

Real Repentance
Psalm 51:10-17
February 3, 2019

Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You. 14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. 15 O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. 16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart--These, O God, You will not despise.

David had FALLEN - He had done the UNTHINKABLE - If committing adultery with the wife of one of his DEVOTED FOLLOWERS was not bad enough - he had ARRANGED THE MURDER of this man - one of his trusted soldiers - one who had FOUGHT FAITHFULLY alongside David - In fact, Uriah is murdered while fighting a battle David had SHAMEFULLY AVOIDED.

For several months, David had CAREFULLY HIDDEN his sin - I am sure there were WHISPERS around the palace - but no one dared CRITICIZE OR CONFRONT the king - He was a larger than life person in Jerusalem.

He was the GIANT KILLER - He was the ANOINTED KING - He was the author of many TOP 10 worship songs sung in the Temple! - He was the beloved king - the one called by the Prophet Samuel **“a man after God’s own Heart”**.

But, finally, ONE CLOSE COMPANION had the courage to go the king - Nathan the Prophet - He came telling David a story - a SAD STORY about a poor man who had only ONE SMALL LAMB - this lamb was LOVED AND CHERISHED like a member of the family.

In the same city, there was a rich man with a HUGE FLOCK of sheep - One day, a TRAVELER CAME through the city to visit the rich man - but rather than kill one of his many, many sheep to feed his guest, he went and took the poor man's lamb and SLAUGHTERED IT - this was how he fed his visitor.

David became furious and wanted the man SEVERELY PUNISHED - that is when NATHAN STARED into the angry eyes of the King and said, **"You are the man!"**

David's punishment would be severe - the child that came from the ONE NIGHT STAND, would die - David's kingdom would be in CONSTANT CONFLICT AND WAR - Nathan even declared that some of David's own wives would one day be VIOLATED IN PUBLIC VIEW by his son, Absalom - the same son who would LEAD A REBELLION against his father.

Bottom line - Nathan informs David that there would be much PAIN AND SUFFERING in his future - his sin would come with a STEEP BILL to pay - Why?

TWO REASONS - First, David's particular sins were ones that come with HEAVY EARTHLY CONSEQUENCES - Adultery is always terribly destructive to a family - And premeditated murder comes with the DEATH PENALTY - even to the King - though the one who would die WOULD BE THE CHILD.

In contrast, some sins seem to have very few CONSEQUENCES IN THIS LIFE - at times, we are tempted to think that we are GETTING AWAY with our sin - or we MISTAKENLY THINK that God has OVERLOOKED OUR DISOBEDIENCE.

But, don't be fooled by the calm around you - As we will see later, even though the earthly penalty MAY BE SMALL, our relationship with God can and WILL SUFFER GREATLY.

The second reason for THE SEVERITY OF DAVID'S PUNISHMENT is given by Nathan in 2 Samuel 12:13-14, **"So David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' And Nathan said to David, 'The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die'"**.

Did you see it - **"because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme"** - When a man or a woman lives their life AS A BRIGHT LIGHT of God's goodness and blessing - when that light goes dark - how great is the darkness! - It is noticeable to everyone!

During an ice storm, many SMALL LIMBS BREAK OFF trees and fall harmlessly to the ground - very little damage is done - we hardly notice!

But, when one of those HUGE OAK TREES TOPPLE under the weight of the ice and fall on a house or car, everyone takes notice - it is all over the local news - the CAMERAS ARE SNAPPING PICTURES and the stories are being reported.

It's the same way with sin - When a person whose life has made VERY LITTLE IMPACT on the world for Jesus falls - few people stand up and take notice - we might even respond by saying something like, **"Well, that doesn't surprise me. I saw how they were living their life!"**

But, when a person who has TAKEN A STAND FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS stumbles and falls - everyone STOPS AND GAWKS - they all have some BITING COMMENT on social media - It usually goes

something like this, **“I knew that whole God thing was a fake!”** or they might write, **“Those Christians are such self-righteous phonies!”**

Whatever the comment, the sentiment is always the same, **“You can’t believe or trust those Christians!”** - When a bright light goes dark, much damage is done to the reputation of our Lord - this doesn’t mean we should SHY AWAY FROM letting our light shine - it just means we need to understand how GREAT THE CONSEQUENCES will be if we fall to sin.

The truth is we are all SUSCEPTIBLE TO SIN - We will all fail in some way - be careful putting people ON A PEDESTAL - be careful basing your faith on THE FAITHFULNESS of another person - Make sure your faith is in Jesus, not me - not Pastor Sandy - not any man or woman. David was a man WHO LOVED GOD with all his heart - Yet, in a moment of moral weakness and failure, he brought **great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme!**

Don’t think it can’t happen to you and me? - It can - Hopefully our failures WON’T BE THE SIZE of David’s - but sin is still sin - We will still FIND OUR FELLOWSHIP with God broken - Like David, we will find ourselves in need of TRUE, HEART-FELT REPENTANCE.

Our question this morning is, **How do we respond and react when we fall into sin?** - Do we HIDE IT AND HOPE it won’t be found out? - Do we try to COVER OUR TRACKS and hope no one notices? - Or do we repent? - Do we even understand what REAL REPENTANCE looks like?

I am convinced that today MOST CHRISTIANS ARE SORROWFUL when they sin - but I believe fewer and fewer UNDERSTAND AND EXPERIENCE true repentance.

For repentance is FAR MORE THAN TEARS - it is much more than MERE WORDS of confession - True repentance is always accompanied by CERTAIN UNMISTAKEABLE ATTITUDES that will always be present.

With our remaining time, I want us to look at 4 ATTITUDES OR EVIDENCES that were present in David's life when he FINALLY EXPRESSED real repentance - it took the confrontation of the Prophet, but he got there!

After that, we will examine 2 FRUITS OF REPENTANCE that should be coming from every SIN-STAINED LIFE that has experienced forgiveness - and we will conclude with ONE THING THAT SHOULD NEVER be a part of our lives when we are seeking God's forgiveness.

First, let's discuss the EVIDENCES OF TRUE REPENTANCE that are seen in the life of King David.

In verse 10, David writes **“Create in me a clean heart O God”** - The first attitude of true repentance is MY AWARENESS OF THE REAL PROBLEM - **It is me!** - I am the problem when I sin - I am the reason for my failure!

It's not my parents - not my friends - not the internet - not Hollywood - not the Fast Food restaurant - not the WOMAN AT WORK who came on to me - not even the young, naked lady bathing on the roof - Surprisingly, it is not even the Devil! - No, the problem is me!

In Romans 7:18, Paul wrote, **“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells.”** - In his letter to the Galatians, he wrote, **“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”**

Basically, Paul is saying, WHEN IT COMES TO SIN, I am the problem! - I need God to create in me a CLEAN HEART! - My FLESH IS DIRTY - I need Him to forgive me and to **“cleanse me from all unrighteousness!”**

David was a man of GREAT FAITH - but he was aware that WHEN HE SINNED with Bathsheba, his fellowship with God was broken - Yes, he was STILL A BELIEVER - a man full of faith - with a heart for God - but his FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD had been broken.

His heart was now far from the heart of God - He knew there was a WALL THAT HAD BEEN ERECTED between he and God - His DIRTY, SELFISH DESIRES had taken over - and they had DAMAGED HIS FRIENDSHIP with the GOD HE LOVED.

Now HE NEEDED a clean heart - He was in desperate need of FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION - It finally came when he admitted that HE WAS THE PROBLEM - He was the cause - He was RESPONSIBLE - He was the man who HAD SELFISHLY BROKEN the heart of God.

This is where TRUE REPENTANCE ALWAYS BEGINS - It begins with me - Me admitting that I am the problem - taking responsibility for my sin - not blaming others or making excuses.

Sure - there may be other CONTRIBUTING FACTORS - like a woman BATHING NAKED on a roof - but David FINALLY ADMITTED that he was the one WHO INQUIRED about her - He was the one who SENT FOR HER - He was the one who SEDUCED HER - He was the one that had NOT SIMPLY TURNED AWAY when he had the chance.

The SECOND ATTITUDE or evidence of repentance is found in the very next sentence, **And renew a steadfast spirit within me** - Notice David wanted a “**Steadfast spirit**” - this word steadfast means “steady” or “firm”.

For some time, long before the episode with Bathsheba - his spirit had not been steady - note that we are talking about David’s spirit (small “s”) - not the HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD living inside David - His “spirit”, his DEDICATION AND OBEDIENCE to the Lord had been wavering and rocky - He had gotten a little LAZY AND COMPLACENT.

He should have been WITH HIS MEN on the Battle Field - but he had LOST FOCUS - He had decided to TAKE IT EASY for while - He felt he DESERVED A BREAK from all the fighting! - And it was when he STOPPED FIGHTING that trouble came!

It is when WE STOP FIGHTING, that we are in the GREATEST DANGER - In our case, our battle is with our flesh - There are times in our lives when we decide THE BATTLE between the flesh and the Spirit is JUST TOO HARD - that we just need a break!

Maybe we HAVE BEEN WINNING for a long time - so, like David, we think we deserve some R & R from this battle!

When WE GET COMPLACENT in our fight against our flesh, we are in GRAVE DANGER - Thinking we have won this war is a DANGEROUS PLACE to be - Remember the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 10:12, **“Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”**

True repentance always comes with A RENEWED DESIRE to firm up our commitment to OUR WAR WITH SIN - We have to get back to STANDING STEADFAST against our flesh - against Satan - and against the pull of this world - the time for SPIRITUAL RELAXATION is over! - We have to get BACK IN THE FIGHT!

There must be a STEADFAST DETERMINATION that we will continue to fight the battle against sin EVERY MOMENT OF EVERY DAY!

Third - in true repentance there is also an ELEMENT OF DESPERATION - In verse 11, David pleads, **Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.**

Sin is FAR MORE DANGEROUS that most of us believe - We treat it like it is an OLD FRIEND - But, in reality, sin is not a friend to anyone - it is an enslaver of people - a CON ARTIST bent on destroying lives - it is a vicious killer who will snuff out every life - if we give it enough time.

I don't exaggerate - In 2017, **72,000 people died** as a result of a DRUG OVERDOSE in America - That is about 200 people per day - Do you think when they got tempted to have THAT FIRST HIGH, they were planning to BECOME A STATISTIC?

I don't think so - but that is how sin works - It all SEEMS SO INNOCENT until it has you BY THE THROAT and it won't let go - You try to escape - but once it has a grip on you, it is INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT to break loose!

Once we are ENSLAVED BY SIN, we begin to wonder if we can ever get back to the LOVING, PEACEFUL PRESENCE OF GOD - We wonder if we have GONE TOO FAR - Will we ever BE FREE AGAIN? - have we CROSSED A SPIRITUAL BRIDGE in life that we can't come back from?

This seems to be where David found himself - Sin had DESTROYED HIS REPUTATION - his family - his authority - and most importantly his friendship with God - His fear is that he WOULD NEVER GET that closeness back! - So, IN DESPERATION, he prayed for God to draw him close again.

Have you ever prayed with this TYPE OF DESPERATION? - Have you FELT ALIENATED from God - wondering if you could get back to Him?

My Prayer today is that that desperation will drive you OPEN-HANDED to the Father - He will FORGIVE YOU - He will RESTORE YOU - He will WELCOME YOU BACK with open arms!

Understand - True repentance is DESPERATE TO REGAIN that closeness to the Father.

A fourth evidence of repentance is found in verse 12 - There David says, **Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.** - David recognized that SOMETHING HAD BEEN LOST because of his sin - It was the joy of his salvation!

There is a certain UNMISTAKEABLE JOY AND CONTENTMENT that comes to a person's life when they experience salvation and the forgiveness for the first time.

Do you REMEMBER THAT FEELING of just knowing things were right between you and God FOR THE FIRST TIME in your life!

This coming April 6th, it will have been 47 years since I was saved - It was a Thursday night - I stepped out of the pew - walked the aisle - and PUBLICLY COMMITTED my life to Jesus Christ - I can remember the JOY AND PEACE of that moment like it was yesterday!

But there have been times when that JOY HAS DISAPPEARED from my life - LIKE KING DAVID, It usually happened at times when I had FLIRTED WITH THE DESIRES of my flesh - or at times when I was WAVERING IN MY DEVOTION to the Lord and CHASING OTHER THINGS.

All of us GO THROUGH DRY TIMES in our walk with God - these are times when we KNOW WE ARE SAVED, but we just don't feel that joy - Eventually WE FIGURE OUT that God was always there - we realize we had just allowed OURSELVES TO DRIFT from His presence.

Sin always evokes this experience - OUR FELLOWSHIP with God is broken - therefore the joy of our salvation QUICKLY DISSIPATES! - It is not that we are NO LONGER SAVED - **We just lose the reality of our salvation!**

We are STILL A CHILD of the Father - but we HAVE LEFT HOME in pursuit of other things - we have pursued relationships that GOD WILL NOT BE PART OF - Ones that VIOLATE HIS HOLINESS - relationships that come with COMPROMISE AND DISOBEDIENCE.

Our fellowship with The Father is broken - our joy and peace are gone!

But, when we REPENT AND TURN our hearts back to God, it is amazing how quickly THAT JOY WILL RETURN - Even though we may still have to deal with the PAINFUL CONSEQUENCES of our choices, the joy of GOD'S FORGIVENESS RETURNS.

These are 4 evidences in my life that I have genuinely repented of my sin:

- **There is a recognition and admittance that I am the problem - I need God to change me!**
- **There is a renewed desire to firm up our commitment to our war with sin.**
- **There is a desperation to regain that closeness to the Father.**
- **The joy of our salvation has returned.**

Now let's look at 2 FRUITS OF REPENTANCE that also should be growing as a result of my forgiveness.

13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You. - Nowhere in Scripture is there evidence that King David was a Sunday School teacher or a home Bible Study in the palace - How did he **“teach transgressors God's ways?”**

David had paid a TERRIBLE PRICE for his sinful decisions - Who could better teach others ABOUT THE PAIN OF SIN than this broken man - He had BECOME AN EXPERT in the field of sowing and reaping.

I love the old saying, **“Experience is the greatest teacher if you can afford the tuition!”** - The tuition for David's education in the EFFECTS OF SIN in a person's life was steep - Let's just say, **“The man had some enormous school loans that had to be repaid!”**

It really is true - the MOST EFFECTIVE TEACHERS are those who have WORKED IN THE FIELD they are now teaching - they understand the REAL WORLD TRUTHS of the lessons they are teaching - and the real world can be A TOUGH AND PAINFUL PLACE for students to learn!

Young people, let me ENCOURAGE YOU TO LISTEN to that older person who is TRYING TO WARN YOU about a DANGER UP AHEAD on the road you are traveling.

Trust me, it is MUCH LESS PAINFUL to learn in the classroom of THEIR EXPERIENCE, than it is in the classroom of your own experience - Pay attention to lessons you have opportunity TO LEARN FROM OTHERS!

Attention OLDER PEOPLE - I turned 60 this week - So I NOW QUALIFY!

When you talk about YOUR SINFUL EXPERIENCES with others (esp. young people), do you talk about it WITH LAUGHTER and a LIGHT HEART? - or WITH TEARS?

Be careful HOW YOU REMEMBER your days of sin - **BE A TEACHER, NOT A PROMOTER!** - Sometimes we forget just how PAINFUL & HARMFUL those days really were - NOSTALGIA can be a dangerous thing when it comes to sin!

David, like many here today, HAD MUCH TO TEACH to those who will listen - Are you listening to those who have been SCARED BY SIN? - or are you DETERMINED TO GET your own painful scars?

A second fruit is found in verse 14, **Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. 15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.**

The fruit of THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE to God are always present in the person who has TRULY TASTED HIS GRACE! - David was GUILTY OF BLOODSHED - He deserved THE DEATH PENALTY - There was no other way for him to respond than to want to SING AND SHOUT God's praise.

The Bible NEVER QUALIFIES the singer of praise to God - there are no try-outs! - Yes, you have to try-out to be on the Worship team - but there is NO SUCH QUALIFICATIONS to be a worship participant - God takes all comers to THE ALTER OF WORSHIP.

David says we should **“sing aloud”** of God’s righteousness! - There is NO LIP-SINGING when it comes to praise - God wants FULL-VOLUMED PARTICIPANTS!

Some of you need to PRAY THE PRAYER of verse 15 - You need to pray, **“O Lord, open my lips!”** - Some of you HAVE LOCK-JAW when it comes to PRAISING THE LORD - May He open your lips - May you learn the joy of VERBALIZING YOUR PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING back to Him!

Let’s end today teaching with one thing God is not INTERESTED IN RECEIVING from you - Do you know what that is? - Look at verse 16.

16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart--These, O God, You will not despise.

God is not interested IN YOUR PENANCE - You know what penance is don’t you? - **It is trying to somehow compensate God for His offer of grace and forgiveness** - It is you ATTEMPTING TO MAKE SOME SACRIFICE that will PLEASE OR APPEASE God - or it is attempting to PUNISH YOURSELF in some way in order to EARN HIS FORGIVENESS.

God is NOT INTERESTED in your sacrifice - Why? - Because He has already made THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE for you - He OFFERED UP HIS SON on the cross for our sin - We only INSULT HIM when we try to offer another sacrifice - our attempts only DIMINISH THE MAGNITUDE of His sacrifice!

We really struggle with this idea that GOD'S GRACE IS FREE TO US - We are taught early in life that NOTHING IS REALLY FREE - But free to us, doesn't mean IT WAS NOT COSTLY - Our forgiveness was very costly to the Father - but He paid THE COMPLETE BILL.

There is NOTHING LEFT for us to pay - All He wants from us to ACCEPT THE PAYMENT He has made - BE THANKFUL for it - And then DON'T GO BACK to that pit of sin again!

This is what God wants from us - **SO STOP TRYING TO PAY YOUR BILL!** - Stop trying to EARN THE FREE GIFT of God's Grace - The only thing God wants from you is **"a broken heart and a contrite spirit"** - In other words, our Father just wants you to HUMBLE YOURSELF AND TRUST HIM - Get off the PRIDE TRIP - come to him AS THE BROKEN PERSON you really are!

Peter wrote, **"God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble"** - In our pride, WE WANT SO BADLY to have a part in our salvation and forgiveness - but we have no part in it - All we can do is HUMBLE OURSELVES AND EMBRACE what He has provided for us.

Do you want to please God? - EMBRACE THE AMAZING GRACE that is found in His Son, Jesus Christ!

That sacrifices we want to make are ALWAYS BORN OF GUILT, PRIDE AND SELF-RELIANCE - That offering you want to give to appease God is just YOUR FLESH SCREAMING to have A PLACE OF IMPORTANCE before God - But, He does not need your help!

Humble yourself - EMBRACE THE GIFT God is offering you - You want to give something? - GIVE SOME BOLD PRAISE to Him - TEACH OTHERS from the LESSONS you have learned - and lastly, SHOW OTHERS the AMAZING GRACE you have experienced.

These are the ONLY SACRIFICES God is interested in seeing - You with a BROKEN SPIRIT - a heart humbled before a forgiving God - These God will NOT DESPISE!

