

Chapter 12 | What to Do With Your “Third Week of March”

When Pope John Paul died, a man named Rogers Cadenhead quickly registered the web address www.BenedictXVI.com, thinking this might be the name chosen by the new pope. When Cardinal Ratzinger was elected Pope, he did choose the name Pope Benedict XVI, causing some to question what the Vatican would do to get the rights to that domain name.

Cadenhead didn't ask the Vatican for money. Instead, in a humorous manner on his blog he suggested a few things he would trade for:

1. Three days, two nights at the Vatican hotel.
2. One of those hats (referring to the bishop's hat).
3. Complete absolution, no questions asked, for the third week of March 1987.

Wonder what Rogers did the third week of March in 1987? Me too, but does it really matter?. Most of us have at least a week for which we'd love to have total forgiveness.

We discover in The Story that David did. One day when the army is at war, David, who is the commander of the nation's military, neglects his duties and stays behind. He sees Bathsheba, seduces her, gets her pregnant, murders her husband, and tries to cover up his actions by deceiving his general and soldiers. Then he marries Bathsheba and she bears their child.

It looks as if David will get away with all of this. But he doesn't. God sends his prophet Nathan to confront David by telling him a story about a poor man with one lamb. David knows something about sheep and shepherds, so he listens. Nathan says that the poor man has a rich neighbor who needs to slaughter a lamb to feed a guest, but instead of taking one of his many sheep he steals the poor's man's one lamb.

David is incensed and says that man should be put to death. Nathan then declares, "You are the man!" At that moment David must have wished he had bought a domain name that he could swap for absolution. He may have wanted to make excuses. Explain things away. Blame it on Bathsheba for taking a bath in broad daylight where he could see. But instead of making excuses, David confesses. "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12:13).

And God did with David's sin what he will do with yours and mine. He put it away (Psalm 103:12-13).

You can do what David did. Whatever your "third week of March" might be, sit down with it, yourself and God. Confess your sin. And then let another shepherd from Bethlehem forgive it. That's better than any domain name you might secure.