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SERMON PREACHED AT CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION
July 29th, 2018 10.30 a.m.
Rev'd Dennis Webster

Transcribed from the tape. Some odd things may appear...!

Transcription results:

00:00:02 May the words of my lips and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable of your side, our Lord our strength and redeemer. Amen.
Please be seated. Well, I hope you have strapped yourselves for what's going to be a few weeks of some very difficult readings. I'm not going to continue this next week,

00:00:29 because what follows is Nathan's attack on king David, and I felt for a baptism that's probably not the best welcome in the world! So Dianne will be preparing separate music musical lists next week! But when I look at this second book of Samuel chapter eleven, my blood boils.

00:01:00 King David can be very happy. He didn't leave in the time of the Twitter sphere because this is a hash tag "metoo" moment. If you want to see corrupt power, then look no further than what David does here.
I grew up in a tradition which says, the person who was at

00:01:29 fault is Bathsheba. It's her fault. She was beautiful. It was her fault that she had to purify herself after her period for being on the roof, and it was her fault for getting pregnant. What a load of nonsense? King David has abused his power. He has lost it. He has called for that woman.

00:02:00 He has put her in a situation where he was the dominant person and submitted her to sexual intercourse, and she became pregnant. He then conspires to murder and cover up. And what's worse? He does, every part of the Leviticus code you can think of is defiled, every part of the 10 commandments.

00:02:29 David has abused his power. And he is about to be caught up and we know the story which is coming, and we know the result. We as a people of God, challenged to call people out when we see abuse of power. It's one of the things we do as a church. We know we have to be good

00:02:59 And, alas, we haven't done our very best. And that's why we have been subjected to Working with Children Checks. That's why we were about to go through CrimChecks. And that's why some of you when you serve on parish council are going to be asked to sign a document even a nun would have trouble living. It is because we have not done this well. When we take advantage of someone else for our own

00:03:29 gratification, that is an abuse of power. In our community, we see this as awful. And we see people using their position to put down the small people we have got. For what

gain? Sometimes personal. Sometime political. I'm fully prepared to admit it because he knows these.

- 00:04:00 My Bishop and I don't always see eye to eye on a lot of things. But we have a mutual regard for each other. That's fine. But I agree with his stance at the moment. He took on one of the major parties who is saying, race inspired comments. That if left unchecked, will become a self fulfilling
- 00:04:29 prophecy. And I fully behind him saying to the parties, and I don't care if they Labor, Liberal, Green – I have even had arguments with the Sex Party. I'm happy to take them all on if what is at issue is an abuse of power. When I first came back to Melbourne, I was appointed to the parish of Braybrook. Braybrook is one of the most underprivileged suburbs
- 00:05:00 in this country. The archbishop said to me when I arrived, 'you will see them before they go to jail. You will visit them in jail and you'll see them when they come home.' And he was right. A little suburb cut off by major roads, with no infrastructure. 3rd or 4th generation unemployment. And what did we find. The Office
- 00:05:29 of Housing had decided that those who are coming out of Eritrea, Somalia and the various nations that make up the Sudan would be at home at Braybrook. So they put them all in together. I went to a meeting at the Footscray Town Hall when the head of the Office of Housing was there, and he said, 'well, they're all from the horn of Africa. What's your problem?' You might as
- 00:05:59 well have said they're all black. What the problem was – a lack of understanding that the people from Eirtraya, Somalia and various nations within the Sudanese people we're at war with one another. And you've put them all into one little suburb in the western suburbs and told them to get on with it. So you can imagine what it was like with his first generation arriving without
- 00:06:30 adult supervision, without strong men: because they've been in the refugee camps. There was an audible gasp in the hall that night when he said we put them all in the because they're from the horn of Africa. What have I done wrong? The response thing was, well, let's move them all over the city to somewhere depressed and some waiting to Footscray some went out to what I would call Chernobyl Park.
- 00:07:01 Another isolated suburb. No infrastructure, and that stage Noble Park was a zone three train fare. It cost them the same amount of money that costs us to get into the city. Now we have a structure, with no leadership, just to be expected to assimilate and be good people. He we are nearly 20 years on. And what do
- 00:07:29 we have? We have the second and 3rd generation coming out of that. And they are struggling: struggling for identity, struggling for resources, struggling to make sense of everything. And what are they get? They get used as a political pawns. There is one percent of Sudanese represented within the criminal Justice system. One percent.
- 00:08:01 Local news for the major parties, there are 71% white Anglos. Why are they not saying something about us. Stop the dog whistling. Stop the abuse of power. Power is something that is to be used wisely. And as we saw in these reading today about David. There was no wisdom
- 00:08:30 in what he did. Power is also at the heart of the Psalm, which was and it's also at work in the gospel of John chapter six. The word for power in Greek is demenos. And if you break that down, dem, men oss:, demon. A misuse of power is demonic. It's also the word from which we get dynamite.

- 00:09:00 And this is what it's a community we must respond to people who abuse power. The gospel tells us that Jesus was on the sea of Galilee or the sea of Tiberius. This is a point in the changing of the ratings which says that this is a moment where we're going to look at Jesus as the new one to come. The crowds were right. This is the prophet is coming to the world. This is the expected Messiah.
- 00:09:30 And what we have parallels the people of Israel going across the Red Sea into the desert. We will find a bit more about it and next week's gospel, the Passover was near. So we know its springtime, which explained why those grass sit down. We have the paralleling the manna in the wilderness. When as you will hear next week's reading, Israel has a little
- 00:09:59 grumble. And says, we hungry. So Moses and Aaron pray to God and he gives them the manna in the wilderness. And this is where it's important. None of the manna was to go to waste. It was to be gathered up every day and restored so that they would always be plenty for Israel. How many tribes of Israel twelve how many fragments of the body lows gathered
- 00:10:30 in today's reading? Twelve. The people of God will always have an abundance which they can share. That is the message which is in his gospel today. It's why we're looking at starting out food larder: we are looking at the needs, reaching out beyond our doors. Jesus realized that native about to making king this was another abuse of power, so he withdrew back to the mountain. Again,
- 00:10:59 parallel with Israel in the desert. And what all of the crossing of the sea. It's the crossing of the Red Sea, and they have arrived where they need to be. The other reading from Ephesians chapter three beautiful reading. Tells also of power. But it also tells us about the dimension of God's love for us. Most
- 00:11:29 of us know from an artistic point of view how to do things in two dimensions. We can look at the statues and see them in three dimensions, but Paul points out the four dimensional nature of God. Listen to this verse again: I pray that you may have the power to comprehend with all the standards. What is the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth of God's love,
- 00:12:00 which passes all understanding so that you may be filled with the fullness of God. A complete understanding of God. Breadth and length, height and depth. That is so beautiful, beautiful. Pray. And no wonder the reading starts today with these words: I
- 00:12:29 bow my knees to the father from whom every family in heaven and on takes their name. And that comes back to that sense of Justice for a group of people being maligned. They to our family. Too. Share our name in God. So we are to be people who are prepared
- 00:12:59 to make a stand. We are to be people to call out when things go wrong. Bad things happen when good people remained quiet. Let us not remain quiet. Let us be brave, and sometimes to be brave leaves us like the disciples as if on a rough sea and afraid. But remember this, we are the body of Christ,
- 00:13:30 for he spirit is with us. And it's the words of Jesus that must give us encouragement. Jesus of the disciples in they fear. It is I, do not be afraid. Other places he says, take courage, take heart, it is I. Do not be afraid. When talking about the way to the Father.
- 00:14:00 Do not be afraid. Do not let your hearts be troubled. It is. We are at body. So we moving through some uncomfortable readings with fastened seat belts. Make sure

you know where the emergency exits are. If you need oxygen, I think is kind of dropped from the roof.

00:14:30

But. Be aware. In living the gospel at times, we need to take the challenge and stand up for what we believe. And so now to him who by the power of the work within us, is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask. Or even imagine two him be the glory in the church and in

00:14:59

Christ Jesus to all generations for ever and ever. Amen.