

BIBLE READINGS SUNDAY 28th JULY

2 Samuel 11:1-15

It was now spring, the time when kings go to war. David sent out the whole Israelite army under the command of Joab and his officers. They destroyed the Ammonite army and surrounded the capital city of Rabbah, but David stayed in Jerusalem.

²⁻⁴ Late one afternoon, David got up from a nap and was walking around on the flat roof of his palace. A beautiful young woman was down below in her courtyard, bathing as her religion required. David happened to see her, and he sent one of his servants to find out who she was.

The servant came back and told David, "Her name is Bathsheba. She is the daughter of Eliam, and she is the wife of Uriah the Hittite."

David sent some messengers to bring her to his palace. She came to him, and he slept with her. Then she returned home. ⁵ But later, when she found out that she was going to have a baby, she sent someone to David with this message: "I'm pregnant!"

⁶ David sent a message to Joab: "Send Uriah the Hittite to me."

Joab sent Uriah ⁷ to David's palace, and David asked him, "Is Joab well? How is the army doing? And how about the war?" ⁸ Then David told Uriah, "Go home and clean up." Uriah left the king's palace, and David had dinner sent to Uriah's house. ⁹ But Uriah didn't go home. Instead, he slept outside the entrance to the royal palace, where the king's guards slept.

¹⁰ Someone told David that Uriah had not gone home. So the next morning David asked him, "Why didn't you go home? Haven't you been away for a long time?"

¹¹ Uriah answered, "The sacred chest and the armies of Israel and Judah are camping out somewhere in the fields with our commander Joab and his officers and troops. Do you really think I would go home to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? I swear by your life that I would not!"

¹² Then David said, "Stay here in Jerusalem today, and I will send you back tomorrow."

Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day. Then the next day, ¹³ David invited him for dinner. Uriah ate with David, who gave him so much to drink that he got drunk. But Uriah still did not go home. He went out and slept on his mat near the palace guards. ¹⁴ Early the next morning, David wrote a letter and told Uriah to deliver it to Joab. ¹⁵ The letter said: "Put Uriah on the front line where the fighting is the worst. Then pull the troops back from him, so that he will be wounded and die."

This is the Word of the Lord.

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴ I kneel in prayer to the Father. ¹⁵ All beings in heaven and on earth receive their life from him. ¹⁶ God is wonderful and glorious. I pray that his Spirit will

make you become strong followers ¹⁷ and that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. Stand firm and be deeply rooted in his love. ¹⁸ I pray that you and all God's people will understand what is called wide or long or high or deep. ¹⁹ I want you to know all about Christ's love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is. ²⁰⁻²¹ I pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. His power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.

This is the Word of the Lord.

John 6:1-15

Jesus crossed Lake Galilee, which was also known as Lake Tiberias. ² A large crowd had seen him work miracles to heal the sick, and those people went with him. ³⁻⁴ It was almost time for the Jewish festival of Passover, and Jesus went up on a mountain with his disciples and sat down.

⁵ When Jesus saw the large crowd coming toward him, he asked Philip, "Where will we get enough food to feed all these people?" ⁶ He said this to test Philip, since he already knew what he was going to do.

⁷ Philip answered, "Don't you know that it would take almost a year's wages just to buy only a little bread for each of these people?"

⁸ Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the disciples. He spoke up and said, ⁹ "There is a boy here who has five small loaves of barley bread and two fish. But what good is that with all these people?"

¹⁰ The ground was covered with grass, and Jesus told his disciples to tell everyone to sit down. About 5,000 men were in the crowd. ¹¹ Jesus took the bread in his hands and gave thanks to God. Then he passed the bread to the people, and he did the same with the fish, until everyone had plenty to eat.

¹² The people ate all they wanted, and Jesus told his disciples to gather up the leftovers, so that nothing would be wasted. ¹³ The disciples gathered them up and filled twelve large baskets with what was left over from the five barley loaves.

¹⁴ After the people had seen Jesus work this miracle, they began saying, "This must be the Prophet who is to come into the world!" ¹⁵ Jesus realized that they would try to force him to be their king. So he went up on a mountain, where he could be alone.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.