



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 1060

1 Chronicles 3:5 *“These were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon, four, by Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel.”*

Students of Bible history recognize three names that are linked together: David, Bathsheba and Nathan. The sad and horrific story of David's lust and sin with Bathsheba and his cover up that led to the murder of her husband has been the subject of many sermons and Bible classes. For more than 9 months nothing is said about David's sin. It seems that David literally got away with murder. His chief in command knew, but he was loyal to the king. One wonders if Bathsheba every knew the truth. At least nine months pass. God sends Nathan the prophet to David. He tells a story about a man who stole a neighbor's only lamb for a feast. The thief had plenty of his own sheep. David is enraged. That man deserves to die, David declared. Nathan reveals that David is that man. Worse than stealing and killing a sheep, David has stolen a man's wife and killed the man. The story is out. God knows. The prophet knows. David is guilty. Broken and ashamed, David pleads for forgiveness. The compassion of God forgives David but there are consequences. David's household falls apart. The baby that was born out of this lustful sin dies. David's sons collapse in ruin. Rape, murder and an attempted coup are all the results of David's moral failure. David could conquer the world but he could not conquer his home.

Our verse tells of another Nathan, not the prophet, but a son of David. Later, after David moved to Jerusalem, and had married Bathsheba, there were more children born. Solomon, would reign when David dies. Another son, was named "NATHAN." That is interesting that David would name one of his sons after the prophet who came and confronted him. The prophet saved David. The prophet got David back on track. The prophet had to confront and say some plain and harsh things to David. Now, years later, David, names one of his children after that prophet.

God often brings people into our lives to help us. That person may be a parent. That person may be someone from church. That person reminds us. That person confronts us about wrong we are doing. That person helps us get back on track with God. Maybe we haven't been worshipping very regular. Our attendance is hit and miss. Someone talks to us about coming more often. He reminds us of the beauty and benefits of worship. We feel guilty, but know that he is right. It may be something that we are involved in that is not right. Maybe at work we've thrown honesty and ethics out the window

for the sake of profits. Maybe, like David, lust has taken over our sense of what is right. A friend knows. A friend talks to us in confidence. He reminds us of our hope in Heaven. He reminds us of our commitment to Christ. He helps us to see the reckless path that we are on. He reminds us of the mercy of God.

How do we react to people like this in our lives? Do we see them as nosey and they bother us? Do we wish that they would go away? Do we become hostile toward them? Do we threaten friendship because they cared enough and were courageous enough to try to help us from doing dumb and wrong things in our lives? We need people like that. We need people who care enough to say something. We need people to keep us on the path to Heaven. This is why we are engaged in a fellowship. We are linked with others. We are joined in this journey with others. We need each other.

We encourage an atmosphere of dialogue by our honesty, openness and attitudes. If we are secretive, crafty, sly and ambiguous, it will be nearly impossible for our friend to get through to us. If we play spiritual dodge ball with them, living in denial, refusing to accept responsibility, then we are doomed to fall off the tracks. Nathan reached David because he was reachable. Nathan had someone whose heart was honest, even though he had done wrong. The closed heart cannot be touched. How do we respond to the people who come into our lives to help us?

David named a son after Nathan the prophet. This shows the great respect David had for the man who confronted him, corrected him, and guided him back to the Lord. David didn't threaten Nathan. David didn't deny what was known. David didn't flee. He changed. Repentance will do that. It will get through the smog of excuses, shallow reasons and flimsy justifications for our sin. Repentance stops and turns toward God. Repentance is good. Repentance is hope. It is the future. Without repenting, David would turn on Nathan the prophet. Without repenting, David's sins, would multiply even more. Without repenting, David would have been cut off from God.

Too often, we attack the person who cared enough to come and speak to us. Too often, we point the finger at the wrong person. We ought to look in the mirror and see the wrong that we are guilty of. We ought to thank the person that tries to help us. We ought to consider ourselves blessed to have such a person in our life. Without them, we would head straight to the wilderness of sin. Without them, our lives grow further and further from God.

Can you imagine naming a child after the person who confronted you or rebuked you? Can you imagine that child always being a reminder of the one who changed the course of your life. Watching Nathan grow up, David must have returned to that scene of the prophet telling him that "Thou art the man." Those words, that prophet, changed the course of David for what is good. The name "Nathan" would have been a kind reminder to David of the God who forgives.

Do you have a Nathan in your life? Do you listen when he has something to talk to you about? It changed David's life. It might change your life. True friends are not blind to our sins. True friends help us out of the mess we made and help us back to God. Friends that justify and find excuses for sin are not really friends. They are working for Satan and not God.

David had two Nathan's in his life.

Roger Shouse

