

Enough is Enough

An examination by Peter of the issues in 2 Samuel 11:1-15 and John 6:1-21

The John passage that separated the readings from last week - Jesus being constantly followed by the crowd and the miracles of healing of many people. No wonder he was followed. Teaching and healing.

The last verses in the passage about Jesus and his feeding of 5,000 men (and presumably others but only the men are counted)

"When Jesus realised that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself."

What's wrong with being a king. We'll come back to Jesus' attitude later.

The 2 Samuel chapter 11 passage goes to much detail to present David in the worst light. Let's look at the main characters.

Let's look at the players in the **State of Origin** event

Bathsheba

Not evidence in the passage of Bathsheba's consent. Was she flaunting her wares and using her feminine wiles by bathing on the roof? Was she deliberately seducing David?

She is taken, as a married woman, forcibly by David on seeing her and he lusts for her.

Uriah the Hittite.

Presented as near faultless

A Hittite - normally part of the opposing forces, not part of Israel. Serving David as a leader in the army

Would not sleep in the luxury of the palace as his men were camped out.

Brave - willing to be at the front of the army.

David

In this State of Origin David is of Moabite origin. A group of somewhat settled people SE of Israel who would often become raiders when times were bad in their own country.

The story comes at a time when the borders of Israel were being expanded by warfare and skirmishes. This was a short time when Egypt and the civilisations on the Tigris/Euphrates were not battling each other or aggressively seeking to

occupy Israel - the land between them and the obvious terrestrial trading route.

David takes by force, he is all-powerful, Bathsheba has no choice. Without mentioning the word - it is rape.

Plotting - When Bathsheba declares she is pregnant - Getting Uriah back from the front so Uriah can have the opportunity to have sex with her so Uriah would think he is the father.

When that doesn't work because Uriah would rather sleep in the guardhouse. David is surprised that he didn't go home and comes up with another plan. He entertains Uriah and tries to get Uriah drunk so he will be more malleable and go home instead of sleeping rough at the palace.

That still doesn't achieve the aim of having Uriah sleep with his wife so David arranges to have him killed by putting him at the front in the hottest part of the battle.

Uriah doesn't live to suspect anything and no one but David and Bathsheba will know who made Bathsheba pregnant.

Bathsheba is a woman without power or authority would not be believed anyway.

there was nothing especially unusual in his time about King David seeing a woman he wanted and just taking her, in all probability raping her, and then when he needed to keep the scandal of her pregnancy out of the tabloids, arranging for the death of her husband. It was more or less accepted, or even expected, that kings were allowed to do that sort of thing.

David never expected to be rebuked by the religious or political system. He could keep his public image despite committing rape, adultery and murder.

Maybe that's what's wrong with being a king.

The kings that Israel had, and David was accepted as the ideal model, could use their power in any way they wanted, for good or for evil.

Jesus is referred to as a king. He makes it clear that he is a different kind of king. No wonder he removed himself to a mountain as quickly as he could when the people wanted to crown him.

- He doesn't seek to influence by power but by kindness.
- He doesn't take advantage of people but exposes those in society that do.
- He doesn't want to be either type of king the people expect -
 - the warrior king or
 - the celebrity king who can indulge his whims with impunity.

When is Enough is enough - David had plenty of opportunity for wives.

Ads about being sure of consent on TV now.

The #MeToo movement.

In the news - Harvey Weinstein, Don Burke, Jeffery Epstein, the cover up of institutional abuse in care homes.

Not in the news - the woman down the road, the boss, the priest, the politician.

Related to power. Whether it be the power disparity between child and adult, male and female, or female and male, victim of war and combatant, caregiver and almost helpless receiver of care.

What's the point of the story. Sometimes I wonder why the incidents that put Bible characters in a bad light are in the narrative. Remember Michelangelo's David. Is he more fallen than this stature projects?

From Psalm 14

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.

The LORD looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.

All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Do all these evildoers know nothing?

They devour my people as though eating bread; they never call on the LORD.

But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of the righteous.

You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge.

Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!

When the LORD restores his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

Can we take it that if one does terrible things like David using his power to abuse Bathsheba and arranging for Uriah to be killed, that we can then seek forgiveness and rely on God's acceptance?

Many of David's other psalms show how remorseful he was at not doing what was righteous.

God's ways work and David acknowledges this despite having fallen from God's grace.

We see Enough is Enough in the passage about feeding the 5,000. The disciples express fear that there won't be enough money to buy food for the 5,000 plus people and then food to go round if they were to share the boys provision of but a few loaves and fishes.

They also live in fear in the boat when the wind and waters get rough.

How often are we driven by fear? Psychologists say that fear is four times more powerful as a driver of behaviour than the offer of something good.

Think of examples in your own life.

- Is there enough in the cupboard?
- Have you been fearful about not having enough to survive on week-on-week?
- Is your superannuation enough to last you from retirement, through the non-earning years of old age and ultimately to your death?
- Have the descendants you care about been adequately cared for? Who will look after them financially and physically?
- What if my travel plans fail? Instead of regarding it as an adventure we insure, back up, take the safest strategy.

One message we could take from the generous feeding of the crowd is - not to worry- hand it over to God. The plans and fears that we have aren't necessarily the way God works.

Enough is a cultural construct. We compare ourselves with those around us when deciding what is enough. But with all the stuff and services we have we are no happier than our grandparents. Are we happier than Samoans?

Research says "no". The happiest countries are those where people are equal and don't feel they are missing out or fear their neighbour or other group.

We should all be constantly asking "When is enough, enough?"

Reading Geoffrey Blainey's book - *Sea of Dangers*. The Aboriginal people, or 'Indians' as Captain Cook called them, in Botany Bay were not at all interested in British useful goods like knives or pretty things like buttons or beads. They virtually ignored the presence of the Endeavour and its crew.

"When is enough, enough?" when considering the stuff that is so easy to accumulate or keeping up with the latest.

The David passage also asks us "When is enough, enough?" when calling out behaviour that is abusive or self-seeking at someone else's expense