

Today we have another story of David, who was a shepherd boy once and now a king of Israel. Today's story is about David and Bathsheba. Some of you, who know this story, might wonder what in the world I was thinking to bring this story—the story of adultery, murder, and deception—on this Thanksgiving Sunday.

Well, telling you the truth, I did not intentionally plan it. Since May this year, we have had a story in the Bible each week in chronological order. In that order, the given story for today is the story of David and Bathsheba. So, like many of you, I wondered also what God is trying to tell me and tell all of us on this Thanksgiving Sunday through this somewhat "unfit" story for Thanksgiving Day.

Through many prayers and study, I felt like God is trying to tell us that there are blessings we can count on and be thankful for, even in the trials and tribulations we go through. So, I invite you to count your blessings while hearing the story of David and Bathsheba today. Ready? Here it goes.

Let me start by saying that the Bible describes David as "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22). That does not mean that he was blameless. We only need to read the story of David and Bathsheba from 2 Samuel 11.

The story took place when King David was at the pinnacle of his career. He was not where he was supposed to be. It was in the spring when kings go out to battle—but David sent his armies out under others' command. He was supposed to be out there in the battle leading and inspiring his troops, but he wasn't. He was at his palace doing nothing while his troops were in the battle. He was totally a couch potato. Late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch finally and was walking on the roof of the king's house, he saw a woman bathing from the roof, and the woman was very beautiful at his sight. He was told this woman was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his commanders. But he wanted her no matter what, and so he had her.

Here we have a "count-our-blessings" moment #1. We are at the right place at the right time with the right people right now. We are here worshiping our awesome God. It is our divine appointed time with God. We are also with the right

people—the worshipers of God. I'm thankful that you and I are here to worship our awesome God together instead of doing something else. There is no chance for any "Bathsheba" of the world to get our attention when we fully tune in ourselves with the Lord.

When we are at the wrong place at the wrong time, doing something other than what we ought to be doing, we can get into a lot of trouble like King David. We get in trouble when we fail to fulfill our God-given purpose: being transformed into followers of Jesus Christ. When we take our eyes off that purpose, God gets smaller, and the lure of the world presents a whole new set of purposes to live for. When we take our eyes off Christ, we find ourselves wandering into trouble. That's what David did, and that is where his trouble began.

When Bathsheba reports that she is pregnant, David's world starts spinning out of control, and so he comes up with a plan to fix the situation (2 Samuel 11:10-17). In just one chapter of Scripture, a man after God's own heart broke all these commandments! He fell so fast, so far, and God was not pleased. But God will not leave David there, so He sends Prophet Nathan to David to confront him about his sin (2 Samuel 12:1-7).

Here we have a "count-our-blessings" moment #2. God never gives up on us nor forsakes us even when we sin against God. God sent Nathan to David to turn his life around from sinning.

All of us need a "Nathan" in our lives, don't we? A "Nathan"...someone whom we give permission to speak to us truthfully in love, even when it hurts. I am not talking about complainers or critics to point out what's wrong with us. Please don't let those complainers and critics get into you. Do not let them have the power to discourage you. They are not the "Nathans" God sent you. The "Nathan" I am talking about here is a person of God who cares for us, believes in us, and wants us to live up to the maximum potential in life. Who is that "Nathan" for you? If you can name one, at least one "Nathan" now, that's an amazing blessing you can count on today.

If you cannot name one yet, I pray that God will open your eyes to find the "Nathan" God has sent you. Believe it or not, or recognize it or not, we all have at least one "Nathan" in life because our God cares about us.

Because of this "Nathan" showed up, King David repented of his wrongdoings and wrote Psalm 51 we read this morning. Verses 10 through 12 are perhaps the most well-known verses of Psalm 51, *"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."*

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Amen.