



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

October 23, 2022

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

Nathan's word to David (2 Samuel 11:1—12:10)

I recently discovered a book called *First Friends: The Powerful, Unsung (and Unelected) People Who Shaped Our Presidents*, by Gary Ginseng. I have not read it, but am intrigued by the idea. It is a book about the anonymous people who were friends of United States Presidents and helped shape policy and history.

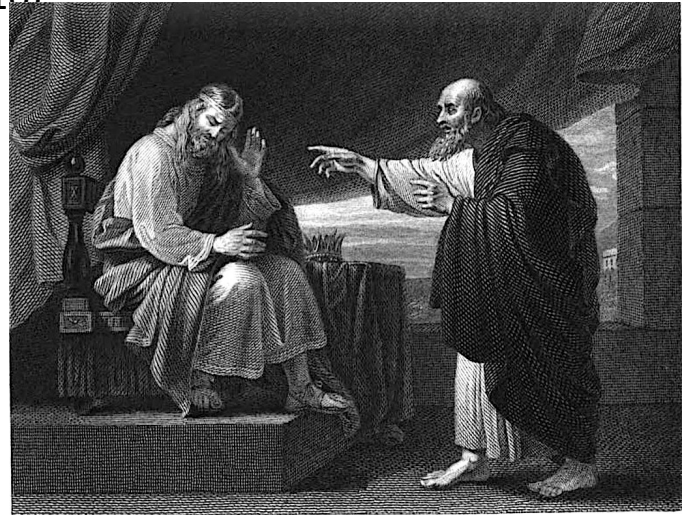
For instance, Joshua Shipp was Abraham Lincoln's closest friend and confidant. The two shared a room in Springfield for four years and it was Shipp who helped Lincoln get through some dark periods in his life. The friendship continued while Lincoln was President and helped him through national and family tragedy.

Eddie Jacobson was a close friend of Harry S Truman. He was a Jewish man who was horrified by the evils of Nazi Germany as the extent of the Holocaust came to light. He was instrumental in persuading the President to make the United States the first nation to recognize Israel as a nation.

David Ormsy Gore was a friend of John F. Kennedy and British diplomat. The two met as young men and remained friends through Kennedy's Presidency. It is believed that Gore encouraged Kennedy consider a greater worldly good over his own political gain, and helped convince him to pass the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This treaty with the Soviet Union was unpopular to many, but was considered an important step toward détente and had wide environmental benefits.

These are just a few of the largely anonymous men who helped shape world events by speaking truth to those in power. Their friendships allowed them to sway leaders into more just decisions, and we are all beneficiaries.

Nathan was perhaps one of those kinds of friends to David. Nathan comes up three times in the Biblical story, and is called a prophet. The first time is when he convinces David not to build a Temple to God. He does this because God tells Nathan that instead of a Temple, God will build David a dynastic line. The third time is when David advocates on Bathsheba's behalf, convincing David to make Solomon his heir. This ensures Bathsheba's well-being and leads indirectly to the building of the Temple.



"Nathan and David." Painted by B. West F. R. A., Engraved by S. Sangster. (1834) Creative Commons

The second time is found in today's passage. Nathan confronts David after his despicable actions. Nathan holds David accountable for assaulting Bathsheba and having her husband—and several other soldiers—killed in the line of duty. In each of these moments, it is Nathan who helps David see clearly what he must do—whether it be to hold off on his pet ego project, confess to the great misdeed he has committed, or select an heir so that the kingdom may have stability.

Nathan, Jacobson, Gore, and Shipp, were able to guide their powerful friends to a more righteous path. Friends can be powerful allies in our own journey. We may not be powerful politicians or rulers, but our friendships are no less important. Nathan helped remind David of who he was—a shepherd who was supposed to protect the vulnerable.

Friends like this can play a role in our lives too. It is important to have people who can remind us who we are. These kinds of friends are invaluable. They are precious, and we should thank them. Take some time this week to reflect on those kinds of people in your life. Thank them. Reach out to them. Foster the kind of friendships that can restore you to righteousness.