

DAY 1: Lectio Divina Psalm 15

Table #	Comments
1	<p>Over my decades of ministry, have I walked straight, acted right, and told the truth? I need to meditate on this.</p> <p>Intentionality about our integrity is essential. It's easy to be and act otherwise if we aren't intentional.</p> <p>It's a matter of our heart, our heart informing our tongue; truth that comes from sincere hearts. Words flow from our hearts. How do we guard our heart?</p> <p>Our reactions aren't always conscious decisions we make. It's the flow of our lives. I wish my natural responses would be ones of integrity, that come out of my pattern of living. Sometimes it's only after we get angry that we go back and realize that we should have acted differently.</p>
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3	<p>"STAND FIRM FOREVER" - is connected to the act of worship at the beginning. In between are very practical behaviors. These are matters of the conscience too. But very difficult, yea, impossible without God's enablement. We are these kinds of people. I am a flagrant sinner. None of us qualify for the opening question. Thus it is a rhetorical question. God judges both the sin and the sinner. Thus we are all equally humbled, because it is only in Christ that might we come into the presence of God!</p>
4	<p>Psalm 15: collective impression— who may dwell in God's sanctuary? Only the blameless, but we all find it impossible, and thus we are grateful for God's merciful righteousness given to us, and we will never be shaken (apart from Him)</p>
5	<p>God calls us to live lives of integrity. He calls us to refuse evil, even things that can seem small such as talking bad about people (even our friends). He calls us to be near him in his presence on the top of the hill where he meets us.</p>
6	<p>Love and truth in our inward lives should be reflected in our relationship with others. Integrity should be an integral part of our lives, affecting everything from inside to outside. Integrity is an act of gratitude that leads us to ask, "How can I shine (Moses' face shone after being with God) in the way I live and interact with others?" When we do all this, we will stand firm forever.</p>
7	<p>This passage is an invitation to a life of authenticity, of living according to values that are integrated into every aspect of life--intention, thought and action. The list of conditions listed, while not exhaustive, reflects the type of righteousness and justice that God expects of each of us. However, they are not meant to keep us out of his presence, but they are a reminder that it is his transformational presence in our journey that molds us and shapes us, so that we may never be moved, shaken or taken away from his Sanctuary.</p>
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DAY 2: Lectio Divina, 2 Samuel 11

Table #	Comments
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3	<p>The contrast between David and Uriah</p> <p>David rested: Uriah stuck to his duty David schemed: Uriah was upright David was King of Israel: Uriah was a foreigner David manipulated: Uriah was a pawn</p> <p>There was a trust relationship between the King and the soldier, but it was costly for Uriah as he ended up dead because of his trust of the King</p> <p>Questions for the text: Could/should Bathsheba have resisted? Did Uriah suspect what was going on? Who was Uriah loyal to?</p>
4	<p>When other kings went off to war. David remained in Jerusalem. David knew Bathsheba was Uriah's wife, but he still sent for her. David made Uriah drunk, but he still would not go home. Uriah identified with the servants of the king and slept with them at the palace gates. David abused his power and lost his sense of service. Uriah refused to do the very thing David was doing, indulge himself with comforts while Joab and the soldiers were in the open field. David yielded to lust and his sin overtook him. David was determined to indulge himself with Bathsheba, in spite of the fact she was the wife of another man. Uriah was determined not to indulge himself with Bathsheba, in spite of the fact she was his wife.</p>
5	<p>The Lord calls us to be in tune with what is going on. We should not withdraw or "take a nap". David was supposed to be in the war, but he stayed in Jerusalem. Uriah denies himself, David doesn't. We are called to persevere in our services. We prayed that God would keep us alert.</p>
6	<p>When one loses perspective, we see where we are headed from David's story. Where we are not active in what God's called us to do, we become bored. He wasn't where he belonged, he made calculated attempts to fulfill his lust and cover up his sin. Uriah's priorities are a sharp contrast to David's. He remains true to his priorities even at the risk of incurring David's anger. Bathsheba was bound by the norms of that society to obey the king and fulfill his lust. David had opportunity to repent after each action but didn't.</p>
7	<p>This is a difficult story that underscored a few things for our group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A great injustice was committed against a family. The grievous thing is that the abuser was David, the King, and a "man after God's own heart." He abused the power and authority that God had anointed him with. He didn't stop to consider that. - Bathsheba was a person, a daughter, and a wife. He used her as an object to satisfy his own desires. - David had lost his undivided heart. Uriah actually reminds us of the way David used to be, zealous for the Lord, and in the front lines of battle.

	<p>(Psalm 51)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- There are three distinct parts in the story where David made a choice that took him further into sin (vv. 4, 6 and 12)- When we try to cover sin it destroys us and those around us. It is a wakeup call for those of us in Christian leadership to ask ourselves if we are or have used our position or role for personal gain or satisfaction. Do we use people or manipulate them to do our bidding. Are those people around us victims to our personal/ministry agenda.- When Christian leaders abuse their position it is a greater evil, for they are misusing authority in the name of God.
8	<p>David's fall comes as a warning to us as leaders regarding the barriers to finishing well of plateauing, sexual immorality, and the abuse of power. We can come to view ourselves as exceptional and above the rules applying to those we lead. We can remove ourselves from solidarity to others become vulnerably isolated. The deeper sin beyond adultery was the deception and misuse of power to cover up David's sin.</p> <p>We - like David - are vulnerable to these sins. We also can tend to cover up our sin and isolate ourselves. We can be threatened by our failures rather than own them. We can fool ourselves to think we can get away with it. We therefore must cooperate with God to build in safe-guards for our vulnerabilities and accountability. When we sin, may we be quick to own our wrongdoing, repent and surrender to our God's chastening hand.</p> <p>Uriah who was a Hittite modeled the opposite spirit of humility, solidarity, resolve and servanthood. He represents the outworking of Abrahamic covenant of the nations coming to worship the true God as a faithful member of the people of God.</p> <p>We noted that this was a story written by men about men. A female perspective would open the possibility of Bathsheba's own manipulation of power for her own benefit.</p>

DAY 3: Lectio Divina, 1 Samuel 3

Table #	Comments
1	<p>What we have learned from the devotion in the morning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By the time Eli was very old, his priority and value has changed and treated his sons better than God. It was his mistake. - When he got the authority, it meant he had more responsibility. But he misused his authority and power and failed to meet his responsibilities. - 3. As a leader, he failed to give a proper training to his own sons. That's why he couldn't control his sons and got into trouble when he was old.
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3	<p>The ministry position of Hophni and Phinehas enabled their sin - they abused their role to their own purposes Why was Samuel not corrupted growing up in this environment? Evidence of him being set-apart from his birth Samuel's unfolding story is a hope in the midst of the corruption in the temple God is a jealous God</p>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sadness seen in Eli, as a result of the misbehaviour of his sons, as he had no influence over them. - The sons rejected him, so Eli had given up on them - Faithful priest who will do according to my heart and mind. Especially: what is in the mind of God, we need to further explore - Eli is made responsible, as he is the leader. - The 'circle of righteousness': God's will is to put Eli and his sons to death, because Eli "honors his sons more than God" and "the choicest part of every offering is for the sons". That's why God makes the relatives of Eli to beggars, asking help from the priest put into place by God. - God promise that Eli's family (as from his ancestors) will minister forever and now he finishes His promise, it seems. But God provides another priest, Samuel. - Samuel is not influenced by his environment and stands firm in his worship to God. After this passage we read about the death during one day of Eli and his sons and the fact that Samuel has to take over the priestly responsibility. Certainly not the best way of leadership transition. - The danger of family businesses with regard to taking up responsibility. Are you making decisions / do you rebuke as a parent or as a boss?
5	<p>We felt the Lord telling us that the time is coming (v 31 from the reading). A warning from God that he will deal with corruption and wrongdoings. The narrative serves as a warning. We need to have a responsible attitude to love what He loves and hate what He hates. Our ministries are not ours, but it's His work.</p>
6	<p>God sees the big picture. We must remember the long term and not just the present. This may motivate us to faithfulness and integrity.</p> <p>Eli heard what his sons were doing. He probably overlooked a lot and didn't realize the gravity of what was going on. Leadership can sometimes be blind to what is going on.</p> <p>There is great contrast between Samuel and Eli and his sons.</p> <p>The effect of our actions can affect our family and many others. We need to honour God above ourselves and family. God will bless and support us if we do according to what is on His heart and mind</p>

	<p>Eli has several opportunities to repent but didn't. We need to reflect on our lives and see if we have become hardened to God's voice and corrections in certain areas in our lives</p>
7	<p>This passage was difficult for us, since we all have children and can identify in some ways with Eli. However, it is obvious that Eli's motivation for confronting his sons was that people were talking and their behaviors were embarrassing him and the family. His rebuke of them seems weak and a little too late. We noticed that as God spelled out their punishment it matched their sin. The sons died a violent death because of their abuse of their priestly privileges to take things that didn't belong to them. For Eli, he became blind and heartbroken as he saw his family die--because he had chosen to ignore and tolerate his sons' sins.</p> <p>One last observation was that in the middle of this heart-breaking passage, verse 26 stands in stark contrast to Eli and his sons in that "Samuel grew taller and in favor with the Lord and with the people"</p>
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