

Reading: Titus 3:3-7<sup>3</sup> For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another. <sup>4</sup>But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. <sup>6</sup>He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior <sup>7</sup>so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.

Preface: This morning's sermon is a reminder that scripture does not endorse everything it reports. The sin in David's own house is condemned vehemently. A reminder that sowing sin to please the flesh reaps destruction. Look no further than 2 Samuel 13 for evidence.

Second, Our text addresses lust, rape, hatred, and murder, all within the King's family. The writer of 2 Samuel directly addresses the sin of David and his sons. He wants us to live in a profound tension between sympathy for the wronged and outrage toward the wicked. We must protect our minds from becoming casual onlookers who drive by a car crash slowly saying, "Glad that's not me." The author wants you to realize this could be you! The same wicked, sinful heart in this story is alive in us. The victim's plea is simple, "Don't commit this outrage."

What is outrage? Is it hatred of wrong, is it motivation for action, or is it disgust? We have all felt it in one way or another. Some of you have been following the trial of Chad Daybell, and I am sure you have experienced moments of outrage being reminded of the loss of two young lives. Suppose you study the ethnic and cultural atrocities of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, or Sub-Saharan Africa. In that case, we become outraged at their bold wickedness. Reasons for outrage are all around us, but what is outrage? We will answer that this morning.

Recap: David has been our hero and the individual we can count on. He was righteous and merciful, showing restraint against Saul's hatred. We've seen him wisely deal with trials and listen to the counsel of others. When he sinned, we see him repent. David has been Israel's best leader since Joshua, if not Moses. Yet we are reminded from the last two weeks that he is also a lustful man, a liar, a coveter, and a murderer. David's faults in chapters 11 and 12 form the foundation for the impending division and civil war with his flesh and blood. Turn with me to 2 Samuel 13 and prepare your mind to wrestle with outrageous

things, but remember that the same wicked heart in this chapter is alive in us. Head God's warning, "Don't Commit this Outrage!"

## **Amnon's outrageous perversion.**

2 Samuel 13:1-7 13 Some time passed. David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar, and David's son Amnon was infatuated with her. <sup>2</sup> Amnon was frustrated to the point of making himself sick over his sister Tamar because she was a virgin, but it seemed impossible to do anything to her. <sup>3</sup> Amnon had a friend named Jonadab, a son of David's brother Shimeah. Jonadab was a very shrewd man, <sup>4</sup> and he asked Amnon, "Why are you, the King's son, so miserable every morning? Won't you tell me?"

Amnon replied, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

<sup>5</sup> Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend you're sick. When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare a meal in my presence so I can watch and eat from her hand.' "

<sup>6</sup> So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. When the King came to see him, Amnon said to him, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my presence so I can eat from her hand." <sup>7</sup> David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Please go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare a meal for him."

God forgave David, but it was also prophesied that <sup>10</sup> "the sword will never leave your house." A foreboding warning that does not take long to be fulfilled. The author assumes we will recognize the similarities between David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah to the actions of his children. The seeds of sin have been sown in the family, and they begin to blossom in this wicked chapter.

We are introduced to Amnon, the eldest son of David and the Crown Prince of the Kingdom. Amnon, however, is not our primary Character, as his younger half-brother Absalom is mentioned first. He will be the central figure for the following 5 chapters, along with David, his father. The author gives us the backstory of Absalom's eventual revolt. Buckle up; it's going to get ugly.

Back to Amnon, his infatuation with his half-sister is obscene. God had declared incestuous relationships wicked by this time in Israel's history (Lev 18:11). Tamar will state just this thing in a moment. The word for infatuated is also love, so it is an ironic statement because it is not love at all. Amnon is consumed with a perverse lust to bed his half-sister. Like his father, Amnon sees what he cannot have, which makes him sick. Yet he lacks the intelligence to do something about it; he needs the help of his

cunning and crafty cousin Jonadab. The plan is to manipulate David and lure Tamar into a trap. Jonadab is a wise man without virtue, a dangerous combination.

Amnon has a terminal condition of wicked heart syndrome. Read with me Jeremiah 17:9-10 “<sup>9</sup>The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable—who can understand it? <sup>10</sup>I, the LORD, examine the mind, I test the heart to give to each according to his way, according to what his actions deserve.” It is not just Amnon; all of humanity suffers from this condition. What diagnosis does God give this condition? Incurable! The condition is nothing new, going all the way back to creation. Before the flood, God says in Genesis 6:5 “<sup>5</sup>The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Amnon’s wicked perversion is not so distant from our own hearts. The fact we don’t act upon these urges constantly is good, but we should not equate self-control with invulnerability.

## Tamar's Plea and Plight

**2 Samuel 13:8-14** <sup>8</sup> Then Tamar went to his house while Amnon was lying down. She took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his presence, and baked them. <sup>9</sup> She brought the pan and set it down in front of him, but he refused to eat. Amnon said, “Everyone leave me!” And everyone left him. <sup>10</sup> “Bring the meal to the bedroom,” Amnon told Tamar, “so I can eat from your hand.” Tamar took the cakes she had made and went to her brother Amnon’s bedroom. <sup>11</sup> When she brought them to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, “Come sleep with me, my sister!”

<sup>12</sup> “Don’t, my brother!” she cried. “Don’t disgrace me, for such a thing should never be done in Israel. Don’t commit this outrage!” <sup>13</sup> Where could I ever go with my humiliation? And you—you would be like one of the outrageous fools in Israel! Please, speak to the King, for he won’t keep me from you.” <sup>14</sup> But he refused to listen to her, and because he was stronger than she was, he disgraced her by raping her.

Jonadab’s plan worked. David is none the wiser, and Amnon’s wickedness is fanned into flame. Tamar is the only innocent and virtuous person in these narratives, is the voice of righteousness and compassion. The narrator uses her pleas as his judgment of the wicked and the application to the listener. Tamar is seized by terror and the hand of her brothers yet pleads 4 times for Amnon to come to his senses.

1. **She pleaded to his conscience.** “Don’t my brother, Don’t disgrace me. Don’t commit this outrage.” Amnon knew he could not be with her. She was his sister, the daughter of the King. The law states clearly, in Lev 18:9 “<sup>9</sup> You are not to have sexual intercourse with your sister, either your father’s daughter or your mother’s” So She pleads to him based on God’s law to do the right thing and emphasizes it by reminding him that he is her brother.

What is the outrage? Here it is the Hebrew word **n<sup>o</sup>bâlâh**, meaning foolishness and wickedness. Outrage is, therefore, anything contrary to Godliness. All sin is outrageous no matter the size or scope. We classify it only as extreme, and to be fair, I believe there is an argument to be made that sins differ in their outrageousness. Still, we must maintain the high standard God gives to us. All sin is outrageous to a Holy God.

2. **She pleaded for his compassion.** “Where could I ever go with my humiliation.” Her value to the family and prospects of marriage and child-rearing are exhausted if he lies with her. That is why the law commands in Deuteronomy 22 that a man who lies with a virgin must marry her and cannot divorce her all of his days. If that law sounds arcane to you, you’d be right. Don’t scoff at that law at this moment in history. She will plead for it in a moment. The compassion she pleads for is that of a brother protecting and providing for a sister. The plea is for him and, by extension, us to think outside the moment and look at what future ruin our present choices bring.
  
3. **She pleaded for his self-preservation.** “You would be like one of the outrageous fools in Israel.” We should be familiar with the word fool here, it is the word *nebal*. It can mean being stupid and a fool. This name was given to a man back in 1 Samuel 25 who refused to honor David and died because of his foolishness. She pleads with him for his reputation not to become a godless fool. Unlike his father, who is a man who is after God’s own heart, Amnon will be known as *Nabal n°bâlâh*, The Godless Fool. Is that a Kingly title he will be pursuing? No, But his actions say otherwise.

Are you a Tamar to a person around you? The situation may not be as extreme or destructive as Amnon’s sin, but you still plead for someone not to commit an outrage. You plead to the conscience because they know right from wrong. You pleaded for their compassion because you wanted to protect the innocent. You pleaded for their self-preservation because you knew hope, joy, and love were not at the end of their sin’s journey. Yet they still sinned, bringing destruction upon their life or yours. You are left wondering where vindication will come from. Well, it is here. Your vindication is found in the word of God written long ago. Take solace in Tamar’s plea. It is God’s plea to all his wayward people. Like Tamar, he has chosen us to be his messengers. We are faithful before God whether or not the “nabal” heads the warning. Tamar is faithful, and she has been vindicated by God.

Her pleas fall flat on the floor. 3 times, the author emphasizes Amnon “refused to listen.” In verse 9, he refused to eat. In verses 14, and 16, he “refused to listen.” He hardened his heart and plowed deeper into his sin which only led to his ruin. This is where Amnon and David differ. David listened to the pleas of those around him. Remember, David and his mighty men set out to kill Nabal, “the fool,” but along the way, Abigail spoke wisdom to him, averting David’s plunge into a Saul-like revenge. He listened. After his sin with Bathsheba, Nathan confronted him, and rather than anger, he listened and repented. What are we to do, listen. Amnon’s heart is hard, and his mind is made up. He forcibly rapes his sister.

Are walking in the path of Amnon? A person who hears a plea for what is right but ignores it's importance. Do you hear the pleas of compassion for others but remained fixated on your feelings and desires. Do you hear the plea for your own reputation, satisfaction, and future but you have no consideration for consequences or posing joy. Head the pleas of God's council today or receive his judgment in the life to come.

Amnon, blinded by lust, hears neither plea nor warning. The sins of David have now made a home in the family. His passion is now satisfied, and his emotion suddenly changes. The author's structure of the narrative puts verse 15 as the anti-climax.

<sup>15</sup> So Amnon hated Tamar with such intensity that the hatred he hated her with was greater than the love he had loved her with. "Get out of here!" he said. <sup>16</sup> "No," she cried, "sending me away is much worse than the great wrong you've already done to me!" But he refused to listen to her."

His love was no love, but lust. Guilt grips him, turning his lust to hate. The very sight of Tamar that once pleased him now disgusted him, so he banished her. Why the sudden change? Lust and loathing are common bedfellows. Banishing her is his attempt to cover his sin while justifying it in his heart. He hates what is good and godly, and Tamar embodies that now.

Tamar is physically disgraced but becomes God's instrument of grace to Amnon. She issues one final plea of desperation to secure her future.

4. **She pleaded for rescue.** "Take me as your wife, don't banish me for it is worse." We must remove our Western lenses of interpretation to grasp the severity of her plight. Her standing as a potential wife is all but eradicated in this culture if she is banished. Tamar becomes a "desolate" woman, meaning "unmarried and childless." For a Hebrew woman, this was a living death. God's law back in Deut. rescued women from this destitute future by ensuring the guilty man provide for her. That is not a justification or rationalization of the wrong, only an explanation for why she would request such a thing. God deals with people where they are at that time. Men did not value women the way God does. God says in Isaiah 54 "Rejoice, childless one, who did not give birth; burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of the married woman," says the LORD." That is why our New Testament ethic is much higher than theirs. Jesus and his gospel present true restoration and redemption for the abused. He has made a way so that no matter the sin, he promises to make all things new again.

Let me take a moment to speak to those who have been victimized and scarred by outrageous sin. You are still a child of the King, and he has a love for you that is beyond comprehension. You are not forgotten, dismissed, or devalued. He hears your cries for rescue and restoration and will one day be your righteous vindicator. Until that day of judgment, he has given you two things: First, his word that describes his perfect, never-failing love for you. (Especially the psalms and the affliction of Jesus) Second, is his church, though we are not perfect, we are called to be the tangible compassion of Christ. An outpost of refuge in an outrageous world. We are glad you are here, and we love you.

The simple truth the author wants us to obey is to listen. Receive the truth, believe it, don't commit godlessness. David would not have sinned if he had just been where he was supposed to be. Now, if we just listen to the truth given to us, we will not do what we ought not to do. As pastor Ryan stated two weeks ago: Be where you are supposed to be and do what you are supposed to do. Don't overcomplicate the Christian life.

I know what might be on your mind. Why listen? Look what good it did for Tamar. Remember, the potential for another person's destructive disobedience never excuses God's command for us to obey. There will be justice. If God's prophecy to David of the sword never leaving his family is coming to pass, so too will his promise to judge the wicked deeds of all mankind. Your justice might not come today but trust me when I say, it is on its way.

Tamar is kicked out of the house and dehumanized by Amnon, calling her a "thing," not his sister or even a "woman." She rips her robe placing her hand on her head and covers her face in dust. She is a woman in exile.

Does your heart ache in pain for Tamar? It is supposed to. Does your heart cry out for justice against this outrage? It should. As we've seen before, one evil tends to produce another.



## **Absalom's Hate**

Absalom coldly comforts his sister but what we interpret as indifference, Absalom conveys calculated revenge. When he tells his sister “Be quiet for now, my sister.” We are to interpret, “Leave it to me, I will handle this.” We'd immediately identify Absalom as the avenging hero if this was a movie or something out of novel. But the author does not share that interpretation. He is revealing the sins of the father continuing in life of the sons. Absalom is no hero. We started with Amnon's lust, which turned to hate, and the story continues with Absalom's hate giving way to death.

2 Samuel 13:23-26 <sup>23</sup> Two years later, Absalom's sheepshearers were at Baal-hazor near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the King's sons. <sup>24</sup> Then he went to the King and said, “Your servant has just hired sheepshearers. Will the King and his servants please come with your servant?” <sup>25</sup> The King replied to Absalom, “No, my son, we should not all go, or we would be a burden to you.” Although Absalom urged him, he wasn't willing to go, though he did bless him. <sup>26</sup> “If not,” Absalom said, “please let my brother Amnon go with us.”

Two years of plotting! That should be terrifying. Unlike Amnon, who was too foolish to conceive a ploy to satisfy his desires, Absalom nursed his grudge without ever indicating his hatred to another. This is how we are introduced to him, and it must shape our perspective of him for the coming division he brings to the Kingdom.

Keep reading <sup>28</sup> Now Absalom commanded his young men, “Watch Amnon until he is in a good mood from the wine. When I order you to strike Amnon, then kill him. Don't be afraid. Am I not the one who has commanded you? Be strong and valiant!” <sup>29</sup> So Absalom's young men did to Amnon just as Absalom had commanded. Then all the rest of the King's sons got up, and each fled on his mule.

Absalom's outrage was subtle and undetectable. But he nursed his grudge, justifying it over and over again. Like his brother who he murdered, the sin of hatred blinded him to true justice and restoration for Tamar. Amnon defiled the image of God, but Absalom has killed the image. Whose outrage was greater?

As a result of all the confusion, David receives word that not just Amnon but all his sons have been killed so he tears his garment in mourning, beginning to weep. But good ole Jonadab sets the record straight. Just Amnon was killed and deduces it was revenge. Absalom flees to his grandfather's Kingdom and waits in exile for his father's response.

Do you think Absalom's hatred is unique to only a select group of people? It would be wrong to assume we are the exception to the truth being presented. Absalom is everyman. Amnon is in every one of us. Paul states simply in Romans 3 "There is no one righteous, not even one. <sup>11</sup> There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. Look also at Titus 3. It was read before the sermon, Titus 3:3-7 <sup>3</sup> For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another. Amnon's unchecked passion leads to rape and hatred. Absalom's unchecked hatred leads to murder. Unchecked sin only produces greater sin because we are not righteous. We are not the exception. We must listen and obey. Paul states how the wicked passion of our hearts is changed, "<sup>4</sup> But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. <sup>6</sup> He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior <sup>7</sup> so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.

Justification is a grace from God not of our own doing. If you are being controlled by lust or hatred Paul's directs you to look upon the kindness of God to love a sinner in their sin. His love results in mercy to you by opposing the wrong in your heart and replacing it with the gift of the Holy Spirit. If you are sitting here today filled with guilt and shame for your previous outrageous actions, including murder and rape, God kindness is your because he still loves you. You can find forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration in the cross of Jesus today.

Disaster follows disaster if we . In the Kingdom of David where is the King?

## **David's hollow crown.**

Rather than being the active protagonist, David took a back seat in the narrative. He is portrayed as the gullible granter of wishes. Amnon implicates him by sending Tamar without caution. Absalom manipulates him to send another child into a trap. Even Tamar says to Amnon “speak to the king, for he won't keep me from you.” David is a compassionate father and that is good. But there is a weakness in him. A weakness to give his kids whatever they want. More damning he is an absent king.

Read 2 Samuel 13:21; 38-39 “<sup>21</sup> When King David heard about all these things, he was furious,

<sup>38</sup> After Absalom had fled to Geshur and had been there three years, <sup>39</sup> King David longed to go to Absalom, for David had finished grieving over Amnon's death.”

David was furious but did nothing. He has anger yet no justice. The author states its “king,” David but he does so ironically. His inaction opens the door for Absalom's revenge and murder. Later, he mourns a death but does nothing to bring justice. Why is David not acting like David? This seems out of character. His hypocrisy paralyzes him. How can he punish a son's lustful indulgence when he did the same months earlier? How can he bring justice to a murdered son when he murdered his servant to cover his sin. David does not act because he doesn't believe he can.

David is a grieving father but an absent King. A king is meant to bring justice to his people. He is the one who will avenge the wronged and punish the wrongdoer. A king seeks the best for his people and leads them into righteousness. A king sacrifices for his people, providing them a better life through service and love. Davids' crown is hollow. In this instance, he is closer to the Prophet Eli, who exercises no control over his wicked sons. It brought destruction upon Israel then and the pattern is repeating.

David's inactivity is an outrage too. Overshadowed by the dramatic sin of his sons, it is hard to see, but it is here. Like David, our past sinfulness does not permit us to ignore the sin around us. Yes, we must take the plank out of our own eye before we address the speck in our neighbors, but we must still plead God's message to one another, “Don't commit this outrage.”

Is David the best we have? If it is, we are in for greater destruction. Who can we look to for justice and righteousness?

David was never the true answer to the problem but a foreshadowing of a greater King yet to come. Jesus Christ. The anointed King who will shore up the faulty foundation that began in Saul and David began. The place where David failed to be a loving father and a just King, Jesus has succeeded in every way. He sits on the throne and rules perfectly for eternity. Will we listen to his words? Will we trust in his justice? Will we long for the day when sin is no more?

Let God's word through David settle our souls until that day.

## Communion Reminder

### Psalm 22:23-26

You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! All you descendants of Israel, revere him! <sup>24</sup> For he has not despised or abhorred the torment of the oppressed. He did not hide his face from him but listened when he cried to him for help. <sup>25</sup> I will give praise in the great assembly because of you; I will fulfill my vows before those who fear you.<sup>[i]</sup> <sup>26</sup> The humble will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the LORD will praise him. May your hearts live forever!

Let's Pray