

## 2 August 2015 Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

2 Samuel 11:26-12:13a  
Psalm 51: 1-12  
Ephesians 4: 1-16  
John 6:24-35



[Proper 13B/Ordinary 18B/Pentecost 10 August 2, 2015](#) Textweek

The first reading contains a clever story in which Nathan gets David to fully appreciate what he has done in relation to Bathsheba and Uriah. It is also a story that illustrates an understanding of 'Karma'; 'what you get is what you give', 'what goes around comes around' and 'you get what you deserve'.

However; this simple idea of 'karma' doesn't stand up to scrutiny; although we sometimes think, or wish, that 'getting what they deserve' is a just outcome, we all know that bad things also happen to good people, and so where is the 'karma' in that?

Stories like that of David and Nathan in the first reading were initially taken as illustrations of karma, and of justice; however they might have more far reaching implications.

In the end David got his just desserts and we're all righteously happy with that outcome; he got what he deserved. However, hearing the story with its implied 'karma' enables us to self-righteously think that we also have got what we deserve; and that enables, even encourages, us to hold on to all that we have.

Now, before throwing the baby out with the bath water; let's consider karma in a more realistic context. What if karma really is one of the fundamental laws of life, but instead of being operative on the individual, it is operative on the whole?

Not only does that context make more sense, it also resonates with our actual experience; acts of injustice, contribute to global injustice rather than coming back to the individual or the initiator of the act. Many suffer from the actions of a few and there are therefore many examples of injustice, but the law of karma continues to be operative.

Once we appreciate that each and every action, and attitude adds or subtracts from the wellbeing of the whole, we then have real cause to look at each and every action we engage with.

What if we now read the story that Nathan told David, as a story that the prophetic voice is speaking to us?

What if our anger is "*greatly kindled*" against the rich man who took the poor man's lamb; and what if Nathan then says to us, "you are that person"?

Picture Nathan talking to us, the voice of God addressed to each, and to all of us; I have given you so much, anointed you with great power and potential and I would have added so much more, but you have taken!

And there we pause to consider, what have we taken, it was not me, not us, that took the poor man's lamb; or was it?

*Za'atari camp is the largest refugee camp in the Middle East, with around 81,000 Syrian residents. The temporary settlement was established on 29 July 2012 amid huge inflows of refugees from Syria.*

*In all, more than 4,015,000 refugees are registered in the region neighbouring Syria, including some 629,000 in Jordan.*

[www.unrefugees.org.au](http://www.unrefugees.org.au)

*The 2011 Census counted about 9.12 million dwellings in Australia, 8.18 million of which were occupied on Census night. This leaves about 934,500 dwellings that were unoccupied, representing a vacancy rate of 10.2%. In other words, about 1 in 10 dwellings across Australia were vacant on Census night.*

<http://blog.id.com.au/2012/population/australian-census-2011>

We are members of one body, and it is the body of common humanity, our actions and our attitudes create outcomes for the whole body.

And we are members of one body, the church; and in the second reading today Paul addresses the Church at Ephesus, he 'begs' the Church: "*to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called*".

That very same plea, like the story that Nathan told to David, still echoes in the Church today; do you, do I and do we "*lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called*"?

The question and the text is one that led me into the priesthood, an auspicious timing, in that it is set for today, as I begin another year.

Do we make "*every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*"?

Paul's letter gives us an opportunity to hear the insight that encouraged the early church, and to hear for ourselves a call into being members of that body that makes manifest the gift and the giving that is the very unfolding of creation.

*"each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift."*

Paul sees each and all with the potential to come to a maturity *"to the measure of the full stature of Christ."*

The whole of creation, life itself is a gift, and we, each and all of us, are made in the image of the giver; we therefore are creators of life, and givers of life's gift.

*"We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. 15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ".*

Paul urges us to an orientation, a life direction, "into Christ"; it is a maturing, an enlightenment that is life giving to all, not just to ourselves.

In John's gospel we have the same illustration as Jesus gives the crowd a reality check; *"you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves."*

Again, we can hear these words as spoken to us and again hear that we are urged to a new orientation: *"Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life"*.

*"Jesus said... "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.""*

We are called to speak those same words; and to make manifest their truth...

In communion we receive this truth; we consume the bread of life, so that we might be consumed into the same

*"Jesus said... "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.""*

We are the body of Christ, we are *the bread of life*; and so

*“lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called”*