**2 Samuel 12:24-25 December 16, 2020**

**Advent Midweek Series III: A Child is Born: Solomon**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Scandal. It comes with the birth of children. At the end of the day the birth of a child is a momentous moment for a mother and a father, it’s the addition to their family and they will be the ones raising this child, working with this child, helping this child, disciplining this child, and loving this child. But everyone has an opinion. Look at the lives of celebrity children. Expectations are thrust on this child from the moment they are born. Assumptions are made about the family. This is true of anyone in the spotlight, but what if you added in “scandal.” A couple loses a child. A couple can’t have children. A couple adopts a child. A couple’s child is born with a handicap. Everyone has an opinion. Everyone knows. Everyone talks about it. Of all the children we are looking at in this series, tonight we look at one who wasn’t the first born, and yet was still king. A child born to parents who had a reputation, whose relationship began in scandal, a child who would grow up and have scandalous relationships himself that would be one of the main things he is remembered for….and still, a child’s birth that has comparisons to the birth of another child, a greater child, the very Son of God, who was born in supposed scandal, and yet was the sinner’s Savior. A child is born! And his name is Solomon.

Solomon. The child born to David and Bathsheba. Who is Bathsheba? If you don’t know, you probably don’t want to. You have probably heard about the events that preceded the birth of Solomon in 2 Samuel 11 and 12. Anyone who has studied the Ten Commandments for more than fifteen minutes can list off the myriad of sins committed by David and Bathsheba in their affair, and the subsequent cover up. Murder, lies, adultery, lust, idolatry of self and a disregard for God and His Word and His Laws. The story doesn’t just end with the sin, but we then see the prophet Nathan coming to David and convicting him of his sins. The hardest part of the story, or at least the part that could be deemed the most Christological, or where see comparisons to Jesus Christ is that the punishment of the parents sins are carried out not against David and Bathsheba in their death, but the innocent child dies, and the sinful parents are forgiven.

Perhaps you know that story well, maybe not, it’s certainly not one that comes up around Christmas; but it is fair to assume that everyone in Jerusalem knew the story well. Gossip was not invented yesterday, nor are rumor mills a recent invention either. News of Bathsheba bathing on her housetop; as well as her affair with the king; and the not so mysterious orders given to Uriah to head to the front lines where he would most certainly die are not big secrets in Jerusalem. People know what is going on; and they know that it is good to be the king, where you can use and abuse your power to make problems go away. If anything that is the greatest example of power that we see not just in the Bible, but in our own lives when we look at powerful individuals. They play by a different set of rules, and scandalous things happen. We know about them, even if we don’t seek out that information. Bad news travels fast. It is also no big secret that Nathan has a meeting with David to discuss the situation, and what God thinks of all that David has done.

Do not think for a minute that there were not more than a few snickers outside of the palace on the streets of Jerusalem when the locals heard that King David got called out for his crimes, and that he was going to be punished severely.

And do not think for a moment that more than a few nodded their heads in agreement when King David got what he deserved when the child that was the result of his sin with Bathsheba died. Jerusalem is well aware of the scandal inside of the palace. News spreads fast in Jerusalem, even when there is no facebook, no text messages, no e-mail, or twitter feeds. People knew. This was a scandalous couple, who did scandalous things, and everyone knew.

What tends to get lost in the shuffle is what we hear today: that following the death of the child born to Bathsheba as a result of the adultery committed with David; she and David conceive again, and this time Solomon is born.

Now perhaps in our Hollywood culture where sex and scandal sells, we can be excused for overlooking the proper conclusion to the events. Everyone likes a happy ending; but not everyone sticks around to watch it. Better to watch the fire burn, than to see the house rebuilt.

And yet, for David and Bathsheba, who go through the guilt of their sins, followed by the death of their newborn child, not to mention the all-around mockery they endured from the residents of Jerusalem, there can be no better occurrence than this: their marriage is blessed by God with the birth of a baby boy, who receives the promise that he will sit on the throne and rule Israel as his father David now does.

Of course, we do we know the life that Solomon will lead as well. He presides over a great period in Israel; he is the one who will oversee the construction of the temple; he will reap the riches of peace and power sown by his father David.

But well do we know the dark side of Solomon as well. Riches and power yielded Solomon 1000 wives and 300 concubines; each of which pulled at his heart to chase after their own false gods. Well do we know that Solomon will be the last king of a united Israel; for upon his death the kingdom is divided, and it is all downhill from there as idolatry becomes even more rampant in the land.

Solomon, like all people, is conceived in sin, and then proceeds to carry on the family tradition that has been passed down, of scandal, of sinning in many and various ways; some original and others not so original.

But the events surrounding Solomon’s birth and life, point us to another. Like David and Bathsheba, Joseph and Mary will also endure the gossip chains and rumor mills of their own day. They are engaged, all but married, but not married yet. They still are charged with following the Sixth Commandment of leading sexually pure and decent lives, awaiting the day when they will be officially married and will come together.

Imagine the rumors that swirled around Nazareth when Mary returns from her three month visit with Elizabeth, and shows off that she is very much pregnant. Scandal, has found it’s way to Nazareth, to a carpenter and his soon to be bride. And, if she was gone, then Joseph can’t possibly be the father! Scandal! Intrigue! How the gossip chains burned hot with the question of who the father might be?

The proper punishment for Mary’s presumed unfaithfulness is stoning; In this case scandal would lead to the death of an innocent woman, but Joseph resolves to divorce her quietly.

But like the birth of Solomon; everyone wants to see the wreck, no one much cares that everyone is ok. Matthew 1 is the last time we hear of anyone questioning Mary’s faithfulness to Joseph; and the question of Jesus paternity.

Joseph does not stone Mary, nor does he divorce her; instead he takes her to be his wife; and raises the Christ child as his own. We don’t know how long Joseph lives, he’s believed to have died before Jesus finishes his ministry as he is not recorded at any of the events of Jesus adult life, but we don’t get the impression that his relationship with Mary was a bad one, or that there was scandal and problems. If anything we have evidence of Jesus siblings, which would mean that God blessed Mary and Joseph with children of their own.

Unlike the birth of Solomon however, Jesus does not continue a tradition of sinning; nor does He invent new and original sins that no one has ever heard of before.

Instead, Jesus lives a perfect and holy life. He lives a perfect human life that not David or Solomon or Mary or Joseph or you or me have been able to live, before or since.

Jesus redeems all those who have sinned from their own sentences of death and hell; and offers to them forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Jesus is the perfect and holy one who saves His people from their sins.

Like the events that followed His birth, seemingly no one takes notice. Some celebrity children, famous for their birth go on to live, rather mundane and boring lives. We don’t hear about them again. We don’t see them again. The scandal fades and the spotlight moves on. That’s the nature of our culture, jumping from one thing to another, one scandal to the next, not dwelling on the good, normal, healthy, and mundane for very long. No one else may give much notice to this child born in Bethlehem, but you know; you know that this child who is born in Bethlehem and who is crucified on Calvary, and who rises on the third day, is your Savior; and with that knowledge, the apostles and martyrs and you, take that message and share it with the world in a way that no piece of gossip has ever been shared with a passion that no rumor mill has ever spun.

For a child is born! And He is your redeemer. Come, Lord Jesus, Come.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen