

Sinners and Saints
2 Samuel 7:1-14a
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Hello everyone, meet Howard, our Hero.

Our hero has accomplished a lot. He is a great leader. He's the boss of a fantastic company. The workers there admire him and would do anything for him. And he tells a great joke.

One day our hero is walking by the staff room when suddenly he sees something he just can't take his eyes off of: A cinnamon roll with butterscotch/caramel topping. He tried to divert his eyes, but something about the cinnamon roll was just so beautiful and delicious. He wanted that cinnamon roll. But next to the cinnamon roll was a sign that said, special cinnamon roll for Flynn. He had to have that cinnamon roll. No one would know if he took a little bite of it...So he did. He took a bite out of it. And it was the most delicious cinnamon roll he ever had.

But what was he thinking? Of course, someone would find out, I mean there was a bite taken out of it... There was only one thing to do... he had to trick Flynn into eating it without noticing it.

So, he went to Flynn, and said, "Hey Flynn, saw a cinnamon roll in the

staff lounge with your name on it. You should go eat it."

"No, no, no," said Flynn. "It is way too early for that much sugar. But thanks, Boss!"

Howard tried again.

This time he brought the cinnamon roll to Flynn as Flynn sat at his desk working. He had covered up the side of the cinnamon roll with a napkin where he had taken a bite.

"Flynn, look here is your cinnamon roll, why don't you go ahead and eat it?"

"No, no, no," Flynn said. "It wouldn't be fair for me to eat it now. Everyone would want a piece of it, and I don't want to eat it in front of everyone. I will just have to take it home."

"Shoot," Howard thought, *"this is getting serious. I cannot have Flynn finding out that I ate a bite out of his cinnamon roll."* So, there was only one thing he could do. He had to get rid of Flynn.

"Flynn. I am so sorry, but you are needed on an important business mission. You need to go to Asia and quick." So, Flynn left to Asia where he found a great job, had a great life and never saw his cinnamon roll or Howard again.

Now you may be saying...this is a silly story....and why would anyone

want to send a person to Asia for eating their cinnamon roll? Why didn't Howard just come clean? Those are all good questions. And the answer is ... because the real story is that the character played by Howard is actually King David, and the cinnamon roll isn't a cinnamon roll, but Bathsheba.

By the way, we do not support the objectification of women, which was literally done when we made the story about a cinnamon roll...but it seemed the most family friendly way to describe this story and let's face it...women were treated as objects and property during this time in history... and Flynn was actually representing Uriah, Bathsheba's husband...and well, David didn't eat the cinnamon roll, but he did do something he really shouldn't have that led to Bathsheba getting pregnant.

And no matter what David did, Uriah wouldn't take his bait to cover up the fact that David took something that wasn't his. And if that wasn't bad enough...David decided to try and cover up his sin with more sin by sending Uriah, not to Asia, but to the frontlines of battle where it was inevitable that he would die. And Uriah did die.

Phew. All of this to say...we started our story by introducing Howard as the Hero, but what he did with the cinnamon roll wasn't very heroic. In

fact there are lots of people in the Bible who did bad things and were seemingly punished for it more than Howard...ahem...I mean David. David ends up being punished for what he did, but he is still known as a good King, he is still looked on as a hero. Why??

Honestly, thinking about what King David did compared to what King Saul did, the King before David, it makes me wonder why do we as a people, and why does the Bible still lift David up as this character that should be an example for us. I was thinking about this question all week. Why is David such an important figure in our history?

We know about some of the promises that God made up until now. God made promises to David about his reign and his children's reign. God was faithful. Even though David was unfaithful, God was faithful and that line that eventually leads to Jesus.

That wasn't the answer I got this week though. The answer I got to the question "why" is that David shows us how much we need God. We lift up many leaders in our world today and in history. The truth is that they are all human, and so was David. David made mistakes and so do we. Even when we look to our Earthly leaders for guidance and to be examples, they fall short. No one can save us except for God. Even though we look to

David as an example, we are given an example of someone who is filled with sin and also goodness. David is an example of why we need God. Even heroic, good leaders are human. When we don't mess up on purpose, we can mess up on accident, or even do it unaware.

Do you all know what a mash-up is? Most famously it is when you put two songs together to make a new song that has hints of both the other songs. The T.V. show "Glee" does this all the time; you should go back and watch it. When I think of our human nature and when I think of David, I think of this mash up of our sinfulness and the Holy Spirit that rests and exists in us. We are this big, huge mix of all that. It's good to recognize we are these creatures mashed up with good and bad.

So, when we ask the question, "Why do we lift up David as a good leader?" it is because we need to be pointed to God, and Jesus is the only perfect leader that we should really follow.

In history, Martin Luther King, Jr. is said to have had an adulterous relationship. We question Mother Teresa's efforts when she helped people to die in India; maybe she could have helped more people to live. She wrote about her lack of faith.

We do harm when we lift our leaders too high because power corrupts. And our human leaders are just that...human. Sure, we need good leaders, who work for the good of the people, but even our leaders will not save us, even our pastors will not save us, there is only God who will save us.

God saves us from ourselves; God gives us rules and asks us to obey so that we can forgo the natural consequences of unhealthy behaviors that harm us and others.

So, what does that mean? It means people are sinners; we don't sin all the time, but we have a lot of choices in life and a lot of times we choose to do what benefits us at the cost of others. But there is hope. We don't always have to sin, and we can learn when we do. It takes work, and God's grace. But it is possible. There is a second part to David's story, and we will hear about it next week. But for now.... Because we have examples in the Bible who did good most of the time, we can understand when they mess up. Even when they are leaders. No one is perfect. We hope that everyone will try their best, especially our leaders, but everyone messes up sometimes. We have to learn to be as forgiving as we know God is.

We have to forgive ourselves and others. Amen.