was. Do not be like that!.' He was able to say: 'Look at how good and gracious our LORD is—that he could forgive a sinner like me!'

So, you too my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the answers to these questions. We say "O LORD, what have you done." We rejoice that he has never lusted or lied or lived against his Father's will. We rejoice that he died so that when we die we will live forever with him in heaven. We rejoice that the LORD turns even the painful consequences of our sins into good. In them we can see God's grace—his undeserved love. With them we can teach transgressors the ways of the LORD. Amen.