

David's Prayer Of Repentance

March 20, 2011

PSL: Prayer As A Second Language- Part 2

Introduction:

What we're going to talk about today would make a great script for a Rated-R movie. There is sex. There is adultery. There is lying. There is power used for selfish gain. There is murder. There is pain.

But there are also some things not seen in most movies. There is guilt. There is grief over guilt. There is repentance. There is crying out to God for mercy. There is renewal. And, in the end... there is true joy is restored.

Today we're going to study Psalm 51. My Bible reading plan has had me in the Psalms so far in 2011. I was telling someone this week—applying our ClearView Challenge from last week—that the Psalms have been like a free counselor for me, as I've struggled with some things in life... I've recommended simply reading the Psalms and contemplating what God says in them countless time in the last month or so. And, what I love about the Psalm we're going to look at today is that it is one of the few Psalms that we know the exact historical context it comes out of.

I want to first look at the story Psalm 51 grew out of. Then, we'll read it together. *And, finally, today we're going to learn how to pray in a way that will lead to repentance and renewal.* **Why is this so important? Because all of us fall short of God's glory every day. Each day we do things or say things or think things that don't stack up against God's righteousness. And, when that happens—we have a sin problem. We have a blockage in our relationship with God that needs to be opened up. And...when we're disconnected from God, we're disconnected from our only true source of joy. We have a relationship with God that needs restored. Here's how to do that. We're going to learn tools to renew closeness with Jesus and live in the joy of being intimately connected with God.**

The Context (What Happened?):

Intro to Psalm 51: *A psalm of David, regarding the time Nathan the prophet came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.*

2 Samuel 11:2-5 (New Living Translation)

² Late one afternoon, after his midday rest, David got out of bed and was walking on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath. ³ He sent someone to find out who she was, and he was told, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her; and when she came to the palace, he slept with her. She had just completed the purification rites after having her menstrual period. Then she returned home. ⁵ Later, when Bathsheba discovered that she was pregnant, she sent David a message, saying, "I'm pregnant."

The following section of 2 Samuel 11 finds David summoning Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, home from battle. David basically gives him time off, with the hope that he will go home and sleep with his wife. David's hope is that if his plan happens soon enough, his adultery and subsequent child will be covered up and appear as if it is Uriah's.

Uriah, a noble, faithful soldier messes up David's plan. He won't go and enjoy his wife when his compatriots are risking their lives at war- for the King! So...David counters by sending Uriah back and orders the commanders to place him at the front of the line. He actually ordered that Uriah be placed where the fighting is worse and then have the rest of the army back away from him, leaving him exposed. Uriah was killed in action.

David then moved to quickly marry Bathsheba, again with the motivation of covering up his sin.

2 Samuel 11 ends with these words (vs.27): *27 When the period of mourning was over, David sent for her and brought her to the palace, and she became one of his wives. Then she gave birth to a son. But the LORD was displeased with what David had done.*

2 Samuel 12 is about how God dealt with David. He sent the prophet Nathan to confront David. Nathan told David a story about a rich man that took advantage of a poor man. David became angry after hearing this story and then condemned the rich man.

2 Samuel 12:7-14

7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are that man! The LORD, the God of Israel, says...⁹ Why, then, have you despised the word of the LORD and done this horrible deed?"

David Confesses His Guilt

13 Then David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Nathan replied, "Yes, but the LORD has forgiven you, and you won't die for this sin. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, because you have shown utter contempt for the LORD^[a] by doing this, your child will die."

Psalm 51 gives us a backstage look at what was happening in David's heart during this time. 2 Samuel 12 describes David worshipping God. Perhaps this is what he said. This Psalm comes as a reflection on his sin, from David's soul. This is how he felt. In vivid terms, he describes how he felt about his sin. He took three steps towards renewal.

READ Psalm 51

In the context of deep emotion over his sin, David took three steps towards renewal.

1. David Owned The Depth And Source Of His Sin

When David sinned there were numerous ways he could have responded. Just like you and me... he could have:

- Denied it.
- Covered it up.
- Ignored it.
- Blamed someone else for it.
- Minimized it.

David did none of these when confronted by Nathan and convicted by God. He owned his sin. Look at the numerous ways he expressed this:

- *1...blot out the stain of **my** sins.*
- *2 Wash me clean from **my** guilt. Purify me from **my** sin.*
- **3 For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me** day and night.
- **4 Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done** what is evil in your sight.
- **7 Purify me from my sins**, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

David took responsibility for his actions. He saw his sin as a stain. It brought guilt. He knew he needed to be purified. He saw sin as rebellion against God. **It haunted him.**

- *When was the last time you categorized your sin as rebellion?*
- *When was the last time your sin "haunted" you?*
- *When was the last time you felt the depth of the stain and guilt of our sin?*

I think—for most of us—we pass right over sin in our lives. Oh, there might be a passing recognition of messing up...and we might even throw up a quick, "Lord, forgive me..." but *do we really own our sin? Do we really feel the guilt and the grief of rebelling against God?*

Illustration: Tressel

David felt the depth of his sin. But, he also recognized the source of his sin. Notice something interesting about this Psalm. Do you see "sex" mentioned anywhere here? Most of us reading this passage would blame this sin on sexual temptation, right? I mean, this all started with David seeing a beautiful woman and then taking advantage of her. Which led to adultery, rape, and murder. It's all about sex, right? Sigmund Freud might think all of our hang-ups start with sex...Or, if not sex, then it's all about power... That's what we usually think—but this passage mentions neither. David (speaking for God) shows us where sin always comes from.

What did David see as the source of his sin? He saw:

1. **Rebellion against God** (verse 3: *I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. 4 Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight.*).
 - a. Sin is always first and foremost against God. *When we sin, we hurt the people around us...but we don't sin against people. We hurt people. We sin against God.* God is the one Who sets the standards of right and wrong. God is the example of holiness we are to exemplify. When Nathan confronted David in 2 Samuel 12:9, he said: .⁹ **Why, then, have you despised the word of the LORD and done this horrible deed?**
 - b. David understood all of this and it led to an overwhelming source of grief for him that he had violated God. *Here is where being in the Psalms (or reading the Bible in general) starts to change you. Here is where you bump into something and you stay there and you meditate on what sin is and how it messes up my relationship with God...I feel it...and I want to change.*
2. **A flawed source of joy.** Notice verse 12. What does David ask for?
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you. David recognized that sin starts when we look for joy in any other place than our relationship with God. When I give into the lie that sex is going to satisfy more than Jesus...then I go and search out joy from some other source. And, that always leads to sin. David wanted his relationship with God restored...so that **there he would find joy**...which satisfies the soul. And, when your soul is satisfied...you are strongest against temptation.

What does this mean in real life? *It means that all sin are a symptom of a deeper problem. The sin is a symptom...not the disease.* Never treat pornography or gossip or misplaced priorities or whatever...never treat them as the problem. The problem is deeper than that. David prayed, "restore to me the joy of your salvation" ...

- See...without joy, you're going to click on porno.
- Without joy, you're going to view your finances as your own and not as God's.
- Without joy, anger will control you.
- Without joy, you fall into the world's priorities. How you look is more important than the state of your heart. Today matters more than eternity.
- *Any sin can be traced back to failing to love and be loved by Jesus.* David prayed his way out of that. **It is almost like, to David, that worship was the solution to temptation (keep him from sin) AND the solution to sin. Worship kept him from sin and worship would help him recover when he forgot that. Apply our message from last week and you'll beat temptation in your life!**

- ⁸ *Oh, give me back my joy again;
you have broken me—
now let me rejoice.*
- ¹² *Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.*
¹⁴ *Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves;
then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness.*
¹⁵ *Unseal my lips, O Lord,
that my mouth may praise you.*

Application:

Now, I want to make an observation. You'll have to give me some freedom here. Please know that I love you and want the best for you and ClearView. I have your best interest at heart. I want to make a statement...please just think about it. I'm not trying to offend you...

I don't think many of us are very serious about sin. I think that mostly because I see that in my own life. I'm too busy to really look deep within my heart and see what's lurking there. Sometimes I'm afraid to face things I know I need to work on. I'd rather cover stuff up. I'd rather try and give people the impression everything is fine. If you don't believe me... think about this:

- *When was the last time you heard someone confess a sin to you or someone else? **James 5:16.** ¹⁶ Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.*
- *When was the last time someone came to you and said, I'm really struggling with this sin...would you pray for me and keep me accountable?*
- *How many people do you know that have real safe-guards built into their life? They have people that know them deeply and check up with them regularly to ask tough questions about righteousness. They allow their friends to ask them hard questions without getting defensive.*
- *Have you or have you ever heard anyone praying a prayer like Psalm 51?*

I just think (even as I look at my own life)... we don't deal with sin like David did. Maybe it's because we're not murderers. Maybe we've never raped anyone or committed the physical act of adultery. But, I sin. You sin... everyday. *Do we understand the depth of our sin? Do we feel it? Do we understand the source of our sin?*

Psalm 139:23 can help us get real with God. **Would you pray this this week?**

²³ *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

Psalm 19 can help us get real with God. **Would you pray this this week?**

¹² *How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart?*

Cleanse me from these hidden faults.

13 Keep your servant from deliberate sins!

Don't let them control me.

Then I will be free of guilt

and innocent of great sin.

14 May the words of my mouth

and the meditation of my heart

be pleasing to you,

O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

2. David Asked God For Mercy

David knew where to go with his sin. He knew the source of cleansing...of restoration. He felt the guilt of his sin...but he didn't stay there. He knew the depth of it...he knew the source of it...but he also knew the solution for sin.

I'm challenging you to consider the seriousness of sin...to search it out...feel the weight of it...realize the source of it...**but God doesn't call us to stay there.** There is a solution for sin. There is a step you can take to put it behind you.

Feeling appropriate guilt and grief over our sin is different than allowing past sins to haunt us for years and years. Any of you have a tape playing in your head over and over again... *Well, God can't ever use you because you did that... You really messed up here...so you stink. You're no good...You didn't live up... **That's a message from the evil one!** We are to feel the burden of sin...to own it...but God doesn't want us to stay there! The natural consequences of sin may linger in life...and God will discipline us (as a loving Father)...but our relationship with God can be restored. Our joy can be recovered.*

Look at what David says:

- David cries out for mercy. *1 Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love.* David called on God's love. His unfathomably deep, wide, long, high passion for you, His child. David knew that God loved him so much that God longed to restore him. Out of God's love comes mercy—God is willing to withhold what we deserve because He loves us so much.
- Vs. 1b: *Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins.* By love, God blots out...covers over our sins. Through His passion for His children, he picks us up...washes us off...and restores us to like-new condition. *2 Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. 7 Purify me from my sins,^[c] and I will be clean...wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

Like David, God instructs us to ask God for mercy and forgiveness. It is true that the Christ-follower has been forgiven from all sin because of the power of Jesus' death on the cross. But, as we see sin and uncleanness in our life on a daily basis...the Bible teaches us to deal with it and seek forgiveness and restoration. This is a daily discipline!

Remember the Lord's prayer? **Matthew 6:11-12**

¹¹ Give us *today* the food we need,

¹² **and forgive us our sins,
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.**

We must learn to do this daily. Jesus has purchased our freedom...*He has purchased our forgiveness for us...but this does not replace our need to ask for it!* And, the beautiful promise we seek to employ is this:

1 John 1:9 (New Living Translation)

⁹ *But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*

Application:

Communion- 4/15!

3. David Asked God For Renewal

When I read Psalm 51 I am struck by something I don't see as a discipline in my own life. It is something I need to learn. Something, a discipline, that is important and a blessing.

When David sinned...he was confronted...and as he responded to God... **he was after way more than forgiveness. He was after renewal. He was after transformation. He wanted God to forgive him AND he wanted God to change him!**

*I hope we learn to want more than forgiveness from God also. May we learn to long for transformation! Because I know Jesus...I have been born again and given new life...and now I have celebrated the blessing of daily forgiveness...I must be personally committed to being changed by God! (John Piper): **"The mark of being forgiven is a passion to be changed."***

If you and I are coasting through life and falling short and then tossing up a half-hearted prayer for forgiveness but failing to beg God for change...for transformation...we're missing renewal... we're missing the intended result of forgiveness—that joy would be restored and change would take place.

Listen to David:

- ¹⁰ *Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.* He asks God for clean heart...asks God to come in and rebuild. Reshape. Make new. Cut out the old. Make his heart loyal...not subject to temptation.
- ¹¹ *Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.* We would think of this like David is asking God to confirm his salvation.

David is so moved by his sin that he wants to go back and be sure he has truly committed himself to following God.

- ¹² *Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.*
David is begging God...crying out for restoration of the relationship. It hurt him...moved him...that he had made choices that killed his joy and separated him from God. He wanted restoration. *He wanted God to grab a hold of his heart and control him to the point of obedience.*
- **Result of renewal (what does transformation look like?):**
 - David wanted to take what he had learned and help others to not make the same mistakes: ¹³ *Then I will teach your ways to rebels, and they will return to you.*
 - **Joy!**
¹⁴ *Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves;
then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness.*
¹⁵ *Unseal my lips, O Lord,
that my mouth may praise you.*
 - Humility. More and more I see throughout the Scriptures this is the one discipline God wants most. Out of humility comes love for God and others. Out of humility comes dependence on God for life and joy. David sinned...sought restoration...and learned a great lesson from it:
 - ¹⁶ *You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one.
You do not want a burnt offering.*
 - ¹⁷ *The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.*

This Week's ClearView Challenge:

- Ask God to search your heart (Psalm 139:23).
- Follow the steps David did- own it and feel it, then ask for God's mercy and renewal.
- Share your journey with someone else (James 5:16).

Here's the motivation for applying today's message and working the ClearView Challenge:

Psalm 32

A psalm^[a] of David.

- ¹ Oh, what joy for those
whose disobedience is forgiven,
whose sin is put out of sight!
- ² Yes, what joy for those
whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt,^[b]