

# Psalm 51

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] I remember going to a college and career Sunday school class in my old church and Dean and Judy Stringer! who live in Talmo, Georgia, not too far from the Sowers actually today they were teaching that class and! and then I actually came that Sunday really broken and really fed up of myself and this was the song that we studied and since that day like in 2002 like I have never found another passage in scripture I think that teaches on the true meaning of what repentance before God looks like and so just in Psalm 51 today we're just going to walk through some of we're not going to look at every little word and phrase but we're going to just walk through it together and but we're going to kind of do it in the context of asking questions about about the psalm and questions about repentance and uh as many in here know who who I you know confess my sin to and who I pray with um and have accountability with uh they know that like I have a lot to learn about repentance and um that I don't this isn't something that you just figure out that the Christian life is a life of repentance continual repentance before God so let's just start very basic but the word repent at least in the Greek means to change one's mind for the better it means to turn away from sin hating it turning to God and resolving by God's strength to not go back to it to overcome it and so it's coming to God um so it's not just a change of actions it's a change of the way that somebody thinks about their sin it's not like just do good things and you'll be fine it's like you it changes your view of what sin is before God it's an attitude shift that only that comes with the new birth um when the Holy Spirit saves us and I don't know no better place to teach us about what repentance is than Psalm 51 but before we dive into the Psalm it's imperative that you know like what what uh the context is um most of you are not unfamiliar with the Psalm but if you look at the the title of it like in the above the little subtitle up here it says to the choir master a Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone into Bathsheba and so the context of the story is found in 2 Samuel chapter 11 and chapter 12 and

David is definitely one of my favorite Bible characters and I think without these two chapters we'd be really tempted to think that he was just like this invincible guy who loved God and never messed up um and the hope is not like well David's sinned so I guess I can sin now it is the hope is wow um a man who had such passion and love for God fell into this depth of sin and God still showed him mercy it showed that it magnifies the glory of the gospel so this is where King David commits a terrible act of adultery murder and scandal and he first he should have been off at war fighting with his soldiers but he's chilling out in Jerusalem and he his eyes caught by Bathsheba who's bathing on one of the rooftops and so he commits the act of adultery has her brought to him and she is married to a noble warrior named Uriah the Hittite he must have been like a somewhat of like a mercenary or a guy who had fled to Israel and believed in the true God probably and so he commits adultery and then shortly after she comes in and says like

I'm pregnant I'm going to have a baby your baby and he panics obviously his reputation is at stake and so what he does he calls Uriah back from the battlefield tries to get him to sleep with his wife so it can appear as if it was his child he refuses because it would be a dishonorable pleasure for him to partake of while his men are out fighting and something that David should have been doing and so then he tries to get him drunk plan B he tries to get him drunk to sleep with his wife but he still doesn't do it so then he results to the worst which is to send him back to the battlefield and have him put in the front line to where he would be killed by the enemy and that's what happens Uriah is killed so then David then moves in marries Bathsheba and he thinks he's got everything covered I mean everybody knows how one lie has to be covered up by another lie and another lie and another scandal and

David knew that this was wrong and he still did it he cared more about his reputation than anything and then God God then sends a prophet Nathan to confront David and he tells David a story there

was once a rich man and a poor man there is a rich man and a poor man and the rich man had many herds many flocks and the poor man had one lamb that he loved and treated almost as if it was one of his children but then the rich man had a visitor come and instead of killing one of the many livestock that he had he killed and took he stole and killed the little lamb of the poor man and then David is outraged he is furious and he says as the Lord lives that man deserves to die you know and little did he know that he was pronouncing judgment on himself when he said that so then Nathan says you are the man and he like it's it's like he says like no you're the man he's like you are the man like yells it at him and so he's found out he's confronted by Nathan and he knows that that his sin has been exposed that the Lord knows like what happened

Proverbs 15 3 says the eyes of the Lord are in every place keeping watch over evil and good so out of David's mouth comes I have sinned against the Lord and a psalm of repentance then comes so after he says I have sinned against the Lord Nathan then tells him the Lord has taken away your sin crazy phrase which we're going to get into so so how can we look at this so I bet later on after Nathan confronted him he kind of had some time to himself he probably got alone in the palace or he went out in the wilderness where he was when he was fleeing Saul and kind of just got by himself and he communed with the Lord and and he wrote this psalm in response and this psalm really does exhibit true repentance so we're going to do it in the form of questions the first one is how do we approach God for mercy and forgiveness how do we approach God for mercy and forgiveness if you look at verse 1 and 2 have mercy on me oh God according to your steadfast love according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions wash me thoroughly of my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin so he pleads mercy and forgiveness pardon forgiveness mercy is undeserved it is a it's given only by God's good pleasure nothing that you can earn at all and so what's his case before God

[ 8 : 13 ] David has no hope of like pleading with God according to his goodness or his righteousness because based on the story his righteousness and goodness is terrible so he has no case to plead like he can't say I'm a good guy he knows that he's not and his actions just prove that so it's faulty so what does he do he pleads not on his own merit he pleads according to God he says according to your steadfast love according to your abundant mercy the way that reads is the multitude of your tender mercies your tender compassions so he recognizes he has no entitlement to ask God for anything at all and when we're there we have to be sensible that God should not be under no obligation to spare us we have to be aware of that reality some of us think that we deserve it when we get angry with God because of something rough that happens and shake our fist at him you're saying that I deserve it how dare you bring this upon me

David has no such case he recognizes that he's not worthy that God should show him mercy otherwise it would not be mercy right so he knows there's nothing he can do to make amends for his sins so what he does is awesome you have to remember this remember this when you pray David appeals to God in a manner that he taps into the very character of God himself because he knows within God it's in God's nature to be merciful he appeals to God's nature not his own he appeals to God's steadfast love it's in the very nature of God to forgive and to pardon and that's where he goes it's not according to you or according to me and my righteousness but yours it's in the nature of God to forgive pardon heal Isaiah 30 verse 18 says therefore Jehovah longs to be gracious to you he longs to be gracious to you and therefore he waits on high to have compassion on you for Jehovah is a God of justice how blessed are those who long for him so he knows that truth and so he's going to that and so that's how you have to pray like Lord I'm nothing I don't deserve anything but you delight in showing compassion you delight in showing mercy so look at the terms that are used in verses 1 and 2 like they're terms of the crime committed he uses transgression iniquity and sin they're all pretty much trying to convey the evil of what he's done so transgression is a deliberate premeditated crossing of the line that you knew you weren't supposed to cross it's that you know that was wrong because you're going to do it anyway David knew what he was doing he was not in ignorance at all also iniquity and that is a perverting or a twisting of what God has said I know God has said this I know it's okay that God said that I can't live this way or act that way but I'm going to do it anyway!

It can't be that bad it's like that internal lawyer that tries to justify your sin when you know God has said no and then he used the term sin the one that most of us are familiar with is the missing of the mark that God has set that God has intended for you to live and all of us have missed that we've all fallen short of the way that God intended us to live and then he even causes his act evil later on it's

that dark terrible unholy everything that is not God so that's the terms he uses for his own actions he doesn't say it wasn't that bad he's like I was committing transgression iniquity and sin and evil so then what does he say he uses these awesome terms depicting spiritual restoration that only God himself can perform in light of these evils he used the term blot blot out my transgressions right it means to wipe away to obliterate exterminate in the ancient times they used papyrus to write on and it was pretty valuable a lot of times they would take a cloth or something and erase something that was on it and reuse it and he's saying here's the record of that evil blot it out wipe it away then he says wash to wash by treading out wash away we all know how refreshing it is to have some of you have been camping or hiking for days and days at a time been in the field and you're cool with it while you're there but then when you come home you're like man

I gotta get a shower like you just stink and you after you get home but we all know how good that feels but he's talking about feeling that spiritually like washing away of all the evil that he has done then he used the words to cleanse to purify to make whole right awesome words and all that according to God's steadfast love and God's aberned mercy these are words that our souls should long for in light of our sin so that's the first question second question what is true confession of sin what is true confession of sin we see this in verses 3 through 5 he says for I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me against you and you only have I sinned against and done what is evil in your sight so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment behold

[14:28] I was brought forth in in in sin did my mother conceived me so look at verse 3 there he says I know my transgressions within its ever before me he's recognizing that he knows humbly recognizing that he knows he's sinned against God and that his sin is ever present with him that is staring him in the face that he can't get away from it those of you who are living in sin now like secret sin in your life or even open sin and you know it's inside of you it says in scripture that there's no peace for the wicked there's no rest for the wicked when you know that you're living in open sin your heart is in turmoil and you will have no peace and you know that he recognizes that my sin is ever before me and is staring me in the face then he says like the results of sin right they stain us and it's not anybody's fault but your own like this is

David's fault this wasn't Bathsheba's fault like he knows that he's guilty he's taking responsibility I know what I did I know what I did and I recognize it and I call it for what it is sometimes when we confess sin to one another we use phrases like I messed up or I did something wrong call it what it is sometimes those are like terms to kind of soothe like the actual evil that we committed it's sin and it's rebellion before God and he confesses that then look at verse four and this is key this is key he says against you and you only have I sinned against and done what is evil in your sight David could have said and he would have been right in a sense Lord I tragically sinned against Bathsheba I tragically sinned against Uriah and the nation of Israel as their king and that would have been true yet he confesses against

God alone as he sinned against and why because all sin ultimately supremely is an affront to God himself he is the one who actually defines sin right so sin is what God intrinsically hates and is devoted to destroying so some of us feel bad about sin because it hurts us it stinks like we feel guilt we feel shame we don't like what it does to us turn to keep your hands on 51 but look at 2nd Corinthians chapter 7 please there's only just two places for you to turn outside Psalm 51 today but look at 2nd Corinthians chapter 7 so though sin does bring great harm to ourselves and others right ultimately it's against

God right it's against our loving creator and when he was confronted this is what David said to him he said I've sinned against the Lord that's what he said to Nathan so let's see here look at 2nd Corinthians chapter 7 verse 9 this is Paul talking and he says as it is I rejoice not because you were grieved but because you were grieved into repenting for you felt a godly grief so that you suffered no loss through us for godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret!

So this is a very clear definition of what true repentance is repentance isn't just badness it's not breaking god's law in and of itself it is in a way but it's saying to god i don't want you it's turning away from god and turning to the garbage of the world to give us only what god can give us and so it's not just feeling bad and feeling guilty even like i've heard people well i'm sharing the gospel with this guy and he seems to be he feels pretty bad about what he's done i'm like well it's different than feeling true conviction of sin it's not just feeling bad for what you've done right it's mainly because you have sinned against god and the way that david defines it here and Paul he says there's two

kinds of sorrow there's worldly sorrow which even unbelievers have it's man centered it's merely feeling guilty about something that you've done and it leads to death that's like what he says then he says there's a godly sorrow it's god centered this ultimately means that you're sorry and you're broken because you have sinned against your creator you've insulted him and you've hurt him right true repentance starts with a sin it's ultimately against the lord himself and it has to be that way right so it's a godly sorrow that leads us to true repentance right so we look at we have to think of sin as a spiritual condition

[ 20 : 00 ] David recognizes that reality he says behold I was brought forth in in in in sin my mother conceived me right yes he recognizes that his action was a result of who he was not that he did something bad he recognized that he was born in a state of sin and he's not making an excuse either some people may think that he's not saying well God I was born that way he knows that it's an affront to God but what it is he's imploring God asking God to show mercy right he's saying I'm so weak I'm so small I'm so pathetic please have mercy on me that's why he's using that argument to show how spiritually depraved he is apart from God right sin gives us darkened understanding corrupted hearts it says in the scripture that if you don't belong to

Christ you belong to the devil that's like what it says John says that Jesus himself said you don't believe in me and you do the desires of your father the devil that's like what he says and it says Paul says that you're being held by captive by Satan to do his will if you do not know Christ so out of all of that it's a scary prognosis so David begs God implores God I'm so weak I'm so small I'm so sinful this is all I've ever known please have mercy on me that's the argument he makes the third question how do we plea for restoration and healing how do we plea for restoration and healing and this is seen in verses 6 through 12 he says behold you delight in truth and the inward being and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart so there he's really saying God save me and change me from the inside out you desire truth in the inner depths of who

I am go door to door inside my heart and change it make it yours right he goes on purse me with hyssop and I shall be clean wash me I'll be whiter than snow let me hear joy and gladness let the bones that you have and blot out all my iniquities create in me a clean heart oh God and renew a right spirit within me cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy spirit from me restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit and based on the language in here we can learn a lot about sin and a lot about what God can do!

response to Hyssop was a plant in the mint family and it was used it had like a cluster of yellow flowers on it it was used during the Passover when the Jews were still in Egypt and they wiped blood over the doorpost they used hyssop to do that it was a sweet smelling thing and he says that it's a cleansing thing he says wash me I'll be whiter than snow we actually had a lot of snow here like it's beautiful it's pure it's clean some of us didn't really like having it that long but like it's a beautiful thing to look at whether you like it or not whether you like the cold or not and he's saying make me clean like that wash me I'll be whiter than snow unadulterated pure and beautiful and like sin is also deafness like to joy it's deafness spiritually he says make me here right make me here he wanted to allow

God to hear like to hear joy and gladness once again instead of just hearing the doom and gloom of the reality of the sin he wanted to hear joy and gladness again sin is also disgrace and separation I love this part he says in verse 9 hide your face from my sin notice that he doesn't say hide your face from me he says hide it from my sin right pretty key to see that because to the Hebrews the greatest blessing that anybody could have was to see God's face it was to because his face was a sign of his his blessing his favor his attention his fellowship and the greatest curse was for God to hide his face from you showing displeasure and judgment and abandonment so he's like don't hide your face from me hide it from my sin I'm disgrace hide it from my sin so you see again that ultimately he wants

[ 24 : 58 ] God himself he wants fellowship with God himself don't hide your face from me right he says cast me not away from your presence right don't cast me away from your presence don't take your Holy Spirit from me the Holy Spirit at least in the Old Testament was how well it is today too how God manifests his presence to us but in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit came and he went he he rested and he empowered prophets and kings to do the work that God intended them to do but it also could be taken away and David himself was very aware of this he knew that it happened to Samson you know God took away his strength through the Spirit and then he also more nearer to home he saw it happen to Saul who was before him he said I don't want to be that way I don't want

God to take away his Spirit from me he saw God abandon King Saul so lots of people want to be delivered so you may be here and you think I want to be delivered from the consequences of my sin but I don't really want

God that's something you got to examine in your own heart you want to be delivered from the consequences of your sin but you don't really want fellowship with God like David does he said don't throw me away from your presence don't turn your face from me you want God's gifts but not the giver you want the blessings not the blesser right and in speaking you're marrying God for his money you don't really want him and that's not what's going to work out Jonathan Edwards he said this I get one Jonathan Edwards quote in he said there's a great difference between a willingness not to be damned and being willing to be received by Christ for your savior you have the former there is no doubt of that nobody supposes that you would love misery and so as choose an eternity of it so he's saying yeah duh nobody wants to go to hell and like have an eternity of misery he says and so doubtless you are willing to be saved from eternal misery but that is a very different thing from being willing to come to

Christ persons very commonly mistake the one for the other but they are quite two different things you may love deliverance but hate the deliverer the inclination of your will goes no further than self and it never reaches Christ you're willing not to be miserable that is you love yourself and there your will and your choice terminate and it is a vain pretense and delusion to say or think that you are willing to accept Christ scary like yeah like you the only concern you have is for self it doesn't go beyond that to love for Christ so like you have to be aware of that and David is he gets it he's like I want God I want to be restored to God so so if you look here also sin is also spiritually depressing it's you don't have joy that's why he says restore to me the joy of your salvation in verse 12 he asked

God to infuse his joy his gladness and thankfulness into his soul again he begs God for that then he says uphold me with a willing spirit like keep me there like give me some endurance to stay there and to remain there give me a willing noble spirit it kind of reads right so some of you may be sitting here and thinking there's no way like there's no way God could change me it's hopeless I've tried to change myself I've tried everything I can do it's hopeless I've felt that way before I even felt that way like a couple weeks ago but it's true that there's nothing you can do to change yourself no amount of willpower or resolve can change your soul it's not going to happen yet don't forget who it is you're praying to

David does not he uses an incredible word that describes his confidence in God's ability to transform him he used the word create in me a clean new heart that Hebrew word create awesome you can guess where else it's used in the Old Testament it's Genesis 1:1 in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth so he's calling on that same power that God made the universe the oceans the mountains the skies all things that same awesome omnipotent power create in him a clean heart and so no you can't but yes God can it's never too late he can change you from the inside out with his power his hand is not so short that it cannot save he can do it so think about that create so thirdly moving on thirdly what is the right response to God's mercy what is the right response to God's mercy we see this in verses 13 through 19 he says then right after God's restored him after God's healed him then

[ 30 : 39 ] I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will return to you deliver me from blood guiltiness oh God God of my salvation like I've committed murder please help me you know wipe me clean of that right then my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness oh Lord open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise and this is key here okay for you will not delight and sacrifice otherwise I would give it you will not be pleased with the burnt offering so many times in the history of Israel the people would go on and live open sinful lives blatant sin and then they would go up to the temple go up to wherever and they would make sacrifices like okay stuff's cool now and then go back to sinning and then come back and do it again like let's just go through the motions and God will be cool he was very aware of that but what God desires is the person the person's heart and the person's life not ridiculous sacrifices he cares more about the heart of the worshiper rather than just the sacrifice or what they're doing so it's not well I've sinned against

God so I better go to church more I better share the gospel with more people I better read my Bible for an extra hour I won't eat for a few days you punish yourself in some way and y'all know like the guys who I confess into know I do that it's stupid and it's wrong it doesn't really commit convey like what God wants in our hearts it's not do penance like the Roman church taught that in medieval

ages do penance like come and make amends for your sins by buying indulgences going on pilgrimages doing good works it's never going to be enough that's why there's purgatory like that's not what we teach right the gospel is what we believe so it's not due penance and I can find myself doing that he says you don't delight in those things otherwise I would do it right men you don't abuse and spit on your wives and then come home mow the grass and do the dishes and think stuff's going to be cool right you want your wife so he says you don't delight in sacrifice or I would give it he cares more about the heart and the attitude of the worshiper so what

God truly desires you see that like in the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit a broken and contrite heart oh God he will not despise see that Jonathan Nower has called this humble broken hearted joy this verse humble broken hearted joy genuine repentance brings a change in our attitude which then brings a change in our actions right that's what repentance does it changes what we think about our sin so we can't just clean up the outside let me get my behavior right and then stuff will be cool God doesn't just care about what you do but why you do it that's like the essence of sin right we have to understand that why we do it is important to God he wants our hearts and our affections to be for him and he wants your heart he wants your affections he wants you so from right actions right we get right actions from right motives so then he says then

I will teach transgressions your ways I will tell them like how great your mercy is I will go out and preach the gospel if you will tell people about the saving work of Christ that you are willing to forgive and to save right that's awesome I will declare I will praise you in my lips open my mouth to do this right so awesome awesome stuff so after he restored verse 19 Keith Green has a good song back in the 70s Keith Green had a great song called to obey is better than sacrifice go home and check that one out so last question how is God how is God's mercy made possible how is God's mercy made possible so how could God pardon David can you imagine like being a family member or friend of

Uriah or Bathsheba and then hearing that conversation when Nathan go down the Lord is taking away your sin you would be outraged right you would be furious like what he gets away with this you are going to slap him on the hand like all of us are angry when we hear about stuff like that when judges let go murderers and child molesters and whatever and just say go back on the street don't do it again you're sorry right don't do it again this is what happened right not so with God though his holiness demands punishment of sin you can't just say go home stuff's cool God has to punish sin so look at Romans 3 real quick Romans 3 verse 22 God is devoted to destroying sin devoted to destroying evil so how could

[ 36 : 16 ] David long time ago how could God pardon him right look at Romans 3 verse 22 this is Paul elaborating on this says the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe for there is no distinction for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God there it is we all stink we all were brought forth in iniquity and sin and then it says and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received!

by faith! why? this alludes to David here this was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he passed over former sins okay see that so like in the Old Testament God forgave and God pardoned right because he knew that one day that David's sin was going to be dealt with at the cross right it says 26 it was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus so he knew that one day he would punish David's sin in Jesus the Messiah Christ died in David's place he was a propitiation for David's sins just like our sins we look back to Christ David looked forward to Christ and the forgiveness was his by mercy to provide for his sin that's why David was forgiven so the

Old Testament forgiveness of sin the Old Testament anticipates the sacrifice of Christ the ultimate payment for all sin so in God's mind David's sins are just are counted as Christ's sins and Christ's righteousness is counted as David's righteousness so Jesus Christ is the only way to be forgiven and restored to be reconciled and to be made right with God again so come to faith in him so if you're kind of like me on a lot of days I feel like man at some point like God's just going to have enough like he can't keep forgiving me of this right I know you can feel that way we're not preaching the truth to ourselves but in closing last thing look at Lamentations 3 real quick we'll close with this Lamentations 3 verse 19 so some of you need to come to

Christ for the first time today you need to recognize the wickedness of your sin that you can't do anything to make yourself right with God that it's him alone that you've sinned against and ask him

to save you forgive you and transform you by the blood of Jesus and others of us who have known Christ for a while like myself who continue on occasion to fall back into grievous sin like this is for us to hear verse 19 remember my afflictions and my wanderings the wormwood and the gall all the nastiness my soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me there's your sin and verse 21 but this I call to mind and therefore I have hope the steadfast love of Jehovah never ceases his mercies never come to an end they are new every morning great is your faithfulness Jehovah is my portion says my soul therefore I will hope in him Jehovah is good to those who wait for him and to the soul who seeks him let's pray together here