

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time - year C 2006 2 Sam 12:7-10,13; Lk7:36-8:3

1. In a **world** where Palestinian slaughters Palestinian and Gaza slides into chaos
2. In a **nation** where our soldiers continue to be killed, and our president refuses to face reality
3. In a **city** where housing prices have soared and gas flirts with four dollars a gallon
4. IT IS AMAZING WHAT PASSES FOR NEWS THESE DAYS (Show *Daily News* Cover)
5. So whaddaya think?
 - a. Did Tony get whacked? In a city filled with people struggling to pay their bills, in a nation at war, in a world falling apart,
 - b. The fate of Tony Soprano gets almost a much coverage these days as those other burning national issues -
 - i. Paris Hilton's quality of life in prison,
 - ii. and whether Brittany Spears is wearing panties to her parties again.
6. And that is because the show many critics have called the best television series ever
 - a. Ends with Tony Soprano eating onion rings with his family in a restaurant.
 - i. We don't see him get whacked.
 - b. And that has so infuriated so many fans
 - i. that they have begun to construct elaborate theories
(1) suggesting that he did get whacked;
 - ii. because if he didn't well then that is just not right.
 - c. Imagine that: in a world a nation and a city filled with so much injustice
 - i. if Tony doesn't get what's coming to him well now - THAT's not right.
7. Psychologists would call our fixation with such stories - denial;
 - a. Because we refuse to face the mess we have made of our world.
 - i. Perhaps. But it also reveals a deeper truth
 - b. that we expect the world to be just
 - i. despite the mess we have made of it.
 - c. And that maybe, just maybe, we are afraid
 - d. that the mess we have made of the world has happened because the world IS just. And we're getting wacked - by God.
 - e. and so if we are getting whacked, we think, well then, by God, so should Tony!
8. There were many in ancient Israel who would have agreed;
 - a. For them life was every bit as unjust as it so often is for us;
 - b. Which is perhaps why they were fascinated with a story with as much sex and betrayal, adultery and murder as any episode of *the Sopranos*.
9. The story of king David
 - a. We know David as the charismatic revolutionary
 - i. who is chosen by God to seize the throne from his father-in-law Saul.
 - b. In today's first reading we hear a small part of that story;

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- i. When the prophet Nathan reminds David that
 - ii. God gave him all the power and wealth and wives he could want-
 - iii. but he wanted more - his loyal soldier Uriah's wife, Bathsheba.
 - iv. He takes her, gets her pregnant; has Uriah killed, and then marries her.
- 10. Anyone listening to this story would know what would happen to David;
 - a. how his first son with Bathsheba would be born dead.
 - b. How his daughter Tamar would be raped by her older brother Ammon;
 - c. how Ammon would be killed by David's beloved Absalom;
 - d. how Absalom would rise up in rebellion against David
 - i. and be killed by David's men.
 - e. How the sword would never leave David's house, to use Nathan's own words.
- 11. Anyone listening to this story should be satisfied that justice was done;
 - a. except for one thing
 - i. That David doesn't get whacked!
 - ii. And that is not because of something that David does
 - iii. But something that God does. As Nathan says;
 - (1) The Lord on his part has forgiven your sin: you shall not die.
 - b. And David doesn't die.
 - i. he lives a long life, dies peacefully
 - (1) and the throne passes to his son Solomon.
- 12. The ending of David's story must have frustrated some every but as the ending of Tony's story frustrates many of us;
 - a. because for them it highlights the injustice of our world.
 - b. But it highlights something else for us;
 - c. that same something that Paul wrestled with in today's second reading where he wrote that despite our best efforts no one can do enough to justify themselves before God - but nonetheless we are.
 - d. That same something that Jesus had shown a sinful woman
 - i. And because of it
 - ii. she broke in on a dinner party
 - (1) and scandalized the host, Simon the pharisee,
 - (a) by throwing herself at Jesus' feet,
 - (b) anointing them with oil
 - (c) cleaning them with her tears
 - (d) and wiping them with her hair.
 - e. And that is forgiveness.
 - i. God forgave David
 - ii. Jesus forgave that woman

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- iii. And according to St. Paul through Jesus God forgives us all.
 - (1) Not because of anything we do;
 - (a) Though like that woman we might certainly do much in return
 - (2) But because that according to Luke is what God does; from the start of Jesus ministry where he proclaims God's favor, to his last words on the cross where he asks his father to forgive the ones crucifying him - God is the one who forgives.
13. Now in a world filled so much suffering; a God who ultimately forgives seems like the greatest injustice; for all us know someone who, if we had our way would get whacked. And if you are the president, you might just try to make it happen; all in the name of justice.
- a. But all we have to do is look around us to see
 - b. That the e greatest injustice in the world is not God's willingness to forgive -
 - i. but our own unwillingness.
 - (1) Because it results in flawed judgments
 - (2) based on our limited knowledge.
 - c. Maybe THAT is why Jesus told his followers NOT TO Judge but to forgive.
 - i. Because only God knows everything;
 - ii. and thus only God can truly judge.
 - (1) and according to Nathan, according to Paul and according to Jesus, God's judgment is to forgive.
14. And so whaddayathink?
- a. Did Tony get whacked? I really don't know, of course - and maybe we don't care. But perhaps we should; because the story of "king Tony" is little more than a modern day version of the story of King David;
 - i. And that story was written not to teach us how God dealt with some king
 - (1) but how God deals with us all.
 - (2) That despite the often terrible consequences of all our stupid mistakes and unjust decisions.
 - (3) God is not the one punishing us
 - (4) oh God judges us alright but God's verdict is forgiveness -
 - (a) and the chance to begin again.
 - (b) Imagine what would happen, if we took our cue from God, and did the same for one another?
 - (c) What would happen would be the kingdom of God; which we glimpse every time we are forgiven; and forgive in return.