

I made a mistake. I googled “famous cover-ups.” And what came up? Beach-wear. Women’s beach-wear. I scrolled down. And what did I find? UFOs, aliens, the CIA’s exploding cigars. I scrolled down some more. And what did I find? Cover-ups so sick and sad, it’s no wonder people don’t trust churches. Cover-ups so disturbing and deadly, it’s no wonder people don’t trust government. I didn’t have to google to find cover-ups, did I? We could do a Bible search. Go back to the beginning of time, and we see Adam and Eve using leaves and lies to try to cover up what they did. Go back to last week, and we see David trying to cover up what he did.

David knew he was wrong. But he did it anyway. He took Bathsheba as his own to do what he wanted. David knew he was wrong. And when he found out that he had made Bathsheba pregnant, he tried to cover it up. He sent for Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband, hoping that he would cover up what David had done. When that didn’t work, he sent Uriah to his death, hoping that would cover up what he had done. It didn’t.

David pretended that it did. David pretended that all was good and right, that he was good and right. He pretended to be the caring king and took Bathsheba as his wife, and her son as his own. David pretended that all was good and right, that he was good and right. But it didn’t work. The messengers he sent to take Bathsheba, they knew. Joab, the general David ordered to arrange Uriah’s death, he knew. Secrets like that rarely remain secrets. Soon, who else knew? David pretended that no one knew, but God knew.

I wonder, did David write Psalm 139 before or after this? **“O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when**

I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.”

God knew. And he was displeased, distressed; he saw what David did as evil. God knew. And he made sure David knew - his cover-up wasn't working, his pretending wasn't working, his life wasn't as right as he pretended. God knew what David had done as horribly wrong, and he made sure David knew what he had done as horribly wrong. It's not in our lesson, but in Psalm 32, David tells us how God had worked on him, how God had worked him over.

“When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.” Was David writing about this time in his life? We don't know for sure, but it sure seems to fit. With a guilty conscience, God made sure David knew his pretending, his cover-up wasn't working.

But we're not quick to give up our pretending, are we? We're not quick to quit our cover-ups. So, in our lesson, God makes sure David knows his pretending and his cover-up weren't working with God. The LORD - the God of saving grace - sends his prophet Nathan to David.

You notice how Nathan didn't get right in David's face. Instead, he tugs at David's heart, tells the story of a rich man and a poor man. The rich man had sheep and cattle; he was rich with sheep and cattle. But the poor man had only one lamb; he raised it and cared for it like one of the family. The rich man has a guest. What does he serve up for supper? Instead of taking one of his own sheep, one from his own cattle, he takes the poor man's lamb, and serves her up for

supper. Nathan tugged at David's heart, and David's heart responded. **“David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!”**

With a big, bold “you,” Nathan connects the dots for David: **“You are the man.”** “The LORD has blessed and blessed and blessed you; he has given and given and given to you. But that wasn't good enough, was it? You despised the LORD and you despised his Word.”

Did you notice? David's sin wasn't just against Bathsheba or Uriah. It wasn't just a sin against a cultural norm. It wasn't just a failing, a fault, a weakness, a mistake - or whatever else we call sin to make it seem small. David had done wrong against God; he had broken God's law - and so he had despised God. We don't like to think of our sin that way - do we? - as a despising of God. David knew it, and now he admitted it: **“I have sinned against the LORD.”** No blaming, no excusing, no-small-sizing of what he had done: **“I have sinned against the LORD.”** No more pretending; no more cover-up: **“I have sinned against the Lord.”**

What about you? How might God see you pretending? Excusing your sin, blaming others, covering up? What about you? Is there some sin in your life that you pretend is small? Some ungodly attitude in your mind that you pretend is ok? What are you covering up, pretending to get away with?

How has God been nudging you, calling you out? What have you been doing with his nudge and call? In our lesson, God used his prophet Nathan to call David out. God doesn't always use a prophet or even a pastor to call us out. He might use the word of a child, a

tear in the eye of someone we love, a hot look, or a cold shoulder. How has God been nudging you, calling you? When God uses someone, or something, to nudge you, squeeze you - to call “you,” don’t pretend he’s not calling you. Don’t pretend all is right. Don’t pretend he doesn’t know, that he doesn’t care, that it’s alright to continue in your sin. Like David says in Psalm 32: “Don’t be a stubborn mule.”

Answer like David: **“I have sinned against the LORD.”**
Answer like David: **“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”** Answer like David, and hear Jesus answer: **“The LORD has put away your sin. You are not going to die.”** As far as east is from west. Covered over. Erased. Washed away. See your sin taken by Jesus, at the cross paid for by Jesus. And not just your sin, but your guilt, and God’s judgment, see them all “Finished” at the cross. For you.

Sometimes it’s hard to see that, hear that, believe that forgiveness because sin has consequences. Sometimes our sin has consequences that continue long past the words: “You are forgiven.” David’s sin had consequences that tore at his heart the rest of his life. Why? God had some re-teaching to do. By his sin, David had taught the world around him - “It’s alright to sin. It’s alright to do whatever you want. To despise and reject God and his Word - it’s alright if you can get away with it.” God’s sense of justice could not and can not let that lesson stand. Even more so, God’s sense of love could not and can not let that lesson stand.

Look at the hurt and heartache in our world today. Even if we don’t see sin damn, we do see how sin destroys and causes more damage than we like to think. God’s justice, God’s love needs people to know that sin is not ok; sin is toxic. And just because our sin is

forgiven ..., forgiveness doesn't make sin ok; in this life even forgiven sin is toxic. I'll say it again - God doesn't want us or anyone out there thinking that sin is ok, or that forgiveness makes sin ok! What does that mean for us? Even as God forgives full and free, in this life, he doesn't take away all the consequences, all the hurt and heartache our sin causes.

Some days we have a hard time with that, don't we? But some day, the hurt and heartache of this life will be gone, and we will be face-to-face with God - with no scowl on God's face, no wince on our face. We'll be smile-to-smile with God, enjoying life the way it's supposed to be, surrounded by the life and love, the peace and joy, of heaven all around us. David looked forward to that day ... and so do we! Amen.

July 23 & 24, 2022

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

IN OUR WORLD TODAY... we blame, we excuse, we hide, we cover up, we call wrong right ... and our hearts and minds and families spin further and further away from the good life and love that God designed for us.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we hear the God of life and love call David from the darkness of his hiding cover-up. We hear God's beautiful Good News of forgiveness. But just in case anyone thinks that sin is an easy, no-cost option because sin is easily fixed with words of forgiveness, the consequences continue....

OPENING HYMN (PAGE 11)

"In Hopelessness and Near Despair"
Hymn 738 CWS

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by your Holy Spirit, that we may love you and praise your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FIRST READING

2 Samuel 12:1-14

The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

“Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.”

David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.”

Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master’s house to you, and your master’s wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’

“This is what the LORD says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’ ”

Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.”

Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 51A

Refrain



Tone



Have mercy on / me, O God,
 according to your un- / failing love;
 according to your great com- / passion
 blot out my trans- / gressions.

Wash away all my in- / iquity
 and cleanse me / from my sin.
 For I know my trans- / gressions,
 and my sin is always be- / fore me. *Refrain*

Against you, you only, / have I sinned
 and done what is evil / in your sight.
 Surely I was sin- / ful at birth,
 sinful from the time my mother con- / ceived me.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I / will be clean;
 wash me, and I will be whit- / er than snow.
 Hide your face / from my sins
 and blot out all my in- / iquity.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
 and to the Holy / Spirit,
 as it was in the be- / ginning,
 is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders.

Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!

“ ‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ ”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“By Grace I’m Saved”

Hymn 575

By grace I’m saved, grace free and boundless;
my soul, believe and doubt it not.

Why waver at this word of promise? Has Scripture ever falsehood taught?
So then this word must true remain: by grace you, too, shall heav’n obtain.

By grace God’s Son, our only Savior, came down to earth to bear our sin.
Was it because of your own merit that Jesus died, your soul to win?
No, it was grace, and grace alone,
that brought him from his heav’nly throne.

By grace! O mark this word of promise
when you are by your sins oppressed,
when Satan plagues your troubled conscience,
and when your heart is seeking rest.
What reason cannot comprehend God by his grace to you did send.

By grace to timid hearts that tremble, in tribulation's furnace tried,
by grace, despite all fear and trouble, the Father's heart is open wide.
Where could I help and strength secure if grace were not my anchor sure?

By grace! On this I'll rest when dying; in Jesus' promise I rejoice,
for though I know my heart's condition, I also know my Savior's voice.
My heart is glad, all grief has flown since I am saved by grace alone.

SERMON

+ INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION +

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

CW p. 282-283

Minister:

In the name of our God, to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets are hidden.

Penitent:

Amen.

Minister and Penitent:

**Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.**

**Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight.**

Penitent:

I confess that I am by nature sinful.

I am guilty of many sins.

I am distressed by the sins that trouble me.

Specific sins may be confessed.

For all this I am sorry. I pray for forgiveness.

Minister and Penitent:

**Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.**

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

**Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.**

**Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.**

Minister:

Jesus says to his people, "If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven." His death paid for the guilt of your sins and the sins of the whole world. Do you believe this?

Penitent:

Yes, I believe.

Minister:

By the authority of Christ, I forgive you your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Penitent:

Amen.

Minister:

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. You are a dear child of God and an heir of eternal life.

Minister and Penitent:

**The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.**

**As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
his love endures forever.**

Minister:

Go in peace.

Penitent:

Amen.

HYMN

“Jesus Sinners Does Receive”

Hymn 654 v. 1, 2, 6, & 7

Jesus sinners does receive; oh, may all this saying ponder
who in sin’s delusions live and from God and heaven wander.
Here is hope for all who grieve: Jesus sinners does receive.

We deserve but grief and shame, yet his words, rich grace revealing,
pardon, peace, and life proclaim; here their ills have perfect healing
who with humble hearts believe: Jesus sinners does receive.

Now my conscience is at peace, from the law I stand acquitted.
Christ has purchased my release and my ev'ry sin remitted.
Naught remains my soul to grieve: Jesus sinners does receive.

Jesus sinners does receive, even I have been forgiven.
And when I this earth must leave, I shall find an open heaven.
Dying, still to him I cleave: Jesus sinners does receive.

INSTALLATION

Congregation President	Steve Lemerand
Secretary*	Charles Ledvina
Outreach Elder	Nic Holter
Youth Ministry Elder*	Paul Massey
Worship Elder	Tim Kalter
Adult Ministry Elder*	Phil Garberding
Congregation Treasurer	Jim Thies
School Board Chairman	Joe Lofsness
School Finance*	Ray Linnemann
School Recruitment	Peter Kolch
Parent Relations*	Greg Haak

* Elected to a new term

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“Amazing Grace”

Hymn 576

Amazing grace—how sweet the sound— that saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

The Lord has promised good to me, his Word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

OFFERING

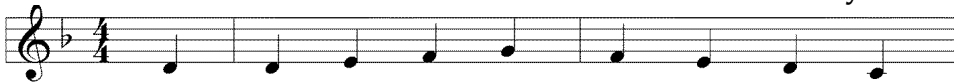
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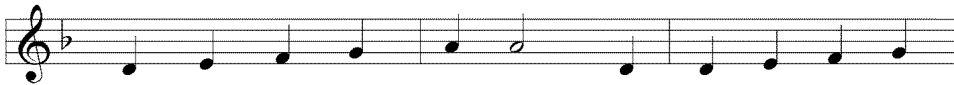
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"In Hopelessness and Near Despair"

Hymn 738 CWS



1 In hope - less - ness and near de - spair, I
2 I see my heart's con - di - tion now, My
3 I trem - ble as I feel your hand, Ex -
4 For - giv - en, free of guilt and shame, Grant



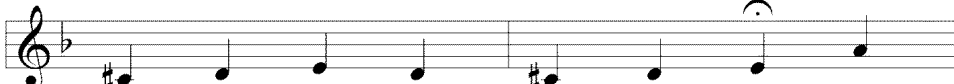
cry to you, my Sav - ior! My guilt is more than
heart's di - verse af - fec - tions. Why do I love the
pec - ting re - tri - bu - tion, Yet hear no curse or
me some time to ren - der A gift to glo - ri -



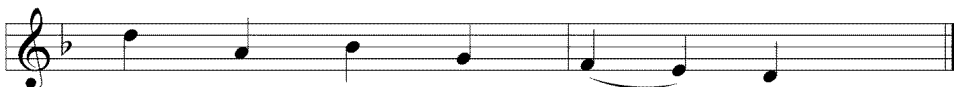
I can bear. I have not earned your fav - or. You
things you loathe; I'm torn in two di - rec - tions: Now
re - pri - mand, But grace and ab - so - lu - tion: With
fy your name, Love to re - flect your splen - dor: This



know me as I real - ly am: How
prod - i - gal, now Phar - i - see. O
you there is for - give - ness, Lord, You
world must know what I have learned, That



much is truth, how much is sham; Why
God, be mer - ci - ful to me; Who
speak the sweet, con - sol - ing Word, And
you be - stow what none has earned: The



should you heed my plead - ing?
else but you can help me?
I am sure you love me!
joy of full for - give - ness!