

Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service/passage.

Week beginning Sunday 29 July 2018 Temptation and betrayal

Pray that we would be alert to our faults and failings, open to God's help in resisting temptation and aware of God's forgiveness both of ourselves and others.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). 2 Samuel 11 :1-15.

Background Time is wearing on and David is well and truly settled in his palace and capital. Gone are the days when he is on the run or facing military pressures personally on a day by day basis. Perhaps distancing himself too from the need to walk with God. Perhaps as a result of boredom or inactivity he falls from Bathsheba, wife of one of his officers. Not only does he seduce her but on learning that she is pregnant he goes to great lengths to try to cover things up, attempting to blame Uriah, the husband. When that doesn't work he orders his general Joab to put Uriah in the forefront of battle and then suddenly retreat so that he will be killed in action. He then takes Bathsheba as his wife.

Possible questions/points to consider

1. We can of course say that things were different then, that kings had the right to take who they wished but that doesn't really wash. Without doubt David did wrong and in covering it up did far worse. Who all was wronged through David's actions? How do you react to the comment But the Lord was not pleased with what David had done.?
2. How do we avoid pointing the finger at others while learning from their mistakes? It could be argued that David had greater responsibilities than most because he was king. What obligations had he towards his people? Towards God as king?
3. It is easy for us without necessarily making out that we have done no wrong to point to others whose faults might be more obviously culpable than ours? What dangers are there in doing that? What do we do about conduct that we engage in that might not please God?
4. In some cultures even today there is a sense in which those in authority are not really considered to have done serious wrong unless they are found out. Why does this kind of thinking encourage cover up? Minimise the significance of wrongdoing?
5. Watergate might seem light years away from the sort of moral dilemmas that we may have to face personally or as a congregation. How important is doing the right thing for the right reasons? What place has facing up to things when we have done wrong? In the light of the forgiveness God makes available to us in Christ how are we to treat those who own up to their failings?
6. There were consequences for those involved in the Watergate coverup. But there are consequences for us when we do wrong whether we are found out or not. What is God's take on temptation, succumbing to it or moral responsibility generally? What ought the Christian's attitude be to a) our own wrongdoing b) that of others? What place does forgiveness have?
7. Abuse of power is not just for politicians or kings. It can affect anyone who has influence over others. How can we ensure that we minimise the chances of misusing our influence or power?
8. Please discuss/consider anything else that arises from the passage or service.

Prayer Lord forgive us for the times we make light of our own faults and failings and are condemning of others. Help us to be honest about our shortcomings and quick to seek forgiveness and to be generous in our acceptance of others. Remind us that we are accountable to you. Help us to be grateful for your acceptance of us in Christ. Amen.