

# Repentance//The Search for a King//2 Samuel 12 & Psalm 51

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**CAUGHT IN SIN:** I heard a story this week of a guy named Danny whose mother came to visit him at college. Danny had just moved in with this girl named Allison. He explained to his mom, “Mom, don’t get stressed out; this is Platonic; it’s just an arrangement for rent; we live in separate rooms; it’s just cheaper this way;” but his mom thought, “There’s no way;” Cause, I mean, this girl was really pretty. But Danny assured her, no, no, they were just friends trying to save money.

So she came over to eat dinner with them, and as they were eating dinner, his mother looked at Allison and said, “Hey Allison, I love that watch. I’ve been wanting one like that. Can I see yours?” Allison handed her the watch... they go on with dinner.

A couple of days go by and Allison comes to Danny and she says, “You know, Danny, I’m missing my watch, and the last time I remember having it was when your mom was looking at it. Obviously I wouldn’t think she would steal it. But can you see if she maybe she just forgot to give it back to me... dropped it in her purse or something?”

So Danny sent his mom an email the next day that said, “Dear Mom, obviously I’m not saying that you took the watch. But the fact remains that the watch is missing and you were the last one who had it.”

A couple of days later his mom sent an email back to him that said, “Dear Danny, obviously I’m not saying that you are sleeping with Allison. But the fact remains that had she been sleeping in her own bed, she would have found the watch on her pillow right where I left it.”

**We all know what it’s like to get caught in sin. I told you last time that everyone sins. It’s what you do after you sin that makes the difference between life and death... it’s how you and I respond to the fact that we are sinners, or if we even agree with the fact that we’re sinners.**

Here’s the verse we left off with last week: **Proverbs 28:13, “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”** That’s a promise on both accounts.

2 Samuel 12 is the story of David being caught in his sin and how he reacted to that... OPEN BIBLES

2 Sam 12:1: we’re about a year after David’s affair with Bathsheba. We know that because the child from that affair has just been born, and back in those days, it took 9 months between when a couple had sex and the birth of the baby. That’s why I went to seminary.

The prophet Nathan (remember Nathan? He’s like David’s pastor) requests an audience with David and he comes in says, “David... I heard something recently that really bothered me, and I thought you should know about it.” Again, at this point, nobody knows about David’s sin except of course Bathsheba, and maybe a couple of accomplices, but no one knows. Nathan continues:

**<sup>1</sup>“There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. <sup>2</sup>The rich man had very many flocks and herds, <sup>3</sup>but the poor man had nothing but one little tiny lamb, which he had bought with his own money. And... it grew up with him and with his children. (It was like a pet to them). <sup>4</sup>It used to eat**

*from their table and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him.* Which is a little sketchy, I know but, you get the point. Nathan goes on.

Well, (vs. 4) this rich guy, who had more sheep than he knew what to do with, had some relatives from out of town stop in for a visit, but instead of preparing one of his own sheep for them to eat, he went and stole that one little lamb from this poor family, just because he could away with it and they didn't have any power to stop them.

*[5] Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the rich man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, [6] and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no compassion."*

Nathan looks at David and says, in the most direct application point from a sermon, ever...

~~[[7] Nathan said to David,~~ *"You are the man!"*

- I always wonder how long the pause was between that line and the next one.
- Talk about an awkward turtle moment.
- The conviction was inescapable; David's actions are inexcusable. David has condemned himself to death out of his own mouth.

Nathan then says (vs 7), *"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul... and if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do what is evil in His sight?'"*

<sup>13</sup> *David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."*

*And Nathan said to David, "The LORD has put away your sin; you shall not die."*

<sup>14</sup> *Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die."*

<sup>15</sup> *Then Nathan went to his house.*

- ~~I've always wondered why that last verse was in there, too. David, God knows what you did and because of that your child is going to die. Then Nathan went home and watched some TV.~~
- That's the ultimate dramatic sermon walk-off. Ever see one of those? Pastor is preaching, makes a big point (dropped his Bible) and walked out. I always thought it looked dumb, but here it totally worked (Nathan dropped his scroll and goes home).

**Everybody sins. It's what you do when you are confronted with your sin that makes the difference between life and death.** What happens next is what makes David a man after God's own heart. *David is going to confess his sin, in all its ugliness, and throw himself on the mercy of God.* This is what makes him different from Saul. David and Saul had both sinned. And badly... and it's not like Saul's sin had been a lot worse—if anything, David's sin was much worse. But when Saul was confronted, he rationalized his disobedience and passed the blame. But David confesses his sin and throws himself on the mercy of God.

You see, when we feel like we are exposed in our sin (someone confronts us, our conscience smites us, or whatever), we'll almost always react 1 of 4 ways:

1. **We hide our sin:** we deny it. We might admit this was something we had trouble with in the past, but not anymore. I'm sure we have people here at this church that possess secrets they don't want anyone to know about; so they come and put on their plastic Christian smile and carry their Bibles with the embossed naked baby angels on the front and act like they have it all together.

2. **We rationalize it:** We explain why our sin is not really that bad.
  - I'm not really hurting anybody. it's such a small little thing.
  - Or, everybody's doing it
  - Or, I can't help it; my desires are too strong
3. **We blame-shift:** It's not really my fault. You have no idea what's been done to me. You don't understand my situation.

Each of those 3 is what Saul did. It's what Adam and Eve had done in the Garden (explain). It's what David refuses to do.

4. **You can repent:** David acknowledges his sin, and he wrote Psalm 51, which gives you probably the clearest picture of what true, Gospel-centered repentance looks like. (*So, I'd love for you to turn there because that is where we'll spend the rest of our time.*) I told you a few weeks ago that many of you don't know how to repent. *This psalm gives you the anatomy, the internal workings, of true Gospel-centered repentance.* Now, a little warning: It's not like a systematic theology. It doesn't have a real tight outline. This psalm is the Bible's version of Jazz. It's more like a stream of consciousness. What I'm about to do is less like preaching and more like 'expository riffin'.

This psalm has a caption: **TO THE CHOIRMASTER. (This was a choir song) A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN NATHAN THE PROPHET WENT TO HIM, AFTER HE HAD GONE IN TO BATHSHEBA.**

**[51:1] Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy...**

- Stop. What is the basis of David's plea? Where is his hope? "*the mercy of God.*" Notice where it is not...
  - *It's not in any of his past righteousness* (God, I've been, on the whole, a really great king. Remember that whole deal with Goliath? That was me. I've got a little capital in the bank.)
  - *David doesn't try to rationalize it* and make it seem like, on the scale of things, his sin is not that bad (God, do you have any idea how hard it is being king? And, you know, my other marriages are not going too well. For 3 straight weeks every night all my wives have been complaining about having headaches).
  - David doesn't trying to bargain with God by making a bunch of promises about the future. Ever do that? It's like you're asking for God's forgiveness on credit. "God, I need you to let me off on this one, and in return I'll make it up to you in the future. I'll be the best husband and follower of yours ever."
  - David doesn't do any of that.
- He puts all of his hope in one place: the mercy of God. It's kind of audacious, isn't it? I have only one plea; one hope: your mercy; Plus nothing.
- So here's the question: Is God's mercy great enough that you could make it the entire basis of your hope? Or does he want something else with it?
  - **Haj example.** "Our only hope is the grace of God..." But I hope by being here it will cause God to extend it to me. God, there has to be a reason you show it to me. David doesn't do any of that. There's no, "God, give me mercy because..." David says, "My only hope, is God's mercy, plus NOTHING. I cast myself entirely on it.
- **Again: Is God's mercy great enough that you could make it the entire basis of your hope?** Good news: for those who make the mercy of God the sole basis of their plea, they will never be turned away. They will find there is literally no limit, no end to the mercy of God. Every person who came to Jesus in the Gospels found that to be true.
- The ones who are turned away are those who still hold onto some reason God should be, or is obligated to be, merciful to them.
- Being delivered from your sin is easy; it's being delivered from your religion that most people find difficult.

- Our sin separates from God, but our self-righteousness keeps us from Him. Before God can save you from your sin; he has to save you from all the reasons you think he should save you from your sin.
- God has abundant mercy for sinners. But our righteousness keeps us from that mercy.

**[3] For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.**

- I own it. I've quit excusing it.
- Ever had someone confront you, and you felt yourself resisting, even though you knew that what they said was true? You go through one of those stages earlier:
  - **You start to blameshift.** Problem is everyone at work is on my case; people aren't sensitive to how much pressure I'm under.
  - **You rationalize why you're not that bad...**
  - **Or, even better, you just avoid the conversation.** You fake a cell phone call. Ever do that? I do it all the time.
  - Or here's one we do: **We turn it around on them.** Oh yeah, you want to confront me about some things? Well then let me use this opportunity to talk about some of your sins. The best way to avoid my sin is to talk about yours.
- What David is doing here is the complete opposite of any of those. He says, "Yeah, what you're saying is right."

And then, vs. 5, he says, you don't know the half of it. **[5] Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.** Sin, oh yeah, it comes natural to me. I was born like this. I don't even have to practice. I'm just *good* at it.

- That's owning it. My behavior was not even an exception. That's just how I am. From birth.
  - Do you ever get angry and say something in an email or in an argument and then you say late, 'I want to apologize to you for what I said. I said you were stupid, selfish, and incompetent...' And then we go on and say, "But that's not what I meant." When, in actuality, it is **exactly** what you meant in the moment, it's just that you feel bad because in that moment your words revealed the actual state of your heart... that you are such a selfish person that what they did to you made you hate them.
- "You didn't catch me at a bad moment, that's just the way I am. I was brought forth in iniquity, and born with sin in my heart." I am a deeply flawed individual, and every once in a while I reveal what is going on in the real me.
- This is the truth about all of us, if we'd admit it.... I see it even in my own precious, cute kids. I have never had to send them 'sin camp.' I never taught them to be disrespectful and selfish and dishonest.
  - The most common word in our household is "No." They're always telling me "no," because they don't want to do what I want. I'm always telling them "no" because they naturally doing the opposite of what they should be doing. Wouldn't it be awesome as a parent if you constantly said, "Yes, Yes, Yes, Allie..." It just doesn't happen.
    - You put your 1.5 year old down for a nap and his body bows up in anger. I don't want to go down for a nap. I want my will, not yours.
    - A 2 year old takes a toy from her older sister and says what? MINE. She knows that's not true. I want this. I want to do what I want.
  - This is because our kids are "*brought forth in iniquity, and in sin does their mothers conceive them.*" The one thing ever kid is naturally is a rebel. Some of you may question how original sin works, but nobody really denies it... every kid is born a rebel; someone who naturally wants to do his own will and not anybody else's, including *God's*.
    - Nobody gets up and at 5 am and their 5 year old kid has tidied up the living room, and is sitting there reading his Bible, journaling, saying, "I need to surrender more of my life to

the Lord today.” No... I leave my kid alone for a while I come back and say, “Who set the backyard on fire?”

- *I realize that other people have sinned against you, and other people have contributed to your sin. But you are never going to get anywhere until you own it. You're not deprived, you're depraved.*
  - You say, “My problem is I hang around with the wrong crowd.” No, your problem is that you are the wrong crowd, which is why you loved hanging out with the wrong crowd.

**[4] Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...**

- Look at that statement. Is that true? Really, David? What about Bathsheba? Seemed like you also sinned against her. What about *Uriah*? Uriah definitely looks like he was sinned against.
- This is a little deep, but it's the heart of the whole thing. 2 important reasons David says this.
  1. **He realizes his sin began against God.** All of our sin is ultimately directed at God.
    - We're not satisfied with what God has given us, or we don't trust God to take care of us, so we go around God, outside of the boundaries, to get what we want.
    - Think about jealousy: Why do we get jealous? I don't like what God has given to me, and I wish He had given to me what He gave to you. You look at someone else's car, girlfriend, or job or looks or talents and say, “I wish I had that.” In that moment, you are saying, “God I don't trust what you gave to me and I'm not satisfied with you and your plan.”
    - It's like I explained in our series on the 10 Commandments last year, breaking the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment leads to breaking all the others. If we ever kept the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment, to love God with all our heart soul and mind and trusted Him completely, we would naturally keep all the others.
    - David says, Why did I need power? Why did I need Bathsheba's beauty? Why did my soul have this incredible suction power that drove me to go after? I needed her arms because I did not have yours, God. I needed her beauty because I did not have your beauty, God.
    - David realizes his sin is 1<sup>st</sup> and foremost...
  2. **David realizes God was the most important One he'd offended.**
    - What he'd done to Uriah was hideous and despicable, to be sure; but what David did to God, believe it or not, is even worse.
    - This might be hard for some of you to see... but this is precisely what is missing in most of our repentance. We are always focused on what our sin has done to others; we rarely give thought to the insult our sin is to God.
      - God is the ultimate Creator of all the universe; without Him there would be nothing; you owe every breath to Him;
      - ...in addition to that, think about God's goodness and grace to us. David said, “You took me from the shepherd fields when I had nothing and gave me everything; for us, you gave us Jesus to rescue us and then poured so much blessing and mercy into our lives. To rebel against Him is cosmic treason utter ingratitude of the worst order.
    - *Our sin against God is so bad it required the brutal, bloody death of the Son of God.*
      - Stop and think about that for a minute? What does the cross tell you about the severity of our sin before God? Jesus died not because of what our sin had done against other people, but because of what it had done against God. The hideousness of the cross is in proportion to the hideousness of our sin before God. It is a cosmic treason and blatant ingratitude.
      - People hate the doctrine of hell... but suppose, just for a minute, that hell is no worse than our sin demands. What we've done to each other doesn't deserve hell. But what if hell gave you a picture of the heinousness of our sin to God?
- David is overwhelmed with this truth at this point. “Against you, you only...”

- The repetition of you, you in Hebrew indicates the intensity of emotion. You, God, You... after all that you have given me, and what you've shown me, I forsook you!
- When is the last time you were emotional about what your sin had done to God? Not that you cried because it made you feel bad or embarrassed but simply because of what it had done to God!
- You see, until you are most upset at what your sin has done to God, you'll never really change. As long as your repentance is just a reaction to being caught, or the bad circumstances sin has created, you are not repenting.

**[6] Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**

- Our focus is on the behavior; God's focus is on the heart. **1. Your heart is the real you.** God doesn't want to dwell in a heart that secretly fantasizes about sin any more than I'd want to live in a beautiful brick home with rotting, maggot-infested corpses in every room. **2.** Until you deal with the heart, any change you make will be superficial. God doesn't want us just to step a certain behavior, He wants a re-creation of the heart. He doesn't want a year of dutiful obedience; he wants 5 billion years of passionate desire.
- The focus of David's obedience is not on what he's done, but who he had become. "I didn't just commit adultery. I have become the kind of person who commits adultery."
- Do you ever notice that so much of our confession is focused on what we did, and not on who we are that is behind what we did? The action is not the problem. It's the heart that produced those actions that you need to worry about.

Vs. 7 he begins to explain how God will heal him:

**[7] Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

- This seems random... if you go to Wikipedia and ask "What is hyssop?" you'll find that it is a small plant that produces a delicate white flower. That doesn't help. But if you go to your Bible concordance and do a word search you'll find out that hyssop was what they used to spread the blood on the doorposts during the Exodus; it was also what they used when they asked God to cleanse a leper (dip the hyssop in the blood of slaughtered lamb, and it was how God would miraculously heal them);
- These are pictures of Christ.
  - At the Passover, the blood symbolized that the lamb had taken the death penalty for sin. This was, of course, a picture of Christ, on whom God would put our sin and punish Him to the full extent.
  - In the case of leprosy, the blood and hyssop symbolized God's ability to make all things new, to recreate new life out of old dead. Jesus' death and resurrection are able to make our souls new. Restore purity to us. Give us baby skin again. Remake our desires.
- His blood spread on us by the hyssop *purges* us. The cross takes away the penalty; the resurrection makes all things new.
- The forgiveness we need is not just "forgive and forget." Because even if God could forget, guess who wouldn't forget? You wouldn't. What do you call a person who commits a crime and then just forgets it? You call that person *insane*. God does not purge us by simply "forgiving and forgetting," as if he did the little flashy thing in "Men in Black."

**[8] Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.**

- David knows that God's intention for him in all of this is his good. This is huge. Many of you think that your sin has permanently disqualified you.
- You can tell what someone's intention is for a house by the size of the tools used on it...
- Jesus took the wrecking ball so He could use the chisel on you.



- Not saying it's not painful... How many have broken a bone? Would you call what your bone does in the moment it is broken, "rejoicing"?
  - But it's how God wakes you up. People who can't feel pain have things happen to them that destroy them and they never know about it... in 1 of our houses we had a problem... water in foundation
- The broken bones of your soul; your broken heart; is God's way of waking you up. Conviction and guilt are terrible and painful, yes, and humiliating, but not as terrible and painful and destructive as unchecked sin in your life.
- Don't resist it, because the life-saving mercy of God. That voice calling out to you, pointing out your sin: don't resist it. **God's goal for you is your deliverance, not your destruction; it is your exaltation, not your condemnation.**

Look at the next 4 verses:

*[9] Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.*

*[10] Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

*[11] Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*

*[12] Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.*

- Every word of this Psalm cries out for Jesus.
  - We need someone who could put away our sin. How could that happen? Not through a lamb... Jesus did that by living the life...His death put it away forever.
- We need someone who could create in us a clean heart and a love for God and renew a right, willing spirit within us. Where can we learn to love like that?
  - Here I may sound like a broken record: GOSPEL. The only way we ever learn to love God is seeing His beauty and learning of His love for us.
    - Famous story that comes out of the Civil War era... **Abraham Lincoln**. The steadfast love of Jesus is the only thing that renews a right spirit within us.
- A lot of people think that what they need is like a diet pill... lose weight without changing their diet or exercising. Oh, you ate loaded cheese fries, take this and it will cancel it out. People treat Jesus like a diet pill for sin, but that's a terrible metaphor. Imagine if you could take a pill that would not just supposedly burn off calories but change your whole attitude toward food and exercise. It changed your desires for cheese fries into a love of broccoli. At night you are like, "I could watch TV, but I just don't feel like it. What I really want to do is a set of Palattis." This pill made you love what you should love and hate what you should hate.
  - You can't change that. Jesus does that by shedding abroad His love in your heart and filling you with the HS.

Following this, there are several phrases that say the same thing:

*[13] Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.*

*[14] When you... Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.*

*[15] O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.*

And, vs

*[18] Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem;*

Cross and resurrection. God of cross forgives us of our past; God of resurrection recreates our future.

Well, I told you there was no outline... but there kind of is. David says:

- God, I throw myself on your mercy
- Because I am an inexcusable sinner
- The way you save me of the Gospel
- And in response to the Gospel, I'll learn to love you again and be used by you

**You see, the GOSPEL is all through 2 Samuel 12:**

- Nathan stands before David and says "You are the man." You know what that sounds like? It sounds eerily similar to what Pilate said about Jesus when they brought him forward to be crucified. Pilate said, "Behold the Man."<sup>1</sup> To every one of us, the law of God says, "Thou art the man." At the cross Jesus was accused of being the man in our place. And the Gospels say He stood there silent. He consented to our guilt. And he died.
- And, get this: In this story, Nathan tells David he won't die. But his descendant will. His innocent son died in David's place. Do you see the picture being given to you? David lives, because one of his innocent descendants would die in his place.
- When David's promised son was born, many generation later, "Unto you this born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ, the promised one, the Lord... you will find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger... and you will call His name, "Jesus," which in Hebrew means literally, "God Himself will save," because He will save His people from their sins.

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene Peterson: "There's a remarkable verbal resonance of this story of David standing before Nathan, and that of Jesus standing before Pilate. Nathan says of David, 'You are the man.' And Pilate says of Jesus, 'Behold the man.'"



# Bullpen:

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- 1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
  - I've told you that my favorite word in that verse is not "forgiven," but "just." He is just to forgive our sins. A lot of times we think of God's forgiveness of us as his mercy. But if God only forgave us from mercy, I'd always wonder if he decided to not be merciful...
  - I used to think when I'd break one of these commandments over and over... I wonder if God will forgive me, and I'd plead... "God, please, please, please forgive me." And sometimes I felt like He did, and sometimes I felt like He didn't... You're 70x7 is up, you're on #491... Or sometimes I would feel like he would forgive me, sometimes I felt like there would be conditions... don't do it for a week, and read your Bible every day, and I'll forgive you, because I'm merciful like that.
  - It doesn't say merciful, it says "just." God forgives it not because He's merciful, but because Jesus already paid it in my place and God can't demand 2 payments for 1 sin.
  - I had this idea of Jesus up in heaven going, "God, please forgive J.D. Just give Him one more chance. Come on, God, be merciful." That's not how it works. Almost sounds blasphemous, but Jesus says, "You have to forgive Him, because I already paid it and in justice you have to forgive Him for what I've paid for." "This sin cannot be laid to his charge."
  - My sin is not forgiven and forgotten; it is purged and put away forever.

## [2] *...blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!*

- David uses 2 really clear words here to describe his sin:
  - **Transgression:** Transgression is when you take what is not yours. Some translations say "trespass." If I come into your house uninvited and eat your food and run up your long distance bill, that is trespassing. I've taken what is not mine. David had done that. He had gone into forbidden territory and taken what God had not given to him.
  - **Iniquity:** Iniquity means moral uncleanness. This is the soul-darkness that accompanies sin... sin is a discoloring of your whole soul. It's like washing a pair of bright red socks in a pair of all whites. You ever done that? Everything comes out pink. David's sin has infected his whole being. David's transgression transformed him from being the king who protected the people and faced Goliath on their behalf into the king who exploited the people; abused and murdered the people, like the rich man who stole the guy's lamb.
  - Do you see what David has done?
    - **He is not just confessing what he has done; he's confessing what he has become.** He's dealing with sin on the heart level. "I didn't just commit adultery. I have become the kind of person who commits adultery."
    - Do you ever notice that so much of our confession is focused on what we did, and not on who we are that is behind what we did?
      - Do you ever get angry and say something in an email or in an argument and then you say later, 'I want to apologize to you for what I said. I said you were stupid, selfish, and incompetent...' And then we go on and say, "But that's not what I meant." When, in actuality, it is **exactly** what you meant in the moment, it's just that you feel bad because in that moment your words revealed the actual state of your heart... that you are such a selfish person that what they did to you made you hate them. That's a much better confession to your spouse: I am so selfish that when you

let me down, it made me exaggerate your faults and hate you, but that has more to do with the perverseness in my heart than it does you.”

- David says, “No, the reason I did these sinful actions is I am sinful.”

He goes on:

*[16] For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. [17] The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

*[19] then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

- Two times he talks about sacrifice. The first he says “you don’t delight in it.” Then vs. 19 he says “Then you will delight in it.” What is that all about?
- There are two types of sacrifice... those done to make up for your sin. God hates those because they don’t deal with the real issues. Then there are those done in response to the Gospel. Those kind of sacrifices delight God because they spring from love and willing obedience. Some people serve God because they want God to accept them; others serve God because they know they have been accepted. God resists the former; God loves the latter. The only ones whose sacrifices delight God are those who know that their sacrifices don’t change how God feels about them 1 iota.

Salvation is a gift of God’s mercy, not something you earn. You don’t gradually take small steps toward God. You receive, all in one moment, the billion steps He’s taken toward you. and then you respond to Him for the rest of eternity.

What’s happened? David’s focus is back again on building God’s kingdom.

- He wants to help the nation know God. He asks for God to help him build the kingdom so that they can know God.
- True repentance is always accompanied by a renewed focus on God’s kingdom. Sin starts by forsaking God’s kingdom and focusing on your own; it ends by renewing yourself in God’s kingdom.
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- **Here’s what I want you to think about, in the background, as we go through this.... God had not sent Nathan to condemn David, and he had not sent Samuel to Saul to condemn him either, but to awaken them so that they could receive mercy,** but Saul would not admit he needed it and never accessed it; David did. That’s what he He is doing through me to some of you this weekend. And I really need you to to believe that **His goal for you is your deliverance, not your destruction; it is your exaltation, not your condemnation.** You have a choice, Saul or David. The mercy of God is abundant if you will just admit you need it and throw yourself upon it.
- David says, “I can’t pay you off. There’s nothing I can do to make it better. My hope is in your mercy.” Salvation is something that comes down to us as a gift, not something we can earn.
- That’s what I told you last week. You don’t gradually take steps to get closer to God. You receive, all in a moment, the billion steps He took to you at the cross.
- Does that blow your mind? Then you probably are starting to understand it.

- The moment you receive Jesus, you are as close to God as you will ever be, because Christ's record has become yours.
- Take the greatest saint that has ever lived... who lived a life of love and sacrifice and generosity... Is he any closer to God than the thief on the cross, who had lived a life of lies and selfishness, but on the cross believed in Jesus? No. Both are in Christ. It has nothing to do with your record, it has to do with His.
- Does God love you any more after you've had the greatest spiritual year of your life than He does when you've struggled? No, not if you see salvation as a gift. In Christ, there is nothing you could do to make God love you more, and nothing you could fail to do that would make Him love you less.
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- If I just threatened myself with consequences it doesn't change the problem in the heart that lead me to sin to begin with which was my feeling of separation from God and His love.
- You'll never really repent until you are more upset at what your sin has done to God than what it has done to others. We learn that by learning his love for us. **Only repentance that begins in the assurance of God's love that is effective.**
- I own it. I've quit excusing it. (See Tripp, p 32). Keller: Sin never feels like sin in the midst of it. David didn't feel like a sinner, he felt like a lover. When he gave the order for Uriah to be killed, he didn't feel like a murderer; he felt like a general
- "Sin is a poisonous weed that throws the whole nature out of order. The inner life disintegrates. The flesh lusts after the forbidden pleasures. The moral judgment is destroyed so that good appears evil and evil good. Time is chosen over eternity, earth over heaven, and death over life." A. W. Tozer
- I'm sorry you were offended.
- Confession begins as a plea for rescue. You are humbled because you cannot win the war; you are discouraged because there are desires you cannot conquer; you are confronted by actions that are inexcusable. You finally confess that what you need is rescue. And you don't deserve it at all. You are guilty; no excuses
- God's grace must not only save us from sin, but from our self-justification and our rationalizations
- Abe Lincoln: bought the girl to go free; girl who got straight A's from removal of pressure; God is not after 1x obedience, but 50x.
- Uriah: no, God, you can't just turn away from sin.
- Diet pills: lose weight without changing your diet or exercising. We want to lose the weight without having to change the things we do that bring destruction of our bodies. **What's this got to do with Ps. 51? We do this with Jesus. Jesus is a pill that takes care of our sin...**
- "Sin is a poisonous weed that throws the whole nature out of order. The inner life disintegrates. The flesh lusts after the forbidden pleasures. The moral judgment is destroyed so that good appears evil and evil good. Time is chosen over eternity, earth over heaven, and death over life." A. W. Tozer
- **Sin is like a piece of tape that you put on your arm. You rip it off and you can hear it, and then you do it three of four times, and it gradually just loses its power to do that. That's the way sin is, the more you commit it.**
- God puts it in the sea of forgetfulness--he chooses not to bring it up. It's not like the little flashy thing in "Men in Black." But YOU can't forget. There's a word used to describe people who commit a crime and then totally forget it—it's called "insane."
- The most common word we say back to each other is "No."
- Chandler: Kids are naturally sinners: Nobody gets up and at 5 am the kid has cleaned the house, sitting there reading his Bible journaling, "I need to surrender more of my life to the Lord." No...we say, "who set the backyard on fire?"
- Sin never feels like sin in the midst of it. David didn't feel like a sinner, he felt like a lover. When he gave the order for Uriah to be killed, he didn't feel like a murderer; he felt like a general
- Repentance is killing the habits of your heart that are killing you, without killing yourself.
- Repentance is making careful distinctions with your **mind**; taking **radical responsibility with your will**; achieving **emotional distaste** against your sin with the heart.

- David couldn't repent because he was David. David could repent because God set his affections on him. He has done the same for you.

### From Keller:

- Our culture/society subscribes to a victim-mentality. We assume it is the circumstances around us that are to blame for our wrong deeds. We do not accept that it is from our hearts that evil actions come from.
- When a twisted murder or massacre occurs, we ask "what horrible thing happened to that person that caused them or made them do such a horrendous thing?" We assume we are not capable of the exact same deed(s).
- Even if you know God and have encountered him, you are still capable of these same sins as David.
- Everyone – every 'Godly man and woman' – in the Bible screws up. Moses doesn't even get to enter the promise land. Do you honestly think you are better off than Abraham, Moses, David, and Peter?
- Get off of your self-pedestal.
- John Owen, "Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you."
- What sins are you tolerating? 'Small' sins? 'Respectable' sins? 'Excusable' sins? Like a small acorn becomes an acorn tree, so will your small sins. Deal with them while they are small. It is easier to destroy an acorn than an acorn tree.
- We are putting up and excusing jealousy, envy, hatred, sexual lust, insecurity, etc. These are much more dangerous than we believe. We must deal with them.
- A theme in the Bible is that the best people who have ever lived have not, will not, and cannot overcome their own sins, flaws, and self-centeredness; but if they cling to the grace of God to the end of their lives, they will triumph.

### Be a Nathan

- Not only be a Nathan, but get a few Nathans. The sin in your heart always produces self-defense mechanisms.
- The type of Nathan-David relationships do not happen on Facebook or Twitter. These happen in real life.

### Assurance of Pardon

- Eugene Peterson, "There's a remarkable verbal resonance of this story of David standing before Nathan, and that of Jesus standing before Pilate. Nathan says of David, 'You are the man.' And Pilate says of Jesus, 'Behold the man.'"
- Nathan's story is sad, but David overreacts. Why? Conscience is beginning to awaken.

How do we start to identify our tendencies toward false repentance? The answer is to look for patterns of remorse and resolution in our dealings with sin. Remorse: "I can't believe I did that!" Resolution: "I promise to do better next time." Behind this way of living are two great misunderstandings about our hearts. First, we think too highly of ourselves. We do not truly believe the depth of our sin and brokenness (the bottom line of the Cross Chart). This leads us to react in surprise when sin manifests itself: "I can't believe I just did that!" In other words: "That's not what I'm really like!" Second, we think we have the power to change ourselves. We think that if we make resolutions or try harder next time, we'll be able to fix the problem.

These patterns of remorse and resolution taint our attitudes toward others as well. Because we think so highly of ourselves, we respond to others' sin with harshness and disapproval. We are very lenient toward our own sin but we resent theirs! And because we think we can change ourselves, we are frustrated when other people aren't changing themselves faster. We become judgmental, impatient, and critical.

The gospel calls us to (and empowers us for) true repentance. According to the Bible, true repentance:

- IS ORIENTED TOWARD GOD, NOT ME. Psalm 51:4: "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight..."
- IS MOTIVATED BY TRUE GODLY SORROW AND NOT JUST SELFISH REGRET. 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly sorrow produces death."
- IS CONCERNED WITH THE HEART, NOT JUST WITH EXTERNAL ACTIONS. Psalm 51:10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (ESV).

- LOOKS TO JESUS FOR DELIVERANCE FROM THE PENALTY AND POWER OF SIN. Acts 3:19–20: “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Christ who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.”

Instead of excusing our sin or falling into patterns of remorse and resolution, true gospel repentance moves us to realize and repent. Realize: “I did do that.” (“That IS what I’m really like!”) Repent: “Lord, forgive me! You are my only hope.” As we learn to live in light of the gospel, this kind of true repentance should become more and more normal for us. We will stop being surprised by our sin, so we will be able to more honestly admit it. And we will stop believing we can fix ourselves, so we will more quickly turn to Jesus for forgiveness and transformation.

Sin is a condition, not just a behavior, so true repentance is a lifestyle, not just an occasional practice. Repentance is not something we do only once (when we are converted), or only periodically (when we feel really guilty). Repentance is ongoing, and conviction of sin is a mark of God’s fatherly love for us. “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent” (Rev. 3:19).

So: what are you repenting of?

- David could say, “Well, if that tramp Bathsheba hadn’t been bathing naked this wouldn’t have happened.” Sure. But if David had not had the heart of an adulterer he wouldn’t have acted on it. “*You know whether a house is being restored or condemned by the size of the tools being used.*”<sup>2</sup>
- The voice of God is that of a chisel, not a wrecking ball... God is going to have the wrecking ball go into Jesus so the chisel can be used on us.
  - It’s like the husband who his wife says she will leave him because he is working too hard; she never sees him; he’s emotionally distant, loves his job and money a whole lot more than her; she’s just like a convenient roommate and housekeeper... So she finally says, “That’s it. I’m leaving.” So, he begs her to stay until and promises he will change his ways, until that threat is gone; then he goes right back to how he was
  - Real repentance is a regret toward God that is grieved about what our sin did to Him.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Whiter than Snow*, 76.