

Key:

Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread

Blue – Explanation/Exposition

Red – Application

Green – Illustration

Brown – Quotation

Orange – Sermon Notes

## Sinner Seeking Sacrifice

- Sometimes in life you do something that is so significant that it changes the course of your life.
  - It's a moment that separates your life into *before* and *after*.
- It's an action you take that is so significant that it acts as a milestone.
  - If you were looking at your life on a timeline, this event would cleave that line in two.
- These types of events make a clear "before" and "after" because things are never the same after they occur.
  - There is no undo button, no rewind, no going back.
    - "You can't put the genie back in the bottle"
  - I have a couple moments like that.
    - One of which was marrying my wife, Katherine.
    - April 24, 2016 is a day that separates my life into before and after.
    - My life has never been the same - in a good way.
- But not all milestones are so happy.
- Consider with me the event in Genesis 3.
  - Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, enjoying fellowship with God.
  - And in a moment of rebellion sin was ushered into this world.
    - Nothing was ever the same; a dividing line was drawn in history.
- For David, the author of tonight's Psalm, his adultery with Bathsheba is one of those moments.
  - It divided his life into before and after.
  - It brought incredible grief and pain.
  - And in the midst of this turmoil, David lets us into his mind.
    - To see his tortured, searching, prayer to God that's pouring out of him in the aftermath of sin.
    - From what he writes we're going to draw 6 things that form post-sin action plan for us.
- Let's pray tonight as we open God's word.
- \*PRAYER\*
- Okay, if you haven't already, please turn with me to Psalm 51.
- Before we get to verse 1 I want to address the superscription of this Psalm.
  - It says "To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> deClaissé-Walford, Nancy L., et al. *The Book of Psalms*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sbts-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4860097>, 478-483. : "Placing Psalm 51 in the context of Nathan's meeting with David does not limit our application of its words to that event alone. That is, Psalm 51's superscription does not anchor it to the

- Most Psalms don't have historical context like this.
  - Just like any other song - some of the words might be inspired by real events.
    - But they're generic enough that they can be enjoyed even if you don't know the context behind them.
- But that's not the case with this Psalm.
  - And honestly that made my job much easier as I was writing this sermon.
- It's also helpful to us as we read.
  - The story that the superscription is referring to is found in 2 Samuel 11 and 12.
- I encourage you to write down 2 Samuel 11 and read it later and then read Psalm 51.
- But because we don't have time to read chapter 11 together, I'm going to give you a brief overview of what happens.
  - The chapter opens with David who has remained behind while his men are out fighting a battle.
  - He's on the top of his roof looking down on Jerusalem and he sees a beautiful woman bathing.<sup>2 3</sup> This woman's name is Bathsheba and she's married to a soldier who fights in his army named Uriah.
  - David summons her to his palace, sleeps with her, and sends her back home.
  - She then lets David know that she is pregnant.
  - David fumbles around trying to cover up his adultery in a variety of ways.
  - Eventually he tells Joab, his military chief, to put Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, in a dangerous area of the battle and to draw back so he would die.
    - This is David's plan to cover his sin.
    - Kill the man whose wife you slept with so that he doesn't find out.
    - After Bathsheba mourns her husband, David summons her again and she becomes his wife.
    - The text says nothing about David ever telling her the nature of her husband's death.
      - Maybe there were whispers around the palace.
        - But we have no record of David confessing his sin to Bathsheba.
      - You see the depths to which David stooped?

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past, but instead provides a beginning point for reading the psalm, a point of reference for the faithful to reflect on their own acts of unfaithfulness to God. The timeless quality of Psalm 51 is demonstrated in its inclusion as one of the seven penitential psalms of the Lenten season, the lectionary reading for Ash Wednesday."

<sup>2</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 2 Sa 11:2. : "It is uncertain whether her intent in bathing on the roof was simply to use the air to help dry herself or whether she used the opportunity to bring herself to the attention of the king."

<sup>3</sup> James M. Freeman and Harold J. Chadwick, *Manners & Customs of the Bible* (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1998), 225. : "Some say that the bath in which Bathsheba was washing herself was probably in the courtyard of her house rather than on the roof as was customary. From the rooftop David would then be able to look down into the courtyard and see her. But then she might also have been exposed to being seen from the rooftops on any surrounding houses. So it is most likely that she was bathing on the roof of her house, and, for some reason not told to us, was not protected from being seen from the roof of the palace where David may have customarily walked in the evenings."

- Adultery, lying, murder of a loyal soldier.
- All to cover up sin.
- So David continues on like this.
  - Probably trying to put this all behind him.
- And then in chapter 12 the Lord sends a prophet named Nathan to David.
- He meets with David and begins to tell him a story.
  - The story is about a rich powerful man who steals something precious from a poor powerless man.
  - David is enraged at the action of the rich man in the story and exclaims, “

## 2 Samuel 12:5 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup>Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die,

- And then Nathan says "You are that man!"
  - And David's facade comes crashing down, his sin is exposed, and he can't undo it.
- This story should make your stomach turn.
  - Because you can kind of relate to David, right?
    - We have all had a moment after we sin where we realize that we can't undo what we've done.
    - We're filled with shame, especially if our sin is found out.
    - We want to go back but we can't.
- We'll come back to 2 Samuel a bit later, but for now let's get into Psalm 51 and see how David reacts to Nathan.
- David is writing to God about his sin, and look at how he starts.
  - Let's read verse 1

## Psalm 51:1 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

- I think it's instructive that David begins with an appeal to the character of God.
  - He's asking for mercy because he knows who God is.
    - He knows that God loves steadfastly.
    - He knows that God is abundantly merciful.
    - So he makes his request in a manner that matches God's character.
    - He's appealing to his merciful creator.
      - The God who wrote the law which he has transgressed.
  - The word transgressions isn't commonly used today.
    - If you're unfamiliar with it, it's just a synonym for sin.
      - It's an action that violates a law.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Noah Webster, Noah Webster's First Edition of An American Dictionary of the English Language. (Anaheim, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education, 2006): "The act of passing over or beyond any law or rule of moral duty; the violation of a law or known principle of rectitude; breach of command."

- In this case, David is violating God's law.
- David violated a law found in one of the oldest, most famous collection of laws.
- It's called the ten commandments.
  - If you remember, these laws were written by the finger of God.<sup>5</sup>
  - Literally.
- The seventh of those commandments was

#### Exodus 20:14 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup>“You shall not commit adultery.”<sup>6</sup>

- Very clear.
- You know there are some situations in the Christian life where we will have to rely on the Holy Spirit to direct our consciences.
  - We call the ability to follow the directing of the Holy Spirit - Christian Liberty.
- Please hear me tonight.
  - Adultery is cannot be categorized as Christian liberty.
    - There is no amount of sexual sin that can be categorized as Christian liberty.
  - And if you're married, your spouse is your only God-pleasing outlet for sexual energy.
    - Nothing else.
  - If you're not married, you have NO outlet for sexual desires or energy.
    - I think that sexual desire is part of God's design to motivate people towards marriage.
    - It's how God helps people fulfill his instruction to “Be fruitful and multiply!”
    - And it's good to channel that sexual energy to your spouse.
      - That's God glorifying!
  - But unfortunately, like many of us, David chose not to submit his desires to God.
    - He chose not to obey God's design for marriage and sexuality.
- And so he finds himself here, asking God to blot out his sin.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Exodus 31:18

<sup>6</sup> A misprinting of the Bible contains a command to commit adultery. David cannot use this as an excuse as it was printed in 1631:

<https://collections.museumofthebible.org/artifacts/6196-the-wicked-bible?theme=collections-highlights>

<sup>7</sup> Wilson, Gerald H.. *Psalms Volume 1*, HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2002. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sbts-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5397652>, 804-817. :

“Along with the three verbs for cleansing, the psalmist uses three nouns for sin:

“transgressions” (peša’ ), “iniquity” (‘awon), and “sin” (ḥaṭṭa’ t).<sup>8</sup> Rather than focus on specific types of sin, the use of all three terms seems intended to be comprehensive, so that the psalmist's confession is far-reaching and complete. This interpretation is confirmed in verse 3, where he admits his sin by referring only to the first and last categories previously mentioned (peša’ and ḥaṭṭa’ t), indicating the whole constellation of sin is intended, not just these two categories.”

- He's pleading here in verse 2<sup>8</sup>

Psalm 51:2 (ESV)

<sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

- And that plea appeals to who he knows God to be.
- He's Clinging to God's Character
- You can write that down as our first point.
- **In the aftermath of sin, Cling to God's Character**
  - You can trust him to forgive you.
- 1 John 1:9 gives us this promise about God.

1 John 1:9 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- And yet so often after we fail, we don't reach out to him.
- I think a lot of us operate with this unspoken belief that there needs to be a waiting period after sin before forgiveness is sought.
- And if you are not repentant immediately after your sin, you should wait.
- But have you ever sinned, felt repentant, and still held back from approaching the throne of grace.
  - I think a lot of us do this.
  - We wrongly let shame keep us from approaching God.
- That's a tactic of the enemy - to accuse and shame us in the hope that we would shrink back from God.
- David is providing a helpful example for us of someone repentantly running to God, looking for that forgiveness.<sup>9</sup>
- You can tell he's repentant because he doesn't justify his sin.
- Look at verse 3

Psalm 51:3 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

- He says "I know my transgressions."
- He knew even in the midst of his sin that he was doing something wrong.
- He wouldn't be trying to cover it up if he had nothing to hide.

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<sup>8</sup> deClaissse-Walford, Nancy L., *Psalms*, 478-483. : "While each word has a basic root meaning — pāša' means "go against, to rebel," 'āwâ means "bend, twist," and ḥāṭā' means "miss a mark or goal," attempting to define each as a particular kind of action or attitude is not productive. Psalm 51 opens, then, with a piling up of pleas for cleansing and of words describing the past action of the psalmist."

<sup>9</sup> C. H. Spurgeon and David Otis Fuller, *Psalms*, 1st Kregel Publications ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1976), 238. : "It is not the punishment he cries out against, but the sin."

- And remember when Nathan came with his hypothetical story?
  - And David shouted “that man deserves to die!”
- Up until that point David was doing his best to ignore his sin.
  - He’s trying to let the past stay in the past and move on.
- I can identify with David a little bit here.
  - I have this ability(Katherine may call it a defect) to cease being aware of problems around the house.
  - One time a towel hook came off the wall in our bathroom.
    - I used that bathroom every single day and after just a couple of days, I became blind to it.
    - My broken towel hook was ever before me.
  - But rather than fixing it, I started hanging the towel on the screw that was still in the wall.
- We can all be like that with our sin.
- Sins that are ever before us.<sup>10</sup>
  - We have a choice in how we’re going to deal with those.
    - We’ll either become blind and calloused to our sin. Maybe even beginning to make accommodations for it or excusing it.
    - Or we will repent and pursue holiness with God’s help.
  - But before we can do that we need to see our sin for what it is.
- That’s our second point tonight.
- **In the aftermath of sin, see your sin.**
  - If you refuse to see your sin, you will fail to receive forgiveness.
    - If you sugarcoat your sin, you will always struggle to repent.
  - Put another way

Matthew 9:12 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup>But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

- Realize that God knows the intentions of your heart.
  - He already knows how bad your sin is.
  - You have nothing to gain by now misrepresenting your sin to him.<sup>11</sup>
- So confess your sins fully to him, he is willing and able to forgive and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.
- Looking at verse 4 we see another strange thing.
  - Let’s just look at the first part.

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<sup>10</sup> Spurgeon and Fuller, *Psalms*, 238. : “To an awakened conscience, pain on account of sin is not transient and occasional, but intense and permanent, and this is no sign of divine wrath but rather as sure preface of abounding favor.”

<sup>11</sup> Spurgeon and Fuller, *Psalms*, 238. : “A sin of infirmity may admit apology; A sin of ignorance may find out excuse; But a sin of defiance can find no defense.”

Psalm 51:4 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup>Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

- This seems flat out wrong.
  - You may have been wondering as we've been reading why David is asking God for forgiveness and not Bathsheba or Uriah.
  - He doesn't even mention them in this Psalm.
  - David has sinned against *at least* two people in this whole ordeal.
    - Bathsheba and her husband Uriah.
- But here he is saying that his sin was committed only against the Lord.
  - This is a bit tricky.
  - I think in part this is poetic language.
- But there's also an important principle here.
  - All sin is an affront to God.<sup>12</sup>
    - Even when sinning against someone who hates God.
  - Who's law did David break in committing adultery?
    - It was God's law.
  - Who's law did David break in committing murder?
    - It was God's law.
- Whose image were Bathsheba and Uriah made in?
  - God.
- Who were they made to bring glory to through their existence?
  - God.
- So every sin that David committed is related to God.
  - Since God makes the rules, every violation of those rules is a violation of God.
- Is it also true that David hurt Bathsheba and Uriah?
  - Yes, completely.
  - Should David have sought to confess and beg for forgiveness from the humans that he wronged?
    - Of course. And we should too.
  - But of all the people who David sinned against. Who matters the most?
    - This question is uncomfortable because it seems to suggest that Bathsheba and Uriah don't really matter.
    - That's not true. The sins committed against them were egregious.
  - But this question is helpful in that it might expose a lack of understanding of the God we serve and the seriousness of our sin against him.
  - One scholar put it this way:

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<sup>12</sup> deClaisse-Walford, Nancy L., *Psalms*, 478-483. : "In other places in the Old Testament, sins against human beings are considered to be sins against God. In Gen. 39:9, Joseph says to Potiphar's wife when she attempts to get him to lie with her: "He (Potiphar) is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How could I do this great evil (rā'â), and sin (from the root ḥāṭā') against God?" When Nathan confronts David with his sin in 2 Samuel 12, David replies in v. 13, "I have sinned (ḥāṭā') against the LORD."

- “Sin can be against oneself (1 Cor. 6:18) and against one’s neighbour; but the flouting of God is always the length and breadth of it,”<sup>13</sup>
  - We should be infinitely more horrified of David’s sin against God than against the actual people that he sinned against.<sup>14</sup>
    - Because God is infinitely more holy.
  - And because God is infinitely holy, and he made the rules, he is the judge of those who break the rules.
- David says as much in verse 4.
  - Let’s read the whole thing now.

#### Psalm 51:4 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup>Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

- Again we find some tricky language here.
  - The “so that” in this verse shouldn’t be interpreted as a cause/effect relationship.
    - It’s not as if David has sinned for the purpose of making God justified in his words.
  - David here is describing God’s authority to judge as the one who is primarily offended by sin.
- Let me paraphrase it this way.
  - Because God is the one I’ve sinned against, God is the one who judges me.
    - And he has perfect visibility into your sin.
    - It would be like if you hit a judge’s car and they got out with their gown and their gavel and pronounced a conviction on the spot.
      - God is both the offended party and the one who gets to decide what should be done about the offense.
- And now we reach a shift in the Psalm.
  - David says something about himself.
    - And really he says something about all of us.
  - Let’s read verse 5

#### Psalm 51:5 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup>Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

- This description is in stark contrast to what David said about God earlier.
  - While God is merciful, steadfast in love, blameless, and justified in all he does.
  - David is brought forth in sin.

<sup>13</sup> Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 208.

<sup>14</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger, vol. 1, *Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 508. : “David does not deny in 51:4 (MT 51:6) that he sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, or anyone else harmed by what he did. He does, however, confess his sin as a personal affront to Yahweh.”



- At the moment of conception....he was sinful.
  - Don't take this to mean that David was the product of an adulterous relationship.
  - That would be going beyond scripture.
- This is about our sin nature.
- David is saying that before he was conscious he was sinful.<sup>15</sup>
  - And the same is true of all of us.
    - This doesn't take away from the fact that we are all beautifully formed in our mother's womb.
    - It doesn't change the fact that we are all made in God's image.
    - It doesn't lessen our value.
    - But we all need to realize that from the moment of conception our hearts are predisposed against God.
  - Paul talks about this in Ephesians 2.
- He says in Ephesians 2:3 that we are

### Ephesians 2:3 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup>among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

- We all bear this rebellious nature.
  - And because of that we deserve God's wrath.
- This innate sinfulness is a theological concept called Total Depravity or pervasive depravity.
  - It is simply the truth that we are completely polluted by sin.
- We have an inability to please God without him.
- This is also an important aspect of dealing with sin.
  - Realizing that you have a spiritual inability.
  - Paul says in a different letter he wrote that:

### Romans 8:8 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup>Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

- If you think that your "holiness" is your own doing, you'll fall into the trap of trying to use the flesh to fight your flesh.
  - You'll think something like "I'll make sure I do better next time."
  - It's like trying to clean mud off your car with a clump of dirt.
- **Admit your inability.**
  - Go ahead and write that down as our third point tonight.
- **In the aftermath of sin, admit your inability.**
- David talks about how God overcomes our inability in verse 6.

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<sup>15</sup> Derek Kidner, *Psalms*, 208. : "This crime, David now sees, was no freak event: it was in character; an extreme expression of the warped creature he had always been, and of the faulty stock he sprang from."

- Look at verse 6.

Psalm 51:6 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup>Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

- Who is putting the truth in our inward beings which God delights in?
  - God is the one doing that!
- Who is the one teaching us wisdom in our hearts?
  - God!
- God is the source of all that is good and pleasing within us.
  - We would do well to ask him to continue to teach us.<sup>16</sup>
    - As we continue to learn how to submit ourselves to God we are made to look more like Christ.<sup>17</sup>
  - And David in verses 7–11 is asking for God’s help in that process.
  - Let’s read that chunk together.

Psalm 51:7–11 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup>Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

<sup>8</sup>Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

<sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

- David is gutted by his sin.
- In these verses he’s reaching for metaphors to express the turmoil inside.
  - First he says “purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean”
    - Hyssop is a plant that had a quality that made it useful almost as a paintbrush.
    - The first time hyssop is mentioned in the Bible is in Exodus 12.
      - The Israelites were instructed to dip hyssop in the blood of a sacrificial lamb and paint the blood on their doorposts.

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<sup>16</sup> Wilson, Gerald H.. *Psalms Volume 1*, HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2002. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sbts-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5397652>, 804-817. : “In his expressions of self-awareness, the psalmist exhibits the kind of transparency God desires: He wants “truth [’emet] in the inner parts.” The word ’emet emphasizes reliability and trustworthiness over absolute accuracy. God is seeking a person whose external profession is consistent with the inner reality of his or her being that is often kept hidden away”

<sup>17</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger, vol. 1, *Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 509. : “If God’s standard cannot be changed, the man who would enjoy God’s holiness must be.”

- This was a sign given to them by God that would allow them to escape his wrath.
- The text in Exodus, and here in Psalm 51 is just screaming a foreshadow of Christ.
- It's Christ's blood that covers our sin.
  - But David hasn't had that revealed to him.
  - So what does he do?
    - He looks back and sees the blood being applied with hyssop as a means by which to escape wrath.
    - That's why he's talking about it here.
  - He's tormented with shame over his adultery, and he reaches back to Exodus towards God's provision of grace for his people.
  - David is groaning for a sacrificial lamb.
    - He's a sinner seeking a sacrifice.
      - But without knowing it, he's actually a sinner seeking a savior.
      - He's asking God for saving, and that joy in his life would return.
    - He feels the ache of God's discipline in the depths of his being.
      - All the way to his bones, he feels broken.
      - Have you ever felt that way after sin?
      - You feel sick. To your core?
      - That's what David is communicating
      - He's pleading for restoration.
- And then he asks God to hide his face from him.
  - This verse reminded me of a time when I was looking around the house for my daughter.
  - Who I think was less than 2 at the time.
  - If you're a parent you know that when the kids are quiet, it's time to panic because they're certainly doing something they shouldn't be.
  - I finally open a door to the laundry room and there she is on the floor with a big bag of candy.
  - And knowing that she's doing something she's not supposed to, she holds up her hand to my face and says "don't see me!"
  - Even in a child there's a desire to be hidden when doing something wrong.
- David wants his sin to disappear.
  - He wants God to blot it out.
- And then He asks God to create a new, clean heart in him.
  - It's as if he knows that his heart can't be fixed, He just needs a brand new clean heart.
  - He's pleading with God for this.
  - He's **crying out for cleansing.**
- That's our fourth point.
- **In the aftermath of sin, cry out for cleansing.**

- We can't stop at number three in admitting our inability.
  - Because we need God to do a work in us.
    - We need him to lift us out of our filth.
- It's interesting to note that in verse 10, that word *create* is the same as the one from Genesis 1.
  - When God is creating from nothing.
  - And God alone is the subject of that verb in the Old Testament.<sup>18</sup>
    - God is the only one who creates like this.
  - It's a small detail, but it points to the fact that God is the one who creates clean hearts.
    - Not us.
    - No one else can create a clean heart.
- We need clean hearts.
  - So what do we do?
    - We turn to God.
    - We ask for him to work in us.
  - We ask for him to give us a heart that wants what God wants.
  - We ask for him to give us a spirit that holds fast in the face of temptation.
- The NASB translates verse ten as saying "renew a steadfast spirit within me".
  - A believer needs to be steadfast in the face of temptation.
    - Have you ever seen a top that you spin?
      - It starts out strong and almost looks stationary because it's rotation is so stable.
      - But then it starts running out of momentum.
        - And what happens?
          - It gets wobbly.
            - And eventually it falls and stops spinning.
        - That's how David is feeling after his sin.
        - David is asking for a steadfast, stable spirit.
  - And then we come to a slightly puzzling verse.
    - Verse 11 reads

Psalm 51:11 (ESV)

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

- If you've been listening to Pastor Tony preach through the book of Acts, you'll remember that the Holy Spirit was given to believers on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2.
- We might assume that the Holy Spirit was a New Testament thing.

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<sup>18</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., Psalms, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger, vol. 1, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 509. : "The term for create (בָּרָא) is the term from Gen 1, the verb of which Yahweh alone is the subject in the Old Testament."

- But here we see David writing about having the Holy Spirit.
- That's a bit puzzling right?
  - Seems like a bit of a contradiction.
- Well it's actually not and I'll show you why.
  - Write down this reference or turn with me to 1 Samuel 16:13.

#### 1 Samuel 16:13 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup>Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

- So David did have the Holy Spirit!
  - It certainly didn't manifest itself in the same way as in Acts, but David has the Spirit of the Lord.
- And in the aftermath of sin he's begging that this Spirit wouldn't leave him.
  - David feels far from God.
    - Maybe that feeling of distance is what's causing him to wonder if the Spirit is leaving him.
  - Feeling the disparity between the Spirit's desires, and what he has just done.
    - Wondering - is the Spirit gone from me?
      - Has God left me?
        - Am I alone?<sup>19</sup>
  - Later in Israel's history, God will depart from them due to unrepentant sin.
    - If you're interested in reading that account, look at Ezekiel chapter 10.
- But that's not where David is at.
  - He's repentant.
  - You can tell by what he says next.
    - Let's keep reading.

#### Psalms 51:12–15 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

<sup>13</sup>Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

<sup>14</sup>Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

- Listen to the desire there.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Derek Kidner, *Psalms*, 210. : "This verse is not concerned with the bare doctrine of perseverance but with the practice of it, as was Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:27, and our Lord in John 15:6."

<sup>20</sup> Derek Kidner, *Psalms*, 210. : "The word suggests the enthusiast and volunteer, with his eager and generous outlook."

- “Restore to me the joy of your salvation”<sup>21</sup>
- “Deliver me”
- “Open my lips so I can sing!”
- Those are the words of a repentant man.
  - He wants to be close to God again.
  - And he wants God to be close to him again!
    - In verse 12 he’s asking that the Lord would willingly uphold him.
    - He’s not interested in God begrudgingly sustaining him because of a promise made in the past.
  - David is looking for close fellowship with God.
    - He wants to be restored to his God.
      - David is asking God to be near to him again.
      - He’s after reconciliation.
    - A testimony of reconciliation has such power.
  - That’s what the gospel is!
    - The gospel, the good news, is that God gave of himself in order to satisfy the demands of his righteous rule.
  - What an act of love.
    - That is what saves sinners.
- David says here in verse 13 that this story of redemption is what causes sinners to return to God.
- They return in response to the gospel.
  - There’s several applications here.
    - Firstly - the gospel is for sinners.
      - We all fit into that category.
        - All of us need a savior.
    - Second - if you are a believer, your salvation should drive you to share the ways of God with the world.
      - Look at verse 13 again.
        - David longs to teach transgressors the ways of God.
          - He wants to share the good news of God’s mercy!<sup>22</sup>
        - He’s not teaching transgressors because that’s his spiritual gift.
        - Or because he’s a vocational evangelist.
        - He’s not teaching in order to retain his favor with God.
      - Why is he teaching them?
    - Let’s read verses 12 and 13 again to find out.

Psalm 51:12–13 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the JOY of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

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<sup>21</sup> Spurgeon and Fuller, *Psalms*, 241. : “This joy comes not first, but follows pardon and purity: in such order it is safe, in any other it is vain presumption or idiotic delirium.”

<sup>22</sup> Spurgeon and Fuller, *Psalms*, 241. : “Reclaimed poachers make the best gamekeepers.”

<sup>13</sup>THEN I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

- Do you see that?
- David is teaching out of the overflow of joy that comes from his salvation.<sup>23</sup>
  - He's proclaiming the things of God as God himself is willingly upholding him.
- The miracle of forgiveness is unfathomable.
  - If you were to sit down and write out every sin you've ever committed, would take years and thousands of pounds of paper and ink.
  - But the moment that you trusted that Christ took the wrath for all those sins, your sins disappear.
    - It's no wonder people sometimes call the gospel scandalous.
    - It feels unjust.
    - But it's not! God pays the penalty and extends mercy to you.
  - This exchange should cause joy to leap out of you.
  - Let that joy express itself in evangelism!
- I could go on for awhile here but I have one more point of application that I want to hit.
- David has hope for a continued God-pleasing life.
  - There is life after sin.
  - When you fail, you've blown it again.
    - There is life after sin.
  - If you are *in Christ*, you need to know that you're forgiven.
    - There is no condemnation for you.
    - When God looks at you, he sees Christ.
    - You're forgiven.
    - Keep pressing on towards holiness.
- This truth that works both ways.
  - Our culture has this tendency to write people off after a failure.
    - People call it "cancel culture"
      - This impulse to immediately mock, ostracize, and belittle those who have failed.
      - It feels like justice when a bad guy gets cancelled.
    - Is that right?
    - What if God participated in cancel culture?
    - What if after the first sin, condemnation fell like a guillotine and you received what you deserved?
      - After all we are the "bad guys" in God's story.
  - Fortunately for all of us, God doesn't cancel people.

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<sup>23</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, 510. : "Psalm 51 is a realization of David's purpose. This text has taught countless transgressors God's ways, leading untold numbers of souls back to the Lord."

- He is longsuffering.
- He is gracious.
- He is kind.
  - While God could have pivoted from David, he instead used David and Bathsheba to establish a lineage that would eventually bring forth Jesus Christ.
- So when someone's sin is exposed, what should our response should be?
  - When someone's affair becomes known do we cheer as their life gets dashed upon the rocks?
  - Or do our hearts break at the destruction that sin is bringing upon those families?
  - When theft or abuse or any other scandal breaks, do we scream for retribution?
    - Or do we say to ourselves *there but for the grace of God go I* ?
  - We would do well to remember that we are hopelessly sinful, and the only thing that saves us is God's mercy.
  - We cannot forget what we've been saved from.
- David has not forgotten.
  - In fact - he's naming his sin out loud.
  - Look at verses 14–15.

Psalm 51:14–15 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup>Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

- He doesn't beat around the bush or use some vague euphemism.
  - He says "God I killed a man! Please deliver me from my guilt!"
  - And honestly, what else makes sense when you're confessing to God?
  - The great English preacher **Charles Spurgeon** said this in talking about this verse:
- "Honest penitents do not fetch a compass and confess their sins in an elegant periphrasis, but they come to the point, call a spade a spade, and make a clean breast of it all. What other course is rational in dealing with the Omniscient?"<sup>24</sup>
  - God knows what David did, and nothing less than a full confession makes sense.
    - And after he has excavated the depths of sin, he anticipates that feeling of relief.
- He knows that there is no more fitting reaction to salvation than praise.
  - David is really clear on his sin and he understands what he deserves.
  - And when he is met with forgiveness rather than punishment he can't help but have praise bubble up out of him.
- When that forgiveness comes - it's like the breaking of dam.
  - God's forgiveness opens his lips and floods of exaltation escape.

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<sup>24</sup> Spurgeon and Fuller, *Psalms*, 241.



- If you trust in Christ's death to cover your sin - you can have this joy.
  - When you fail - approach the throne of grace and ask for forgiveness, talk to the people that hold you accountable, and then resume righteousness.
- That's our Fifth point tonight.
  - **In the aftermath of sin resume righteousness.**
- There is life after sin - get back on the horse.
  - Trust in Christ's death to atone for your sin and get back to the Christian life.
- Now we have a bit of a problem with our text.
- If you're familiar with the arc of redemptive history, you know that when David is writing this Psalm, Jesus hasn't died yet.
  - In fact, the incarnation hasn't occurred!
    - Prior to Christ, God gave Israel the sacrificial system.
  - When someone sinned they could make a sacrifice for that sin to pay for it.
  - There were all kinds of sacrifices for all kinds of sins.
  - But if you've read through the Pentateuch, you know that there is no sacrifice for adultery and murder.
    - This gives some color to David's distress, doesn't it?
  - David knows that he deserves death.
    - He's crying out for a sacrifice that doesn't exist.
      - He's weeping over the sin that can't be covered by the blood of an animal.
      - In the law there was no reconciliation for the one who has done these things.
        - If you did these things, you were put to death.
      - That is the only outcome.
- He writes in verse 16

Psalm 51:16 (ESV)

<sup>16</sup>For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

- He's saying, "Lord if there was something I could do, I would do it!"<sup>25</sup>
- So how is he forgiven?
  - God forgives David in anticipation of Christ's atoning death.
    - Paul says in Romans 3 that God had passed over former sins.
- David, somehow understands this about God.
  - He says in verse 17

Psalm 51:17 (ESV)

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<sup>25</sup> deClaissé-Walford, Nancy L., *Psalms*, 478-483. : "Verses 16-17 of Psalm 51 are not a polemic against the sacrificial system. They are a polemic against sacrifice of material goods without sacrifice of spirit and heart. In the same way that sin cannot be forgiven without a broken spirit and heart, so proper sacrifice cannot be offered without a proper attitude."

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

- He's trusting that God would recognize his brokenness.
  - That the genuine repentance of David's heart would not be despised by God.
  - That he would show mercy.
- And what's crazy to me is that even though David lived sinned and died before the gospel occurred in history, he knew his God.
  - He knew that God is steadfast in love and abundant in mercy.
  - He said "a broken and contrite heart you will not despise"
    - I want to be more like David.
    - I tend to look at myself after I sin.
      - I think "my sin is so great - how could God forgive me?"
    - But David, in fear and trembling, not knowing the gospel, knew the God that he served to be one that was good and kind.
    - Instead of looking at himself David kept his eyes on God.
  - And God puts away David's sin.
- But that doesn't mean there were no consequences for David's sin.
  - Sin always has consequences.
  - If you know this story - you know that the son which Bathsheba had as a result of adultery died.
    - Back in 2 Samuel 12 verse 13 Nathan tells David,

## 2 Samuel 12:13-14 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup>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.

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

- Last year someone asked me, why did the child die?
  - It doesn't seem right. He did nothing wrong.
    - It's a really good question.
  - Scripture says that God won't hold us accountable for sin that's not ours.
  - But that doesn't mean that we're not affected by sin that is not our own.
  - This little baby, who died shortly after being born, was affected by the sin of his father.
  - Just like we are affected by the sin of our parents.
    - It fit into God's plan for the child to die. It's tragic, but we'll see soon that David doesn't lose hope.
- We might view this as placing the punishment that David deserved on his son.
  - We might read this story as someone taking the punishment for sin they didn't commit.

- But that's not what's happening here.
- In fact, that has only happened one time.
  - Jesus Christ was born into this world, lived a sinless life as a man, and then died on the cross to bear the punishment for our sin.
- As we consider events that separate history into *before* and *after*, let's not forget the most important one.
- While David's sin with Bathsheba certainly divided his life into before and after, the incarnation and atoning death of Christ is a far more powerful moment.
  - In fact it's so significant that our calendar is literally divided into the time before, B.C. and the time after, A.D.
- And it was *his* death that resulted in David's forgiveness. God, in anticipation of Christ's death, forgave David.
- It's Jesus's death that makes a way for David, for you, for me, for all of us to live in eternity with God.
- Somehow David understands this because later in 2 Samuel 12 he confidently says that he will see his son again implying that he'll see him in heaven.
- After such an egregious sin, and seeing that sin affect people he loves, David is looking forward to a day when he's freed from sin.
  - David is anticipating eternity.
- That's our last point.
- **In the aftermath of sin, anticipate eternity.**
  - We'll be free from sin some day.
    - We'll be glorified some day.
    - We'll live and act in ways that are always pleasing to God.
- David writes about that in verses 18–19.

Psalm 51:18–19 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup>Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem;

<sup>19</sup>then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

- Again - David doesn't have the book of Revelation, or Daniel, or Ezekiel, or Isaiah.
  - He doesn't have as developed of a concept of the eternal kingdom.
- So in these verses he's writing about the platonic ideal of the kingdom that he knows.
- He's asking for favor and security for Jerusalem.
- He envisions his kingdom being fully pleasing to God.
  - Based on the scriptures we that have about God's eternal kingdom David's words barely hint at the beauty and glory of what God has in store.
  - These verse are like a shadow of that time to come.
- And in that day we will no longer struggle with sin.
  - It's good to anticipate eternity.
  - It's good to live with eyes for eternity.

- And while we're doing that we know that we'll struggle with sin.
- In the midst of that struggle, cling to God's character.
  - He is abundantly merciful.
- Don't sugarcoat your sin either. You need to see your sin for what it is.
- And with humility admit your inability to live righteously.
- Cry out to God for help. Ask for him to cleanse you and then get back to work.
- Resume righteous living all the while you anticipate eternity.
- Long for that day in which we will sin no more.
- Please pray with me.