

Worship Material
It's not fair
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 28th July

Begin with opening prayer

God who sees us,
thank you for being with us this past week
and for bringing us together today.
As we worship, help us to see you afresh
and to look with new eyes on the world
in which you call us to serve you.

Amen.

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-15

Bible notes

King David saw himself as special to God – the apple of God's eye (Psalm 17:8). Yet what happens in this week's passage is not David's finest moment, nor a kingly example others should follow. In spring, kings went out to war (v.1). Speculation is endless as to why David exempted himself, why his focus was not on the welfare and well-being of his army. The commanders may have insisted and refused him (cf 2 Samuel 18:2-4).

Summoned by the king, Bathsheba, a foreigner undergoing her purification ritual according to her adopted Israelite customs (cf Leviticus 15:19-24), was within her rights to refuse. However, the proximity of her home to the king's palace indicates the high regard the army held for her husband, Uriah. Consequently, refusing an audience with the king might have disrespected her husband. David executed his plan unabated or unashamedly. However, he did not plan for the consequence. Her purification indicates that Bathsheba's pregnancy and the paternity of her child were not in doubt, which became problematic for David and Bathsheba. Instead of acknowledging his guilt, David devises another unethical scheme, this time to deceive Uriah. Heroically and patriotically, Uriah's heart and mind were with the army on the battlefield. Neither a luxurious present nor the king's coercion could persuade him to demobilise (vv.8-11). A naturalised citizen, Uriah displayed the qualities and commitment to the battle that David should have exhibited. However, his loyalty and commitment cost him his life. He was unaware he held his death warrant in his hand.

There is no question – these tragedies are an abuse of power. Is it fair that Uriah's loyalty to the king, his army colleagues, and his nation ultimately cost him his life? Is it fair that commitment to David prevented his household from providing wise and godly counsel? Is it fair that Bathsheba and Uriah became mere collateral damage?

Prayer

A prayer of thanksgiving

We thank you, Lord, for setting us high standards by which to live;
rules for the good of ourselves and others.

We praise you for those who try to live by your commands,
especially those in leadership roles who should set an example,

but who struggle just like the rest of us.
We thank you for standards and a spirit of harmony
that holds communities and families together,
encouraging us to make sure no harm is done to anyone.
We praise you, O Lord, for having our good always in mind.
Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Caring God, we ask you to be with us this week.
Open our eyes to see people as you see them,
make us a blessing to all who are affected by our choices,
whether they are right in front of us or far away.
Help us to live by the values of your kingdom,
which is fair and just,
and to value all people as made in your image.
Amen.