

**“Jesus & #metoo”
2 Samuel 13:1-22**

Introduction: Pg. ____ Welcome back!! Last week.... Fall is going to be amazing... College students back... Student ministry is starting. Baptism Sunday on 9/30... Anniversary Sunday on 10/21...

But today, we are starting a series we're calling TODAY. :)

The Why & Goal of TODAY: It is born out of a belief that every topic *and* every conversation (yes, even on college campuses or at work discussing Op Ed's from the NYT) can be spoken to with the greatest accuracy and benefit from a Christian worldview. Please don't hear that as a statement of arrogance, but a statement of humble confidence and conviction.

Because we believe God *is* and Jesus rose from the dead, we expect the mind and heart of Christ to touch every second of every aspect of our lives.

So what's going on in our world, TODAY?

- There is no way to cover every hot topic. As a heads up, last year we covered racism, civility, technology, and sexuality from different angles.
- This year we're going to cover Fake News In two weeks, after we think through the reality of addiction next week. And though I will focus on substance abuse and we will even have a time of prayer for those effected by addiction, there will be relevance for all of life's addictions, from food to sex to our smartphones. Invite...someone to come with you!
- But today, we are going to look at the pervasive reality of abuse, with a focus on sexual abuse.

Introduce METOO...

- Last October, actress Alyssa Milano tweeted: "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted, write 'me too' as a reply." Her tweet, which popularized the #metoo campaign started by activist Tarana Burke ten years before, prompted more than [12 million Facebook reactions](#) in 24 hours and a million tweets of the hashtag in 48 hours.
- As powerful and successful women courageously stepped forward to tell their stories, the #metoo movement not only helped release the burden of silence for countless women (as well as some men), but also incriminated perpetrators, often in powerful positions, like...
 - Matt Lauer, co-host of NBC's the Today show,
 - Film producer Harvey Weinstein, accused by over 80 women for sexual assault, and
 - Larry Nassar, the USA Gymnastics National Team Doctor, accused by 175 woman, who were at the time, LITTLE GIRLS and TEENS!
 - Kyle Stephens: *Let me remind you of the interests of a six-year-old girl. My favorite TV show was Clifford the Big Red Dog. I could not do a multiplication problem, and I still had not lost all my baby teeth. I think we can all agree that someone of this maturity level should not be sexually active, but I was.*
- Like the never before, the tragic reality of sexual abuse has flooded into our cultural consciousness, including our Christian conscience.
- For far too long the church has operated like the rest of the world, ignoring the heinous sin of sexual assault, and at times and even worse, been guilty of covering it up when it has surfaced.

But the Bible paints a better picture as to how we should respond.

T: In every case of abuse, we say with our loving God: enough is enough. I want to call us today to...

The Point: Fight to end sexual abuse with the hope and healing of Jesus.

A few comments to level set our time this morning...

- 1) Though I cannot speak to, we desire to fight against every form of abuse... physical, verbal, domestic, emotional, child, spiritual, financial (and the list goes on).
- 2) Not just women, but women are the most effected by far...
- 3) "The heart knows it's own bitterness, and no stranger shares its joy." (Proverbs 14:10)

I. Fight to end sexual assault because of its heinous prevalence.

What is abuse?

In their excellent book written for victims of sexual abuse, Lindsay and Justin Holcomb say: "**Sexual assault is any type of sexual behavior or contact where consent is not freely given or obtained and is accomplished through force, intimidation, violence, coercion, manipulation, threat, deception, or abuse of authority.**" (Lindsay & Justin Holcomb, *Rid of My Disgrace*)

- It could be physical, verbal, and psychological.
- Any sexual behavior that "violates the well-being of another person."

The reality of abuse in our land...

- **One in four women and one in six men** are or will be victims of sexual assault in their lifetime. [[Higher estimates are 1 in 10. But it could be much LOWER, due to underreporting.]]
- Approximately **80 percent of victims are assaulted by an acquaintance** (relative, spouse, dating partner, friend, pastor, teacher, boss, coach, therapist, doctor, etc.). When accounting for **children**, the number rises to **91%**.
- **One out of six women in the United States has been raped at some time in her life.**
- And among **college women, only 12% were reported** to the authorities!

T: But this is not simply a 21st century problem, this a humanity problem.

As we turn to the ancient text in 2 Samuel 13, recorded 3000 years ago, we discover that sexual abuse and assault, sadly and tragically, is not a new phenomenon.

The story of Amnon and Tamar graphically portrays the wickedness of the human heart and horrendous effects suffered by victims.

Read 13:1-2 (Amnon and Tamar share the same father, but not the same mother.)

Read 13:3-22

Story...

- Amnon was controlled by the unchecked lust in his heart toward his virgin, half-sister.
- Because Tamar was out of his reach, "and it seemed impossible to do anything to her," Amnon recruited the help of his evil friend Jonadab to devise a plan to get Tamar into the same room...
 - Pretend that I'm sick.
 - I'll prey on her kindness & my relationship with my unsuspecting father.
 - When she comes, I will send people away so I can proposition her for sex and my lustful desires can be fulfilled.
- His manipulative plan worked to perfection until verse 12.

- Tamar responds. No!
 - A careful reading reveals she says NO! To him four times!
 - No!
 - No! Do not violate me.
 - No! This is illegal in our land!
 - No! Do not do such an outrageous thing, that would dishonor our land, and me, and you!
 - But Amnon, undeterred by reason or moral concern...
 - V. 14: "Being stronger than her (physically), he violated her and lay with her."
- Let me translate that: Amnon RAPED his virgin sister, violating her to the very depths of her being, placing a scar in her soul time would not erase.

Let me clarify a couple of things going on in this story.

1) Amnon's "love" was not love, but self-love and hate toward Tamar.

- Love is pouring out for the benefit of another. Amnon is only thinking of himself. The filthy irony of it all is that Amnon preys upon the young woman who came to serve him in an act of love.
- He objectified her. He did not treat her as a person.
- In essence, (are you ready for this?), like all forms of selfish lust and sexual immorality, he desouled her.
- Sex, given by God as a beautiful gift to express unity, peace, and love became an instrument for violence and chaos.

2) We need to try to wrap our minds around the heinousness of Amnon's sin.

- This is a crime, but it's more than a crime.
- It's a violation of our humanity! God made us in his image. We have worth. We have dignity. We deserve respect and love and honor.
- Because God says we're valuable (God says you are valuable!) and nothing should taint, distort, harm or humiliate what God has made and declared beautiful.
- To violate someone's sexuality is to desecrate what God has declared sacred.

T: Fight to end the heinous prevalence of sexual abuse.

II. Fight to end the destructive effects of sexual abuse.

How does abuse impact the victim?

Physical repercussions: pain and injury, including but not limited to: bruises, broken bones, STIs (or STDs), nausea, vomiting, headaches, loss of appetite, loss of sleep, stomach pains, and yes, pregnancy.

BUT... Sexual assault is vandalizing the body and the soul.

The devastating emotional and psychological consequences can be far reaching: shame, self-blame, guilt, embarrassment, anxiety, stress, fear, anger, confusion, denial, depression, despair,

social withdrawal, nightmares, flashbacks, panic attacks, extreme dependency, lack of trust, various phobias, hostility, aggression, sexual effects, shock, impaired memory, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). (And I cut the list in half).

This is what we see with Tamar...

- **Shamed (13)**

- Her piercing words reveal the gravity of this heinous and outrageous act.
 - Verse 13. "Where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel."
 - Some translations say: "Where could I get rid of my disgrace?" (A deep sense of filthy defilement mixed with shame.)
 - Shame isolates. It makes us hide. Shame has been described as "internalized disgrace."
 - Once again, the intense Irony... Tamar was a woman of honor... In her defense, she calls on the honor of the nation, then her honor and Amnon's honor.
 - In the end, she received, not honor but shame.
- **Violated (14)**
 - Have you ever had someone take something that belongs to you?
 - "Sexual assault is a massive violation of the physical, psychological, and personal boundaries of another person. The acute damage of an assault stems not only from the denial of the victim's will but also from the violation of the body's physical boundaries." (Holcomb)
 - ... which are a gift of God.
 - **Hated (15)**
 - Feelings of guilt and shame heightened Amnon's emotions, so that he now "hated her more than he had loved her" (v. 15). (NAC)
 - This story continues to reveal the depth of our depravity.
 - **Rejected (17) - Tamar was rejected (denial)**
 - **Utterly Humiliated (18-19)**
 - Dressing the head with a headdress symbolizes dignity, Applying ashes is a symbol of lowliness, a sign of humiliation and disgrace.
 - Covering the head with one's hands (another symbol of anguish) only intensifies the expression of her humiliation.
 - This is one of the many reasons victims remain silent.
 - Scotty Smith story after 10 years of marriage his wife shared about her sexual assault,
 - And then it took him 17 more years to tell his own story of being assaulted as a seven-year-old boy.
 - **Uncontrollable Grief (19)**
 - feelings of shame and loss expressed through symbols of emotional distress. Tamar has become a person who has experienced loss of control over her body, over her life, and over her dignity. To put her hands on her head is a gesture of grief. (Holcomb)
 - **Desolate (20)**
 - Tamar receives a final word at the end of verse 20: "*So Tamar lived, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom's house.*"
 - Alone and empty.

Sexual assault fulfills the very definition of "Trauma:" the state of being negatively overwhelmed, an experience of terror, loss of control, of helplessness during a stressful event that threatens one's physical and/ or psychological integrity.

T That's what flows from one man's lust. It's prevalent and it is massively destructive. That's why we must...

III. Fight to end sexual abuse through bold and compassionate action.

MY HOPE TODAY... is not that we would simply be aware or agree about abuse's heinous effects, BUT that we will play our part in bringing the hope and healing of Jesus into every circumstance of abuse.

That is clearly *not* happening in Tamar's story.

First she was shamed. Then she was silenced... first by her brother Absalom, who planned to kill Amnon & later succeeded as the end of the chapter shows, and then, shockingly, by her own father, King David.

Tamar's abuse was minimized, and because of that, SHE WAS MINIMIZED.

T: That's the story of 2 Samuel 13. How can we be a part of a better story? Let me offer 4 steps to move #metoo to #wewill.

1) We will be proactive to minimize the occurrences of sexual abuse.

- The unwritten failure of chapter 13 is actually recorded in chapters 11 & 12. David committed adultery with another man's wife. Then had him killed, thus fracturing the moral backbone of his family and kingdom.
- To be proactive is to seek purity in all of life and treat sex as a gift from God (Not a commodity. Not entertainment. NOT a tool to fulfill our selfish desires.)
 - [Who could deny that the pornification of our culture is intensifying the reality of sexual assault?]
- As C.S. Lewis once said: "We mock honor and virtue and then we're shocked to find traitors in our midst."
- We will also help men live out Jesus-esque manhood (look at how Jesus elevated women in the gospels!): never objectifying any women, but honoring, protecting, and serving all women as those made in the image of God and sisters or potential sisters in Christ.
- Outside of that, there are other practical steps we can take in our personal lives and in our church.
 - Practice proper boundaries.
 - Create and place ourselves and especially our children in safe environments.
 - That's why we background check everyone of our Kids' volunteers.
 - That's why we have clear check-in and check-out procedures, in addition to other policies to promote a safe environment.
- We must be proactive, but when the time comes (we must be responsive).

Though it may have occurred yesterday or decades ago.

2) We will speak up on your behalf. (??)

- Where Tamar was failed as a victim of rape and then a victim of silence, thus, doubling the injustice, we will speak up. We will defend your dignity and your rights.
- We will report crime wherever we find it and never cover it up.
 - We are too familiar with the Catholic Church scandal in our city as over 1000 children were abused by the hands of 249 priests, and then covered up by the church, lawyers, and even family members who were too shocked or fearful to speak up.
 - But it's also Protestant churches, even this year, one of the Evangelical world's most well-known pastors had multiple women charge him with sexual abuse and the church handled it very, very poorly for months.
- T: #3

3) We will serve you with compassion.

- We will listen to you, cry with you, and walk with you no matter how far restoration's road may take you.

- We will love you with the love of Christ.
- We will make sure you get the pastoral and professional counsel you need to breathe freely again.
- And finally...

4) We will point you to the healing and hope of Jesus.

- Jesus entered our broken world and experienced the effects of sin.
- “[He] hates death with the fury of a thousand suns.” - Andrew Wilson
- When he was crucified on a Roman cross, he was stripped naked, utterly humiliated, shamed, and yes, you could say sexually assaulted.
- “[Jesus] was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” (Isaiah 53:3)
- BUT “for the joy that was set before him [Jesus] endured the cross, despising the shame.” (Hebrews 12:2)

Conclusion:

Listen: Jesus came, not only to take the penalty for our sin and bring us back into a right relationship with God, but also to heal us from all of the devastating effects of sin.

When Jesus began his public ministry, he stood up and open the scroll of the prophet Isaiah

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to comfort all who mourn . . . to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit.” (Isaiah 61:1-3)

THIS IS OUR GOD. HE IS OUR HEALING. HE IS OUR HOPE.

In the quietness of this moment, I want to ask you... do you need to break the silence of your shame? Do you need to receive the healing power of Jesus? Do you need people to walk with you on the road to restoration?

We are here, and we care for you. BUT more importantly, God is here, and he cares for you!

In the quietness of this moment... if you have a prayer request... feel free to jot that down.

Pray... (Team come up)