



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

February 20, 2011

Epiphany 7

Sermon Text: [1 Samuel 26:1-25](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [1 Samuel 26:1-25](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 103](#)

Second Lesson: [Romans 12:9-21](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 5: 38-48](#)

Love Your Enemy

In action

Because you love the LORD

You would think that when we are born into this world we don't really know a thing about the legal system. We don't know litigation, mediation or any of the other "tions" that might go along with our legal system. You would think we have no knowledge at all of the legal system, but each and every one of us has one inborn knowledge about the legal system. We are absolutely convinced when we are young and we have a sibling that as long as we can say to mom or dad that "they started it," we can do whatever we want without fear of any kind of punishment or discipline. As long as I can say to mom, "My sister, she started it," it doesn't matter if I hit her with a pool stick. That should be okay because she started it. "I am now free before the Supreme Court of the United States of America." That's what we think as kids, but do we ever really grow out of it? Really? Do we grow out of it?

"Someone gossiped about me, so I have every right to gossip about them." "Someone did something unfair to me. I have every right to mouth off to them." "Someone is threatening my livelihood. I have every right to not show love to that person that I perceive as my enemy." We hear our President's call for civility. If you watch the news, have you seen much of anything civil in any of our protests in Madison? I don't care which side of the aisle you sit on, but love your enemy and holding up signs with our Governor's face on them with cross hairs on them and signs that say "Reload, don't retreat," I don't see that as being very civil. We all have a problem with that in one way or another, whether it's politics or sports teams or something else.

I heard this week on the radio that some 62-year-old guy, an Alabama fan, poisoned Auburn's oak tree that they celebrate their victories around. You are 62 years old and this is the best thing you have to do with your life...poison someone's oak tree? If over sports we can't love our enemies, what the heck is wrong with us? We are so accustomed to this, we think this is normal and right, that when we hear Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount say, "You've heard it said curse your enemies. I'm telling you love your enemy," we say, "Hey, wait a minute Jesus. You can't really be serious. Love my enemy? Feed them when they are hungry? Give them something to drink when they are thirsty? You can't be serious. You can't expect me to love people that don't love me in that way, Lord. That's impossible. It can't be done." When we read from 1 Samuel, we see it being done.

Last week we saw David as the schmuck, right? He was the guy who became lazy, saw Bathsheba, and made a bunch of widows and orphans in Israel to cover up his sin. This week we see David, not distracted, not complacent, not lazy and unfocused and looking at himself and his successes, we see him with a laser-like focus on God. We see this guy that we saw last week was a schmuck do things that we are amazed at. We see David love his enemy. We see him love him not just in words but in actions. Then we see why he loves his enemy...because he loves his Lord.

David's life is fascinating. Reading the story of David's life is fascinating. Not just the ones you hit the heights of in Sunday school or elementary school, but his entire life is just fascinating. He went through so many of the same problems that we do that it's just amazing. Here is a guy that served Saul from the time he was 13-14 on, when he killed Goliath. Then he was a musician who went in Saul's court and played the harp to sooth Saul when he had the evil spirit tormenting him because he had turned his back on the Lord. He served him as a general and he fought victories and won battles for Saul. Yet he still faced problems from Saul because Saul knew that David was anointed to be the next king, not his son, Jonathan, so he wanted to get rid of David. Saul was prone to fits of rage. One night as they were having dinner, Saul got a little upset with David and tried to make a David-kabob by throwing a spear across the dining room table at him. This is how Saul, the Lord's anointed, had treated him. He had tried to kill him.

Now David was on the run with a band of men out in the Desert of Ziph. Have you ever heard of the Desert of Ziph? Have you ever planned a vacation to the Desert of Ziph? Have you seen the brochures? No, you haven't because it's a desert. That's where he was hiding out with his men because that's the place no one else wants to go. That's where he was. He was on the run for his very life and the king comes after him with 3,000 choicest men because the people of Ziph sold him out and said, "Hey, we can butter up to Saul, kiss up to the king, if we tell him where David is." So that's what happened.

So he has all these people against him. He has Saul hunting him down, like a "partridge in the mountains." Three thousand of the best soldiers of Israel going after David and his ragtag bunch of outcasts, about 500 men.

Then they hear that Saul has come. The scouts find them. The scouts see where they camp. And here comes the time when they see where Saul lays down to go to sleep and David asked for a volunteer. So David and Abishai go into the camp at night when they are sound asleep because the Lord put them in a deep sleep. And there they are, standing over Saul, having this debate. Abishai is saying to David, "God has given you your enemy into your hands. This is obviously self defense. He's trying to kill you. God has said you are going to be the next king. You've already been anointed. Here is the time the Lord is saying, 'Now, take the kingdom. Seize the moment.' Be a man, David. Kill the king."

Go back in your life to all the rationalizations you made to mom and dad about why you beat up on your little brother or big brother or little sister or big sister. I guarantee you not a single one of them was as good of a rationalization as David had right then and there, right? I don't think these would have necessarily been excuses like you and I make for our actions. These were reasons, not rationalizations, from everything God had said to David. But look at what David says. "No one can lift their hand against the Lord's anointed and remain guiltless." He takes to heart what he heard in one of the other readings. "The Lord has said 'It is mine to avenge,' says the Lord." He said "The Lord will take Saul in his time or he will die in battle, but it's not up to me to kill the one the Lord has anointed to be leader of his people." That is love for your enemy because Saul was certainly his enemy.

Saul wasn't trying to defeat David in a sporting event. Saul was trying to kill him with 3,000 men. The Lord allowed David to stand over Saul's head and have a debate about how many spear thrusts it would take to kill Saul. That's love to say "No, I'm not going to do it." Do you think David and his men really wanted to spend more months running around from desert to desert, from wilderness to wilderness, hiding out in caves? That's what they ended up doing. That's what this decision made them do, but he loved his enemy more than he loved his own comfort, more than he loved his own convenience, more than he loved his own destiny.

Why? I believe at this time in his life, David's focus was completely and absolutely on the Lord. When you read in the Book of Psalms and you read about David saying, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble, therefore, we will not fear. God is my stronghold. God is my rock and my redeemer." I think David was living that in this point in time. His focus was on God. And as Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount, how does the Lord love? He causes the sun and the rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous alike. He shows love to everyone, not those who earn it or deserve it. God does this because he loves his enemies. While we were still sinners, Christ Jesus died for us, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God. God didn't love you and me because he knew some day we would be good. He loved you and me because he is love. He took away our sins because he is love.

David trusted him as his rock and his redeemer and the one who would not abandon the Holy One to the grave or let his body see decay. He believed the Savior would come and he trusted in the Lord and walked with the Lord. There are times, just like you and me, when he fell away. He screwed up. He most certainly was a sinner. But you can also see what is possible for us when we have this laser-like focus on God and his love for us in Christ. We can soar above what our sinful nature wants to do and we can actually truly love our enemy, not carry around a grudge like a backpack just so we can whip it out when it's convenient and whine and complain and moan and groan. You and I do it all the time.

God, in Christ, has enabled us to be like David and to do more because we love God. Because God has loved us first, we can set aside those grudges. We can set aside this hatred of our enemy. And we can live in a way that is going to stick out in the world around us.

Think about it in the workplace...when someone runs you down and you don't do it back...do you think people are going to wonder why? Some might think you're spineless. So what? That's a "them" problem. But someone might ask you why? Then you have the opportunity to share the love of Jesus Christ with them so the Holy Spirit can work in their heart. You have that opportunity when you live like this because it sticks out in our world. And if you're worried that someone else is going to think you're spineless, get over yourself. It's not about you. It's about God.

Live for him. Love him. Serve him. If someone else has a lesser opinion of it, they have to answer to God for it. But live in a way that loves others, friend or enemy alike, because you want to thank God that he has given you the gift of salvation.

We are here because we love Christ, right? We are here because we love God. We are here because we know who he is and what he has done for us. So when we go out these doors, what are we going to do? Are we going to find an oak tree of our enemy to poison? Or are we going to say, "Here's your spear and your jug back. I'm not going to take from you because I love you that much"?

God has taken away your sins. Now you can go live for him.