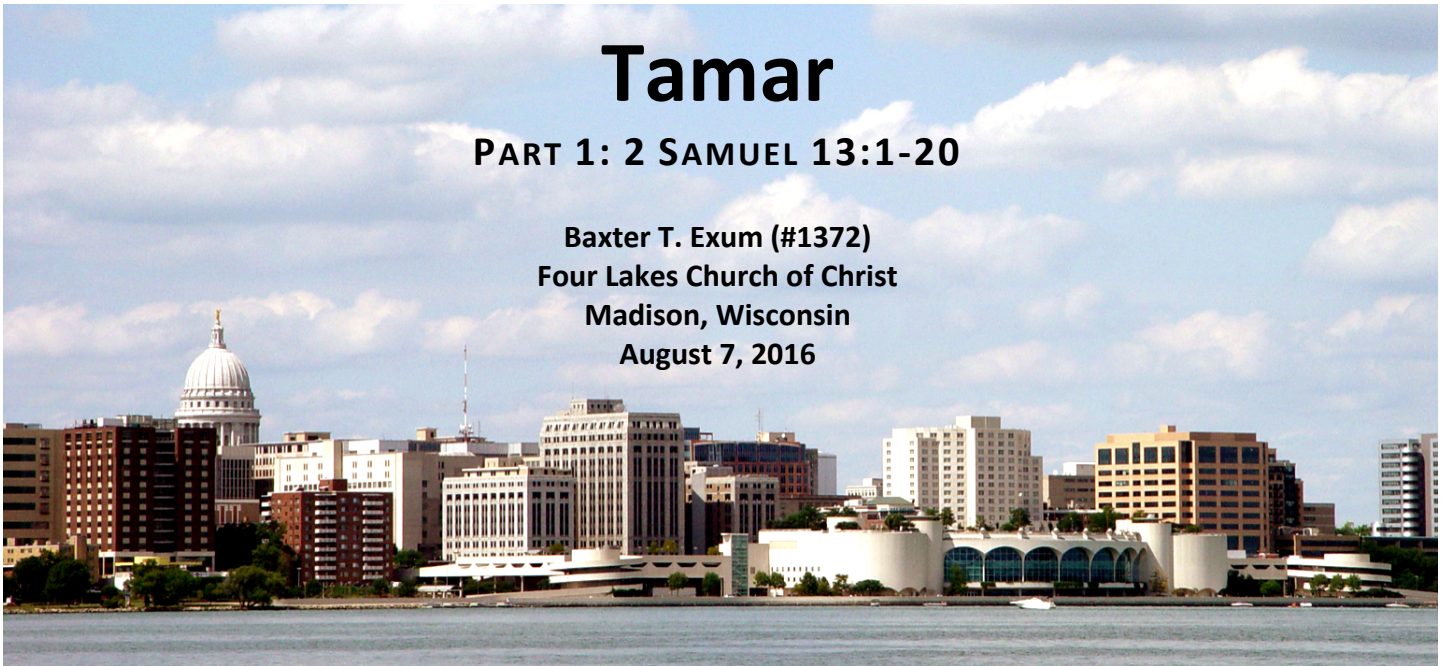


Tamar

PART 1: 2 SAMUEL 13:1-20

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It has been said that confession is good for the soul. And although those exact words are not found in the Bible, the concept is definitely there. Plus, most of us know this from personal experience. And so, I need to confess something to all of you this morning. But before I do, I have a question for all of you to consider, and the question is: Have you ever done anything stupid with friends that you would never do on your own? Have you ever had a lapse in good judgment because you were hanging out with the wrong crowd?

As you think back to some of the things you have done in your life because of the friends you were with at the time, I want to share something from my past (something that I first shared with some of you about five years ago). It goes back to something that happened at Lundahl Junior High in Crystal Lake, Illinois. I must have been in the eighth grade as I remember it, and I used to ride my bike to school with some friends. There were about four or five of us who hung out together, and during the school year we would meet up to ride our bikes to school. Well, one day, somebody in our little gang got a hold of some “snaps.” Some of you are familiar with these. I don’t know exactly what is in these, but when you snap them in your fingers or when you throw them on the ground, they “snap.” There’s a little explosion. At night, you can even see the little flash of light. And for an eighth grader in the mid 1980’s, these were the coolest things ever. Well, one day somebody got the bright idea that it would be fun to bring these to school. So, for one glorious day, we were the kids with the snaps. We threw these things in the hallway; we threw these at other people. I remember throwing one of these at a buddy across the room in Ms. Ellebee’s math class. It actually hit him right under the eye. And if you did it in just the right way, nobody could see where these were coming from. Well, the next day, as I remember it, we reloaded for the morning commute, and all the way to school, we were throwing these things at each other on our bikes. I am sure we were weaving in and out of traffic, we were hitting each other with these, and this continued all the way to the bike rack at school. Suddenly, though, we our social studies teacher, Mr. Danielson, and Mr. Danielson was not happy. He came out there yelling (something about killing and maiming each other – I don’t remember all of the little details), but I had never seen Mr. Danielson so mad. He got all four or five of us in a circle, and he demanded that we turn over the evidence, “Whatever you have left, give them to me!” Well, we weren’t going to do that. So we stood there staring at each other for what seemed like an eternity, until Mr. Danielson said, “Alright, I’ll make you a deal: I am going to close my eyes, and you will have this one chance to turn over whatever you have, and I promise, that will be the end of it.” We made sure his eyes were shut, and once we were quite confident, we turned over whatever we had, and Mr. Danielson let us go to class. At that point, I was pretty sure I had dodged a bullet. We are now in the clear. But then, at

some point after lunch, somebody came and pulled me out of class. I was needed in the Assistant Principal's office. This was strange for me. I had never been to the Assistant Principal's office before. And I really had no idea what this was about. The secretary told me, "Just go down this hallway back here and wait – it's the second door on the right." So I went down the little hallway, I opened the second door on my right, and at that point, I was pretty sure my life was over. I'll tell you why: When I opened that door, that room had almost nothing in it – it had concrete block walls, there was a clock on one of those walls, there was a chair, there was a table, and in the middle of that table there was one tiny white snap. And to be honest, I really do not remember what happened next. I'm pretty sure that for my own mental health my mind simply erased the next several days. Probably, with intensive therapy, I could remember. I do know that there was a call made to my home, and at that point I knew that whatever happened at school would be the least of my worries.

But I want to go back to our question: Have you ever done anything with friends that you would never do on your own? On my own, I would have never even considered going out in public and just randomly throwing these things at people! On my own, I would have never even thought about throwing one of these at someone's face! And yet, with others, with my friends, that is exactly what I did. And I am assuming that some of you probably have similar stories you could tell as well.

This morning we return to our series on some of the more interesting women in the Bible as we consider a request from one of the women of this congregation, as she has specifically asked for a lesson on Tamar, the Tamar in 2 Samuel 13. Tamar was an incredibly strong young woman. And we would expect this, because she is the daughter of King David. Unfortunately, however, although the passage in 2 Samuel 13 features Tamar, the primary lesson comes instead from another character, a young man by the name of Amnon, also a child of King David, although from a different mother. I have put a chart on the wall up here to try to bring some clarity to all of this, and I have put some red boxes around some of the main characters in this passage. But as you can see, Amnon and Tamar are both children of King David, but they were born to different mothers – brothers from another mother! David, of course, had several wives. As we know, polygamy was never God's plan from the beginning. Over time, though, people abandoned God's plan for marriage, and this caused all kinds of problems, including the horrific scene that we find in 2 Samuel 13.

As I understand it, Amnon is David's oldest son, and as the oldest, Amnon was first in line to take the throne upon King David's death. Amnon, therefore, was a young man who probably had pretty much everything he wanted. However, he also had a horrible friend giving him some terrible advice (Jonadab, his cousin). In so many ways, this is a messed-up chapter in the Bible. It touches on some mature themes, but the passage is here for a reason. I realize there are some young ears present this morning. Even with that in mind, I believe we can cover this material in a way that not only honors God, but also in a way that should speak to some challenges we face today. The Bible is a real book about real life, and I would much rather all of us hear the truth of God's word from this pulpit than to be deceived by the world around us. If you are not there already, the passage (in our pew Bibles) is found on page 511, and this morning I'd like for us to look at verses 1-20 – 2 Samuel 13:1-20,

¹ Now it was after this that Absalom the son of David had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar, and Amnon the son of David loved her. ² Amnon was so frustrated because of his sister Tamar that he made himself ill, for she was a virgin, and it seemed hard to Amnon to do anything to her. ³ But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a very shrewd man. ⁴ He said to him, "O son of the king, why are you so depressed morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Then Amnon said to him, "I am in love with Tamar, the sister of my brother Absalom." ⁵ Jonadab then said to him,

“Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill; when your father comes to see you, say to him, ‘Please let my sister Tamar come and give me some food to eat, and let her prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat from her hand.’”⁶ So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill; when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, “Please let my sister Tamar come and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand.”

⁷ Then David sent to the house for Tamar, saying, “Go now to your brother Amnon’s house, and prepare food for him.”⁸ So Tamar went to her brother Amnon’s house, and he was lying down. And she took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes.⁹ She took the pan and dished them out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, “Have everyone go out from me.” So everyone went out from him.¹⁰ Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your hand.” So Tamar took the cakes which she had made and brought them into the bedroom to her brother Amnon.¹¹ When she brought them to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, “Come, lie with me, my sister.”¹² But she answered him, “No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this disgraceful thing!¹³ As for me, where could I get rid of my reproach? And as for you, you will be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.”¹⁴ However, he would not listen to her; since he was stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her.

¹⁵ Then Amnon hated her with a very great hatred; for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Get up, go away!”¹⁶ But she said to him, “No, because this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you have done to me!” Yet he would not listen to her.¹⁷ Then he called his young man who attended him and said, “Now throw this woman out of my presence, and lock the door behind her.”¹⁸ Now she had on a long-sleeved garment; for in this manner the virgin daughters of the king dressed themselves in robes. Then his attendant took her out and locked the door behind her.¹⁹ Tamar put ashes on her head and tore her long-sleeved garment which was on her; and she put her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.²⁰ Then Absalom her brother said to her, “Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now keep silent, my sister, he is your brother; do not take this matter to heart.” So Tamar remained and was desolate in her brother Absalom’s house.

That right there is quite the passage! There’s more in this chapter, but I’ve decided to split it in half. So, we’ll be looking at the first half this morning with one major idea, and then I’d like to look at the second half of this chapter next week (if the Lord wills) as we look specifically at a lesson for parents based on what King David does here. This morning though, there is one big thought that will hopefully have at least some impact on our lives this week. So I hope you are ready for it, because today we are having a ONE POINT SERMON!

- I. **And the big idea this morning comes in these first twenty verses (in the first half of this chapter), as we discover that AMNON HAD A FRIEND.**

We look back up to what happened in the first few verses of this chapter, and it is crystal clear to me that Amnon knew perfectly well that what he wanted to do was wrong! This guy was in love with his sister! But, he didn’t do anything about it, because he apparently knew it was wrong. The Law of Moses was pretty clear on this: You don’t do what Amnon was thinking of doing! And so Amnon (in verse 2) is *“frustrated.”* In fact, he was so frustrated over this that he *“made himself ill”* over it. Amnon, then, had a conscience.

However, Amnon also had a friend! What a tragic statement at the beginning of verse 3, ***“But Amnon had a friend.”*** This friend was actually his cousin (if I have understood that relationship correctly) – Jonadab was the son of one of King David’s brothers. Well, this friend comes in, he sees that Amnon is miserable over this situation, and his advice is, “You just need to do this!” [paraphrased]. His advice is, “Let me help you come up with a plan.” [paraphrased]. And that is exactly what they do. Jonadab eggs him on and tells him what he needs to do, which, of course, is some terrible, terrible advice.

Now, I am convinced that Amnon would have never done this on his own. I don’t know how you look at this passage, but I see a man who was tormented by his own conscience, he knew this was wrong, he was sick over it, but on his own at least he was restraining this behavior. The tipping point comes in verse 3, ***“But Amnon had a friend....”*** He knew this was wrong, he most likely knew what the word of God said about this, but he had a friend who pretty much pushed him over the edge.

And because of what he did, so many lives were ruined. He personally seems to regret his decision almost immediately. Eventually, he is killed by his brother Absalom. Absalom then has this awkward and strained relationship with his father, eventually to the point that Absalom tries to take over the kingdom, after which he himself is murdered. The most obvious victim here, though, is Tamar. As the daughter of King David, this beautiful young woman had so much to look forward to in life, but all of that was taken away. She never got married, she never had children, but this young woman basically hurt for the rest of her life. Earlier I referred to Tamar’s strength. And certainly she did everything right here. I don’t know whether all of you caught this, but this young woman said “No” at least four times in verses 12-13. And then afterwards, what a powerful strategic move that was to immediately tear the sleeves off of her garment! That was a sign. That was a cry for help. That was a very public way of letting everybody know exactly what Amnon had done. As I understand what she did there, her goal was to “out” this man so that he could not get away with doing it to anybody else. Her brother Absalom got that message loud and clear, and obviously he takes matters into his own hands.

But the point here, first of all, is that Amnon had a friend. So the lesson for all of us here this morning is: Be careful who you choose to be your friends! I think of what King Solomon would say a number of years later in Proverbs 13:20, ***“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”*** Amnon was ***“the companion of fools,”*** and he certainly suffered and caused much suffering because of it.

Does that still happen today? Do we ever suffer because our friends talked us into doing something stupid? Absolutely! And this is true in so many areas. Think about doing drugs. Ask somebody you know who does drugs, “How did it start?” And the answer is probably, “Well, I had this friend....” Ask somebody you know who is an alcoholic, “Go back to the beginning: How did it start?” And again, the answer is probably, “Well, I had this friend....” Over and over again, the Bible warns about the danger of ungodly friends who pull us into trouble. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:33, ***“Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.”*** I think of what Paul wrote later in 2 Corinthians 6:14, ***“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?”*** Some translations of that verse have Paul warning about the danger of being ***“unequally yoked.”*** And the picture there is quite graphic. It’s the picture of two oxen yoked up together to plow a field, but one ox is much larger and stronger than the other, so the smaller one just gets dragged along.

Our neighbors have two awesome dogs. Heidi is a pretty sturdy hunting dog of some kind (a German Shorthair Pointer), and Pal is much smaller (a Pomeranian Shih Tzu mix). I refer to Pal as being the “emergency back-up dog.” I’ve never done it before, but I would imagine it might be quite the challenge to walk those two dogs together – they are different sizes, they move at different speeds, they move in different directions. Paul gives

us a similar picture with oxen. And in that picture, Paul is saying: Do not be the friend who gets dragged along! Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Do not get pulled by friends into doing what is evil.

As Solomon says in Proverbs 12:26, ***“The righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.”*** We need righteous friends to help us make good decisions, and we need to avoid those who pull us away. We need friends who will pray for us. We need friends who give us good advice. We need friends who are a good influence. So the question for us today is: Where are we going for advice? Are we talking to people like Jonadab who are more than willing to give us a good supply of snaps to throw at our friends, are we listening to the kind of people who would tell us to go ahead and do whatever it is that feels good at the moment even if it destroys the relationships that should matter to us (like the advice Jonadab gave to Amnon), or are we listening to good advice? Are we listening to those who really care about us? Are we listening to someone who just wants to use us for what we have to offer, or are we listening to those who truly want what is best for us? As God’s people, we need good friends. And that is where we end our lesson this morning. Amnon had a friend, and we do not need the kind of friend that he had. We need good friends.

Conclusion:

The best friend we could ever have, obviously, is the Lord himself! In John 15:13, Jesus said, ***“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”*** And that, of course, is exactly what the Lord did for us. He died in our place, taking our sins on the cross. Jesus continued, by the way, in John 15:14, by saying to his followers, ***“You are My friends if you do what I command you.”*** Jesus, then, died in our place, he was buried, and then he came from the dead. We believe this because of the accounts written by eyewitnesses, recorded for us in Scripture. And our response to what he has done has also been carefully yet simply explained, in Scripture.

As we’ve outlined on the wall up here, to obey the gospel, to be a friend to Jesus, we must hear and understand the word of God, we must believe that Jesus is who he says he is, we must turn away from sin, we must confess our faith in Jesus publicly, we must allow ourselves to be buried with him in baptism, and we must then live the Christian life.

If you have done these things but have turned away at some point, if you have slipped and fallen, the Bible teaches that we must come back, that we must turn away from sin, and that we must pray to God for forgiveness. If you have any questions, let us know. Pull us aside after today’s service. But if we can help in some way right now or if you are ready to obey the good news, you can let us know as we sing this next song. Let’s stand and sing...

To comment on this lesson: fourlakeschurch@gmail.com