

Unfinished- Part 2

God Is an Artist, Not an Eraser

INTRODUCTION

Last week we began this series called unfinished and I asked you to consider God as an artist. And MVBC captures this unfinished state in “belong, believe and become.” We want to create a safe place where people can belong and find out about Jesus. We do this because our hope and prayer is that they might believe in Jesus for eternal life. But we still aren’t finished. Once we believe in Jesus for eternal life, we strive to become more like Jesus. “Belong, Believe and Become.”

But sometimes things get in the way of becoming like Jesus. Last week we talked about our past experiences getting in the way of becoming. We said that our past experiences drive our current responses and behavior. And no matter how hard we try, we cannot erase our past experiences and neither does God. Because God is an artist who needs no eraser and my life is his canvas. Again, there was a pencil on your chair this morning; a pencil with no eraser to remind us that God draws like an artist; he doesn’t erase.

I was reminded again this week from the numerous phone calls, notes, emails and personal conversations that many, many people have experiences that are horrible. Sexual abuse, abandonment, neglect, physical violence, losing a parent- all traumatic experiences that effect the way we respond, think and behave today.

Last week I shared some of things that happened to me as a result of being abused. And as I started making some sense of my past, I learned some things about myself, things like I was numb to emotion, I feared a lot and didn’t really trust people. But I also learned some other things. I learned that my past created some pathways to sin. You see, people who are hurting, people with unresolved shame or unresolved guilt or unresolved abuse- we hurt people. In the church, we call that sin. And for me, because I had ignored my past, I didn’t recognize its affects on me. And because I didn’t, I didn’t really understand the extent to which I was sinning against God and other people.

Last week I shared the stories of Megan and Monica. Both girls were affected by their pasts, but in different ways. But as both girls tried to ignore and escape their past, they sinned. From drug addiction- to stealing to get high- to sex to feel loved- to turning their back on God- both girl's backgrounds created pathways for them to sin.

But weather you have a traumatic background or not, we all sin. We are all unfinished. If you have a Bible, turn to 2 Samuel 12. This morning I'd like us to again consider God is an artist. And if God is an artist and I am his canvass and I am still breathing then he is still drawing and I am unfinished. Last week we looked at the effects of our past on our canvas. This morning I'd like to look at the effects of our sin.

Let me quickly tell you the story. David is King of Israel. Apparently is a voyeur as well. While taking a walk, he spies a pretty girl taking a bath. Because David is king and has complete unaccountable power, he has the girl brought to his palace where he rapes her and sends her home. A short time later, she sends word to the king she is pregnant. So David conspires to bring her husband home from war, hoping the reunion with his wife will take care of this awkward circumstance. But her husband was a loyal soldier and because his brothers were still fighting, he would not enjoy the comforts of home, including his wife. So, David sent him back to the front lines with orders for his commander. The orders specified how the husband was to be abandoned by his fighting brothers so he would die in battle. And that's what happened. So, the husband is dead and David takes the girl as a wife and voila, we have a honeymoon baby, so to speak. But the story of David and Bathsheba does not end here. The last verse of 2 Samuel 11 ► says

^{NIV} **2 Samuel 11:27** After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.

David has erased his sins or so he thinks.

Then Nathan shows up. Nathan is a prophet of God and a prophet's job was to deliver God's message. Sometimes the message was instructions; sometimes the message was about things coming in the future. But sometimes God's message had to do with the past.

So Nathan tells David a story about a guy who has everything. But when he needed a lamb for dinner, he stole the pet lamb of his neighbor instead of using one of his own many lambs. And David is livid. In fact, he wants the guy to repay 4 times what he stole and be killed. His indignation is recorded in 2 Samuel 12:5-6 ►

^{NIV} **2 Samuel 12:5** David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

But Nathan looks at David. ►

^{NIV} **2 Samuel 12:7** Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"

And Nathan delivers God's message to David about what he had done. You see, I am sure at this point David wishes God would have erased his sin. The extent to which he went to erase it himself indicates that David would love for it to go away. And God didn't erase it and it didn't go away.

So, this morning, I'd like to look at David's response to sin in his life. ► And hopefully some of these things will help us take another step towards becoming more like Jesus and being less unfinished.

1. David ► admitted his sin.

For many, this is either really hard or really easy. Many of us will have the response, "I am loser and sin all the time. God can't be happy with me today. Just another disappointment to God." Many times this response is a programmed virus in our mind. Everything we do, including sin, is filtered through this lense of not being good enough or

never being good enough. Many times we don't even realize that's what we are feeling because it just becomes a part of who we are. Sometimes we call this shame. But some of us react differently. We respond to an accusation of sin with "No I didn't." When God's spirit tries to say "You are the man" or "You are the woman" we respond with no I'm not. Or that's not true. Or that's not what I meant. Or I didn't mean to. Or don't be so sensitive. The idea of failure or embarrassment is so strong; we lie, deceive, and manipulate to avoid dealing with our sin. We get angry at close friends or family that point things out or we stop going to church because all they do is make me feel guilty.

But David doesn't seem to respond using either extreme. When faced with what he did, David admitted what he did. ►

^{NIV} **2 Samuel 12:13** Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

David did not make excuses. David did not pull rank with God. "Hey, I am the king. It all belongs to me anyway." He did not try to blame the victim: "she should not have been bathing on the roof for me to see. I just couldn't help it. It's not my fault." David could have made any number of cases, but he didn't. He said "I have sinned."

Psalm 51 was written by David in response to his sin with Bathsheba and confrontation with Nathan. In this poem to God, David says, ►

^{NIV} **Psalm 51:3** For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, ...

When confronted with sin, David admitted it. When faced with our sin, do we admit it? One thing we have today that David did not is we have God's spirit living in us. Sometimes God's spirit prompts us; do we admit it when he does? Sometimes we sin against people and they tell us; do we admit that? Do we admit it when we sin? ► That's David's first response.

2. David ► accepted the consequences of sin

David's response to the consequences set forth by the prophet is interesting to me. For the sake of time, I'm not going to read the entire story, but you can find it in 2 Samuel 12.

One of the consequences set forth by God was that David and Bathsheba's baby would not live. And look at David's response. ►

^{NLT} **2 Samuel 12:16** David begged God to spare the child. He went without food and lay all night on the bare ground. ¹⁷ The elders of his household pleaded with him to get up and eat with them, but he refused.

For 7 days, David did this. David begged God to spare his son. And God didn't. David's son died. And look what David did. ►

^{NLT} **2 Samuel 12:20** Then David got up from the ground, washed himself, put on lotions, and changed his clothes. He went to the Tabernacle and worshiped the LORD. After that, he returned to the palace and was served food and ate.

And this reaction confused those with David. While the son was alive, David fasted and prayed. He was inconsolable. But once the child died, he went to worship God and ate. So they ask David about his change. ►

^{NLT} **2 Samuel 12:22** David replied, "I fasted and wept while the child was alive, for I said, 'Perhaps the LORD will be gracious to me and let the child live.' ²³ But why should I fast when he is dead? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him one day, but he cannot return to me."

You see, David prayed for different consequences. David wanted a different result to his sin and he fasted and prayed intently. He admitted it (and had been forgiven,) but he still wanted different consequences. While there was a chance, he prayed like crazy. But when the consequences played out, he accepted them. David was willing to accept the consequences and trust God's judgment. In essence, David was trusting that God was watching the canvas. God saw what David put there, and David was trusting God's artistry.

So David ► admitted his sin and accepted the consequences.

3. David ► addressed his behavior

Look at 2 Samuel 11:1 ►

^{NLT} **2 Samuel 11:1** In the spring of the year, when kings normally go out to war, David sent Joab and the Israelite army to fight the Ammonites. . . . However, David stayed behind in Jerusalem. ► ² Late one afternoon, after his midday rest, David got out of bed and was walking on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath

Most scholars believe it was unusual for David to send his army and not lead his army. David should have been leading, instead of being home. He was in a place he shouldn't have been, saw something he shouldn't have seen and did some things he shouldn't have done. And he didn't blame in sin on this. But look at 2 Samuel 12:29. ►

^{NLT} **2 Samuel 12:29** So David gathered the rest of the army and went to Rabbah, and he fought against it and captured it.

Next time it was time for David to go to war, he went. He addressed his sin. He changed because of this experience. ►

^{NIV} **Psalm 51:10** Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

^{NIV} **Psalm 51:12** Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

David asked God for a pure heart and a renewed spirit. David again wanted to feel the joy of being saved by God. He wanted and needed a willing spirit to do the right thing. The

point, David's dealing with sin was more than a, "I'm sorry God." David admitted his sin; he accepted the consequences and he addressed his behavior.

And that brings me to my big idea this morning: ► Own your sin so God can draw.

I think David gives us an excellent of owning our sin: admit it, accept it and address it.

Because God still draws. In spite of David's sin against God, Bathsheba and her family, God continued to be the artist. David went on to do great things for God. David's sin did not disqualify him as usable. In fact, The Apostle Paul in the New Testament references David in a sermon in the book of Acts. ►

^{NIV} **Acts 13:22** After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.' ²³ "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised.

In spite of David's heinous acts, he was still called a man after God's own heart. Not because he was sinless, but because he owned his sin- he admitted it, accepted it and addressed it.

God's grace, forgiveness and artistry are incredible; it's unfathomable. ► In fact, it is through the line of David and Bathsheba we get Jesus. David's sin led to Bathsheba as his wife, who is the mother of Solomon- Israel's wisest king and lineage to Jesus. God did that from a rape and a murder.

This issue of sin and forgiveness and ownership and God as an artist plays out in many ways on a regular basis in our world. So how can we make some small strides in seeing God as an artist?

Number 1- Own your sin.

Let's say you have sinned against your family by being a poor money manager. Owning your sin means you say, I have not done a good job as a steward of God's money. Maybe we apologize to God and our family and we ask them for forgiveness. But we also have to accept the results. We are in a financial hole that is overwhelming. We have debt we can't pay. The kids need glasses we can't afford. We can still pray for God's guidance in our situation, but God generally is not going to cause you to win the lottery because you owned your sin. You admit and accept, "This is where we are." But then we address it. What do we do? What do we need to do differently? Addressing it might be getting a second job for a while or a spouse going back to work for a while or a cut in our cost of living or a shorter vacation. In my case, addressing it meant I quit my second job because I needed to trust God more. You see, part of owning our sin is addressing it. If we don't address it, we don't really own it.

But there is another take away from David's story. ► Some of us may need to deal with the extremes- shame and blame. Shame or blame is like a bad computer virus in our mind. It distorts things and things don't look to you the way they really are. Shame is a reaction from your soul, usually created by past experiences. You didn't shape that reaction in your soul, your experiences- things you had no control over- did. But shame affects the way you respond to sin. You can't own your sin- admit it, accept it and address it- wearing shame colored glasses. Those glasses affect the way you see God; they affect the way you see yourself; they affect the way you see other people. Those glasses affect your relationships and how you respond to other people. In my experience, you can't wish or pray away your shame. You need to deal with how and why it's there.

The other extreme to deal with is blame. Some of us just can't admit we are wrong. There are always reasons why we do certain things. We defend our self and our reputation against anything threatening. Everything is someone else's fault. We can't admit our sin and so we don't accept the results either. My rebellious kid- not my fault- I wasn't perfect, but I don't deserve this. The results are always someone else's problem. And so the real sin issue- the part about becoming and letting God draw gets missed entirely.

Even right now, shame and blame are playing a role. Shame is making you feel bad right now because you know in your soul what I am talking about. It's just another nail in the coffin and proves how jacked up you really are.

Others are bored and angry. Thinking in your head right now, "Who are you to judge?" "You must think you some perfect pastor type." A sin or 2 is running through your head, but you have an explanation for that. And both of you can't wait to get out here.

Let me tell you as clearly as I can: Shame and blame are siblings and Satan is their father. For most of us, shame and blame are defense mechanisms created in the face of our past experiences. During traumatic times in our past they moved in and took up residence to protect us and now they go where we go. But they don't have to.

You probably can't make shame or blame move out by yourself. I have tried, many of tried. As I mentioned last week, we want to be a place where people can become more like Jesus. And we know that our past- weather things done to us or sins we have committed- get in the way of becoming like Jesus. We are all unfinished.

SO, as I close this morning, I'd like to offer you some resources. Weather you are dealing with shame and blame- the evil twins- or past abuse or just trying to become more like Jesus, we want to be a church who helps you become.

It's why we have a pastoral counselor on staff who doesn't charge. And if you struggle with shame and blame, I'd encourage you to write that on your connection card and drop it in the box in the back today.

I also wanted to quickly share how MVBC can help you become. Beginning in September, we are making some changes to Life Groups that we believe will help all of us become more like Jesus. Changes that will help us address various areas of our life.

One of the values we have at MVBC is application. Learning what the Bible says, without actually doing it, doesn't help us become. So we focus on application. In the past, we have focused on applying Sunday's message. In August, Life Groups will become topic driven and short term. Life Groups will last approx 10-12 weeks and focus on areas of becoming. Most groups will be general groups that anyone can join, including sermon based groups

like we currently have. But we will also have some application driven needs based groups to help us address some specific things in our life. We are working on groups that address healing and abuse, finances, parenting, marriage, and pornography. We'll have groups geared to the needs of men, women, singles and our college students. All groups will run for the same 10-12 weeks and we'll have 3 different sessions a year. Groups will get to serve together, learn together and pray together. Our goal in creating these small shorter term groups is to provide a safe place to meet some people who also want to become like Jesus. And as God draws on our canvas, we start to look more and more like someone impacted by Jesus.

We'll provide more information near the end of summer as we head into the fall, but if you have questions, please feel free to ask us.

If there is any way we can pray for you or help you or counsel you or guide you, please write in on a connection card and place in the box in the back.

PRAY