



COMMUNITY  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

MINISTER  
DAN YEAZEL, PREACHING  
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*30th Sunday in Ordinary Time  
October 29, 2006*

*2 Samuel 13:1-19*

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### **Crying Aloud**

Intro: Our reading this morning is from Second Samuel. It is a story that does not come up in the usual three-year lectionary cycle. The rape of King David's daughter Tamar is hard to hear. Her story is like that of too many others. Too often these events are never told and the silence creates an atmosphere where abuse festers and continues unchanged and unchallenged. As people of faith let us hear Tamar as she cries aloud.

Tamar was the daughter of David, the King of Israel. Scripture tells us that she was young and beautiful and that she was wise and courageous. This is a sharp contrast to the ugliness of her brothers and her father. The two oldest sons, Absalom and Amnon were in a struggle for power. Both wanted David's throne, and both would stop at nothing to get what they wanted. Tamar had everything going for her in terms of worldly status, as much as a woman could in that day. In spite of the laws and customs that severely reduced the rights of women, she had position, wealth and influence. What was working against her was a family that caused her pain, heard her cries, but would not help. Tamar's family was more interested in

saving face for the male sons of David, than they were about her dignity. It is important for us to hear Tamar's story because it belongs to many people who are the victims of incest and rape.

Too often stories of domestic abuse and sexual assault go unreported, estimates are 90% of assaults are not reported and people remain silent. People do not want to speak of unspeakable hurt. This short drama imagines Tamar in her later years talking with a young woman who bears her name:

DRAMATIC DIALOGUE (with Kim and Ann)

Must the sins of the fathers be repeated by the sons?

Amnon sinned against Tamar by raping her. Absalom sinned against Tamar by his not listening to her cries of pain. David sinned against Tamar by his silence in the face of family violence. Tamar was abused by a society which said that a man can get away with rape and a woman who is an innocent victim must bear the shame and disgrace for the rest of her life. Tamar was abused by a religion, which supported all of the men and ignored the women.

The painful truth is that three thousand years later it is still happening. There are countless stories of people who have been violated by family or friends who were blamed and eventually scarred by the trauma of the experience and the desire of the men or the society, or the family, or the church to keep silent.

As we are true to our faith which is a faith of love and justice, then we must say that Tamar's violation and the violation of countless other Tamars was not part of God's plan. God's plan is that we must learn from these stories of pain and suffering and make sure they do not happen again. That the sins of the fathers are not repeated. Think what would happen if all of the churches in this world committed themselves to believing that we must not make and more Tamars in this world. We must not make any more innocent victims of our senseless desires for power.

The Good News is that we follow a God who has not forgotten the Tamars of this world. We follow a God who will not let us settle for a world in which rape and murder and injustice and apathy can reign supreme. We follow a God who says that our churches must be places of hope and refuge asylums, sanctuaries from the evils of the world places where we can confess our sins and gather strength for the journey which is ahead of us.

The God whom we follow is the God of Tamar. God is a God who looks to the outcast with compassion. So, today, we break the silence of Tamar. Today, we hear her cry and feel her pain. May our life together in a community of faith be one in which we do hear the cries of a sister in pain and disgrace. May we provide the hope, the acceptance and all the love we can give. May we never settle for silence in the face of abuse. Instead, may the telling of stories break down the walls of sexism, of abuse, of injustice and make room for us to live in peace and love. God's Shalom. Amen.