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4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
16 June 2013

Grace-Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita  
2 Samuel 11:26-12:14; Luke 7:36-8:3

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*

Sin is always easier to point out in someone else.

It's always someone else with alcohol on their breath.  
Always someone else with a different guy staying the night.  
It's always someone else's kid hiding out back smoking weed.

It's always someone else that's the sinner—  
*until it's you.*

The woman in today's Gospel is a sinner.  
The guy she was with last night wasn't her husband.  
And it didn't bother her.  
He wasn't her first—and probably not the last either.

She's the sort that pours another drink, even though she can hardly get the bottle out of the cupboard without dropping it.

Sometimes she tries to hide it—  
giving the impression that it's all good at home;  
and other times you'll find her screaming at her kid in the grocery store.

She's been depressed and scared and hurt and lost.  
And she's tried to fix it any way you can think of.

She's an addict. To what? Who knows.  
Could be sex, could be pot, could be just another drink to help her relax.

She's tried to get things under control before.  
Maybe it worked for a while, but here she is again.

Her make-up now is smearing down her face.  
She feels sick to her stomach.  
Life is spiraling out of control.

And there's nothing she can do.

You are this woman.  
When will you finally admit it?

That's our problem.  
It's always easier to point out someone else's sin than our own.

But we'd be lying to ourselves and to God if we said that we aren't this woman.

Some of us cover it up better than others.  
Some of us just don't care.

But what sets this sinful woman apart today isn't the story of her sin,  
or her resolve to turn her life around,  
or the progress she's made or the obstacles she's overcome—  
there's none of that in the story.

All she has today are her tears.  
The perfume she used to lure men into her bedroom is now being poured over Jesus' feet.  
And the lips that went from man to man can't stop kissing these feet either.

Simon the Pharisee spoke the truth when he said,  
*"If this man were a prophet,  
He would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him,  
for she is a sinner."* (Lk 7:39)

She is.  
She knows it. And so does everyone else.  
And Jesus knows it too.

There's no pretense now with this woman.  
No hiding.

With Jesus, everything's out in the open.  
No lies, no self-justifying excuses, no cover-ups, or pretending like no one's watching.

That's the thing about this Jesus—  
He has a way of pulling the truth out of us—  
no matter how ugly it might be, no matter how much it might hurt us.

He did it with David, too.

We didn't hear the whole story today, but you know it.  
David saw Bathsheba naked, bathing on the rooftop.  
He lusted, took her, and got her pregnant.  
She wasn't his wife, but that doesn't seem to matter too much today either.

Then he covered it up.  
He brought Uriah, her husband, home—hoping he'd cover his tracks.  
Then he tried getting him drunk—still no luck.  
Finally he had him killed in a master plan that made everyone look good—especially David.  
And after the allotted time for mourning, he took Bathsheba as his own.  
No one suspected a thing.

Then the prophet Nathan comes in.

A prophet is only as good as the Word he speaks.  
It's not his word, but the Lord's.  
So to face up to the prophet is to face up to Jesus.

That's what happens with David.

After a story about a rich man and a poor man and a little Ewe lamb,  
David's outraged at such perverse injustice, he utters his own condemnation:  
    *"As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die!"* (2 Sam 12:5)

Then Nathan drops the parable and faces David up to the Lord:  
    *"You are the man!"* (2 Sam 12:7)  
    And you can't preach the Law more clearly than that.

David is the woman in today's Gospel reading.

Everything is stripped away.  
His perfect, secret, little plan is opened up for all to see.  
There's no hiding from it now.

So David expressed in words what the woman in today's Gospel did with her tears and her hair:  
    *"I have sinned against the Lord."* (2 Sam 12:13)

When such words and such tears come forth, the Law has done its work.

The Law is the word of God that faces us up to who we really are as sinners.

But when the Law has done its job, and the heart is crushed, and you're left with nothing—  
    then a different word must be spoken.

That word is the Gospel.  
The Gospel is the word of God that faces us up to who we are *in Christ*.  
It's the absolution, the word of forgiveness.

There are few words in all of Scripture better than the words Nathan then spoke to David:  
    *"The Lord has also put away your sin; you shall not die."* (2 Sam 12:13)

That's the Gospel.  
Jesus spoke this also to the sinful woman:  
    *"Your sins are forgiven."* (Lk 7:48)

These words aren't *just* words.  
They're not just clichés or niceties or wishful thinking.

When Jesus speaks, things actually happen.

He spoke this life-giving Gospel to David through Nathan, His prophetic mouthpiece.

He spoke this word of absolution to the sinful woman,

freeing her from her restlessness and fear,

*“Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”* (Lk 7:50)

And He speaks this word to you also through the voice of your pastor!

It happened at the beginning of this service already.

*“As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority,*

*I therefore forgive You all your sins.”*

But with such a general confession, we sometimes forget what it means to be the sinner.

We sometimes forget that we are the sinful woman in today’s Gospel, or David with Bathsheba.

We are the addicts.

We’re the ones having sex outside of marriage and hitting the porn sites late at night.

We’re the ones hiding in our basements smoking pot and taking our frustration out on our kids.

We’re gossips and the cheats and the liars and the drunks.

And we’re the Simons, always pointing out the sins of others, without admitting it in ourselves.

When you finally face up to *your* sin.

When your world comes crumbling down on you—and, like David, you realize it’s your fault—

then come to private Confession with David’s words and the sinful woman’s tears.

Come to where you can hear the voice of Jesus specifically *for you*.

Where you hear His forgiveness for what troubles you particularly,

His promise that He has put away your sin, *you* shall surely not die.

This individual promise of forgiveness is also delivered at this altar.

Here Jesus comes to us.

If the Law has done its work,

and you see in yourself the sinful woman,

then bring your tears and confession and kneel at this rail.

Here you’ll find that Jesus knows exactly who you are—

and He doesn’t push you away.

That’s what’s most surprising about all this:

He knows and He knows it all.

And yet He still forgives.

In fact, Christ came only for sinners.

And that means you.

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*