

Media and Graphics Notes

Word of Witness Video?	No
Sermon Starter Video?	Yes
Sermon Notes?	Yes, there is one picture near the beginning of the sermon.
Other Notes?	There is a picture to show during Joys and Concerns

Key Questions, Metadata and Outline***What is this sermon about?***

This sermon is about the wildernesses which we create from the decisions we make.

***Why is this sermon important?***

This sermon is important because it identifies our choices as the cause of our wilderness experience and reminds us that God offers second chances and the opportunity to move out of a wilderness.

What is the context of this sermon?

This sermon is the second in the Messages from the Wilderness series. This sermon and worship series have been developed using the sermon series by the same name which was preached at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in 2013.

What are the next action steps?

Whenever you find yourself in a wilderness of your own creation, go to Psalm 51 and cry out to God:

- Create in me a clean heart, O God!
- Restore to me the joy of my salvation!

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that there is hope in the middle of the wilderness.
God will lead us out of the wilderness we have made for ourselves.

Metadata

1. Topic(s)
 1. Grow
 2. Changing Lives
2. Sermon Books of the Bible
 1. 2 Samuel

7th Sunday after Pentecost

July 12, 2015

Messages from the Wilderness - The Wildernesses of Our Own Making 2 Samuel 11:1-3

First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

Preaching Target Word Count: 1,943

Text Online at <http://j.mp/1NyhLNI>

Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1K4qKFR>

3. Series

1. Messages from the Wilderness

4. Speaker

1. Andrew Conard

5. Tags

1. sermon, worship, church, Methodist, United Methodist, United Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church, El Dorado, Kansas, Great Plains, Annual Conference, Great Plains Annual Conference, wilderness, messages, sin, human condition,

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Human Condition

Transition

Hope in the Wilderness

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Good News

Call to Action

Invitation

Closing Prayer

2 Samuel 11:1-3, CEB

In the spring, when kings go off to war, David sent Joab, along with his servants and all the Israelites, and they destroyed the Ammonites, attacking the city of Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

One evening, David got up from his couch and was pacing back and forth on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. David sent someone and inquired about the woman. The report came back: "Isn't this Eliam's daughter Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

Introduction

Sermon Starter Video

[Play sermon starter video.](#)

Series Review

We are in the second week of our series, Messages from the Wilderness, in which we are studying characters from the Old Testament who made their way to the wilderness at some time in their lives. We are looking at these biblical characters to see what we can learn about how they made it through and what we can learn from them about where God is in the midst of the wilderness.

Last week

Last week, we considered the story of Joseph. He found himself sold into slavery by his brothers, falsely accused and imprisoned for years. He was in the wilderness. Yet in the midst of all of this, Joseph continues to trust in God and the scripture tells us over and over that God was with Joseph.

Today, we continue with the story of David and contemplate the wildernesses we make for ourselves.

Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can

reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

Opening

Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Opening Story

Judean Wilderness

I want to remind you that there is an actual wilderness in the Holy Land. You can go there. Here is a picture of the Judean wilderness just outside Jerusalem.



I took this picture when Nicole and I were on a trip to the Holy Land in 2007.

The wilderness is a place that is barren, rugged and beautiful.

It can also be a place of hopelessness and despair, especially if you are there by yourself or are facing difficult times.

Wilderness of Our Own Creation

Today we consider the story of David

David went to the wilderness many times in his life.

He was hunted down by King Saul who sought to kill him.

He fought the giant Goliath.

Today we the wilderness in David's life as a metaphor for difficult times.
The story for today is not David's greatest moment.
We will find David in a wilderness of his own creation – a result of his choices.
We will find in David's story, what God does, when those who experience
tremendous guilt and shame return to God.

Transition

So, let's take a closer look at the story of David.

Introduction to David

Statistics

I want to remind you that David lived about 1,000 years before the birth of Christ. He is one of the most significant characters of the Old Testament. David's name occurs around 970 times in the Bible, second only to Jesus. There are 60 chapters of the Old Testament are devoted to telling David's story and 75 of the Psalms are connected with David in some way.

Prototype King

The scripture say that David was a man after God's own heart. He becomes the prototype of what a great king looks like and ultimately what the Messiah would be.

Jesus is called Son of David.

David is that kind of revered figure in the Old Testament.

Hero Stories

The heroic stories about David were told and retold to children growing up.

Everyone in Israel knew the stories of David.

Every little boy and girl would have known about David slaying the giant Goliath.

Example: George Washington

The stories about David were a little like the hero stories that we have as well – like George Washington.

What kind of tree did he chop down?

A cherry tree.

You probably haven't read about that for a long time, but somehow you have it ingrained in your head.

When he did, he confessed to having done it. What was it he said?

I cannot tell a lie.

This story is stuck in our memories because it was used to teach us about life, morals and values, as well as about history.

This is what the stories of David were like.

They were used to teach people about faith, life and morals.

Transition

The story that we have before us today is a story that was probably not taught to little children, but taught to grown ups about how we are meant to live our lives and where God is in the midst of the wildernesses that we ourselves create.

David's Story

Something has Changed

Listen again to these words of scripture from 2 Samuel 11:1:

In the spring, when kings go off to war, David sent Joab, along with his servants and all the Israelites, and they destroyed the Ammonites, attacking the city of Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.¹

This verse seems to indicate that something has changed for David.

You see, David used to go off and fight the battles with his people.

He didn't send his soldiers off to battle. He lead his soldiers into battle.

Did you notice in this verse?

David stayed in Jerusalem in the comfort of his palace, while he sent his soldiers off to battle.

Something has changed in David's heart.

Change in Our Lives from Success

Perhaps something has changed because of David's success. He was the greatest king Israel had ever known. Things were going ver well for him.

Sometimes, when we reach the peak of success, we forget that the rules still apply to us. At times, when things are going great something changes in us.

Change in Our Lives from Challenges

The opposite is true as well.

Sometimes, when we are things are not going well and we face challenges in our life, we figure what else could go wrong? I already find myself in a pretty lousy place. Maybe the rules don't apply to me. At times, when things are going poorly something changes in us.

¹ 2 Samuel 11:1, CEB.

A Woman Bathing

The scripture continues with these words from 2 Samuel 11:2:

*One evening, David got up from his couch and was pacing back and forth on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful.*²

King David – a man after God’s own heart, has written many Psalms, the archetypal king – sees a woman bathing. Now, what would have been the appropriate and honorable response for King David seeing a woman bathing? He should say, “I didn’t mean to see that. I’m going to go downstairs, pick up my copy of Field & Stream while she is bathing. I’ll come back to the rooftop later.”

This is not what David says. It is not what he does.

Something has changed in David.

Inquiry

Here’s what happens next from 2 Samuel 11:3:

*David sent someone and inquired about the woman. The report came back: “Isn’t this Eliam’s daughter Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”*³

David finds out that the woman he had been admiring is the wife of someone else. What should be the response of the honorable king, who seeks to honor God, who is a man after God’s own heart?

His response should be, that’s it.

I am not coming up to the rooftop any more at this time.

She is not my wife. She is someone else’s wife.

Not only that, but Uriah the Hittite was fighting on the front lines for the king.

He should have stopped right there.

But he didn’t stop there.

Rest of the Story

- “So David sent messengers to get her. When she came to him, **he had sex with her.**”⁴
- “The woman conceived and sent word to David. “**I’m pregnant,**” she said.”⁵
- **David calls Uriah** from the front lines, hoping he will be with his wife.

² 2 Samuel 11:2, CEB.

³ 2 Samuel 11:3, CEB.

⁴ 2 Samuel 11:4a, CEB.

⁵ 2 Samuel 11:5

- Uriah won't **sleep with his wife** while his troops are at the front lines.
- He sends Uriah with a **letter to Joab** giving instructions to put Uriah in the heaviest fighting and then draw back the other troops, so he will be killed.
- David has violated most of the **Ten Commandments** in this one story. Finally, the prophet Nathan confronts him with his sin and finally, he is broken. He has reached bottom. David is walking through a wilderness of his own creation.

He is the greatest king of Israel, a man after God's own heart.
David struggles with temptation and gives in to temptation.
When he is in the wilderness, he is not thinking straight.
He is desperately trying to fix his problem and makes it even worse.

Transition

Do you recognize David's story in your life?
Have you ever been in a wilderness of your own creation?

Human Condition

Our Wilderness

Has there been a time when you made a decision which you knew was wrong?
Then you found yourself in a place of despair or hopelessness, anxiety or fear –
A place where you feel absolutely alone and broken.

There are times when the choices we make lead us to our own wilderness.
There are consequences to the decisions we make.
They can be painful and they separate us from God and others.

Human Condition

The truth is that we have all made bad decisions in life.
We have all struggled with temptation.
This is part of the universal human condition.
There is a path that God would have us take and we all struggle with the temptation to stray from the path. We know the right thing to do, yet we have a tendency to lean toward the thing that will bring us pain or bring us to our own wilderness.

Transition

Was there any hope for David?
He violated many of the Ten Commandments and even had a man killed.
Was there any hope for him?
Is there any hope for us?

Hope in the Wilderness

David's Response

When the prophet Nathan confronts David with his sin, David responds by falling before God and by doing what we call

Repenting means to recognize the brokenness which we have created ourselves.

To fully own that and then to confess it to God.

To ask God to heal you and go in a different direction than we have gone before.

To fall on God's mercy and ask God to change your head and your heart.

Psalm 51

This is what David does and you read it in Psalm 51. These are the very words of David after being confronted by the prophet Nathan:

Have mercy on me, God, according to your faithful love! Wipe away my wrongdoings according to your great compassion!⁶

Hide your face from my sins; wipe away all my guilty deeds! Create a clean heart for me, God; put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me! Please don't throw me out of your presence; please don't take your holy spirit away from me. Return the joy of your salvation to me and sustain me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach wrongdoers your ways, and sinners will come back to you.⁷

Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will proclaim your praise.⁸

Transition

This story is in the Bible for us.

This Psalm is in the Bible for us.

Conclusion

Good News

The good news is that there is hope in the middle of the wilderness.

God will lead us out of the wilderness we have made for ourselves.

⁶ Psalm 51:1, CEB

⁷ Psalm 51:9-13, CEB

⁸ Psalm 51:15, CEB

Call to Action

Whenever you find yourself in a wilderness of your own creation, go to Psalm 51 and cry out to God:

- Create in me a clean heart, O God!
- Restore to me the joy of my salvation!

These words are here for you because you are going to need them sometime.

Invitation

No matter what you've done, no matter how horrible you feel about what you have done in the past, God can forgive you.

God wants to forgive you.

Christ bore our sins on the cross.

The story of our faith is a redemptive story.

You don't have to be what you once were.

Your life doesn't have to be defined by your worst moment.

There is hope in the middle of the wilderness.

God is gracious and merciful and will lead us out of the wilderness we have made for ourselves.

This is the message from the wilderness for us today.

Closing Prayer

God please forgive me for... Then you pray and lay that before God right now.

God hears your prayers and even before you spoke was ready to forgive you.

Please give me the strength to step out of the wilderness. Help me.

Jesus, I want to follow you as my savior and Lord.

When we stumble and fall, may we fall into your arms and feel once more your grace and mercy.

Amen.