

On the 17th of June 1972, 5 men were caught in the offices of the Democratic National Committee, committing an act of burglary. This simple break in became one of the biggest scandals in American politics. Watergate. It led to the resignation of the then President, Richard M Nixon. The first and only time this has occurred.

This event sent shock waves through American political life and many high profile and powerful people went to prison.

It appears from the absolute disregard for the law in this case, that Richard Nixon had forgotten he was a shepherd and was simply greedy for more.

You are that man ... but what we did not hear, was ... I have sinned against the Lord.

On the 17th August 1998 William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States, sat before a grand jury and gave testimony about his alleged affair with Monica Lewinsky. "I never had intercourse with that woman," was the Presidents refrain. Clinton was impeached, and charged with perjury and obstruction of justice.

Clinton's lies had the United States teetering on the edge of a constitutional crisis for many months.

It appears from the absolute disregard for the law in this case, that Bill Clinton had forgotten he was a shepherd and was simply greedy for more.

You are that man ... but what we did not hear was ... I have sinned against the Lord.

On January 6th 2021 President Donald Trump sent a tweet to his followers alleging wide spread voter fraud in the US Presidential elections. In a speech in Washington DC, that same day, President Trump urged his supporters, to march, and to make their voices heard.

He ended his speech with the words. "We fight. We fight like hell and if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore."

The Senate is in session as Trump supporters arrive and break in. A riot ensues.

By the time it ends 5 people are dead, 100 police officers injured and millions of dollars' worth of damage is inflicted.

Afterwards, President Trump tweets again, of the marchers, he writes ... "they are great patriots."

It appears from the absolute disregard for the law in this case, that Donald Trump had forgotten he was a shepherd and was simply greedy for more.

You are that man ... but what we did not hear was ... I have sinned against the Lord.

In the year around 1000 BCE. A king arises to go walking on his roof. He sees Uriah's wife bathing. She is beautiful. He sends, he takes, he sends her back. She is pregnant. He sends for Uriah. He is away fighting. He won't go into his wife. The King sends again. Again, he says no.

The King sends him back. He instructs the General, "make sure he dies". He does.

The King sends for the woman again. He takes her again.

It appears from the absolute disregard for the law in this case, that King David had forgotten he is a shepherd and is simply greedy for more.

You are that man ... but this time ... we hear ... I have sinned against the Lord.

These are the words that are so surprising. David does not have to confess them. Richard Nixon did not. Bill Clinton did not. Donald Trump did not. But David does.

Nathan speaks. David listens, submits and confesses.

In this story there is nothing to commend David, until we come to this. Here we see the boy before the prophet Samuel, here we see the youngster before the giant, Goliath, here we see the man King Israel has always needed ... a man King face down before the Lord, contrite and humble. A shepherd once again.

“I have sinned.”

God gives us many gifts, how we use them is up to us ... but using the gifts God has given us to go our own way, is never cost free ... never consequence free ... never harm free ... this is the crux of David's story.

David forgets his responsibilities, that he is a shepherd. Just like Nixon, Clinton and Trump. Like them, he was greedy for the blessings of his life ... but not the burdens of responsibility.

This story of David calls us to the idea that blessing and responsibility come together. A life lived in God's gifts to us, and forgotten responsibilities, ends badly.

As the story finishes, David has come back to the place he should always have been, there is much grace in that. But there is also much sadness, as his greed will cost, he and his family ... and the nation of Israel ... dearly.

He was that man ... he sinned against the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.