

## 1. EXPOSURE OF SIN: GOD ILLUMINATES THE TRUTH

- a. David was a vicious man
  - i. Context of the psalm is David’s murderous abuse of power concerning Bathsheba
  - ii. King
    1. Supposed to be fighting to protect Israel
    2. Supposed to be protecting the holiness of Israel
    3. Instead, he abuses his power and authority to use a woman for his own pleasure
      - a. Not just any woman, the wife of his good and faithful friend
  - iii. Friend
    1. Uriah was one of his 30 mighty men (2 Samuel 23)
    2. In order to cover up his sin, David deceived and lied and attempted to manipulate his friend
    3. Then, when his manipulation didn’t work, he manipulated his general, Joab, so that Uriah was killed
      - a. He conspired, masterminded, ordered Uriah’s murder
      - b. He did it deceptively, cowardly, grossly
- b. Nathan’s Confrontation
  - i. “You are that man!”
  - ii. You are king over Israel, and you coveted and covered
  - iii. You murdered Uriah “by the sword of the Ammonites”
- c. The mercy of God in exposing our sin
  - i. We all need Nathans in our lives to expose our hidden sins, our blind spots, our foolishness
    1. We may think that “we’re the king” and we are “beyond reproof” simply by the fact that we have a position of authority or because we’re also doing good for God and for others
    2. We need people who will come into our lives and tell us straight up, “you’re lying”, when we are trying to justify ourselves by saying, “I’m just protecting the kingdom”
    3. We need people who will tell us that we’re making excuses, who will label our sins for what they really are, not to harm us, but to help us
      - a. You can almost hear David’s excuses “I’m the king. I would be harmful for the kingdom to know because of the shame it would bring the LORD.”
      - b. We sometimes think that the exposure of our sin would be worse than the sin itself
        - i. Why was David willing to lie, and plot, and conspire to kill his faithful friend, one of his 30 mighty men?
        - ii. Because he feared exposure more than he did the wickedness of his abuse, his lust, and murder
  - ii. It is a mercy of God to expose what David calls “blood guilt” before Him
    1. Because the reality is what Nathan exposes, not some harsh possibility
    2. The sin of David’s heart was against God, and acting as an enemy of God, especially while being in a position of representing him, as the King was, made one out to be in an eternally precarious position
    3. It was Nathan’s love of the LORD and love of David which led him to tell David the story which ended with, “You are that man!”
      - a. How is it love?
      - b. Because Nathan knew the real danger, the danger of being an enemy of God, which was far greater than the perception and delusion which David was under, that sin isn’t as dangerous as the exposure of it
  - iii. We may think that we can handle our sin, that we are strong enough, but David calls his sin ‘the making of evil’ in the eyes of God, even if others don’t see it
    1. It is a mercy of God to expose our “evil making” so that we can be “cleansed” and “purified” and forgiven
    2. This is the end result of repentance – cleansing, freedom, purity, peace...joy!

- iv. What we don't often see is that such exposure and forgiveness, via repentance and brokenness, actually restores our joy
  - 1. Sin sucks your joy away
    - a. And often so slowly, so imperceptively, that we don't even see our joy ebbing away
    - b. It is replaced with a self-deception, pretentious and hollow, of delusional self-importance, of kingly duties and pretense while inwardly we are blind wanderers
      - i. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 Jn. 1:8 ESV)
      - ii. "But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes." (1 Jn. 2:11 ESV)
  - 2. When sin sucks your joy away, it sucks your praise away, too
    - a. We aren't boasting in the Lord when we are actively hiding from him
    - b. We aren't resting in the LORD and rejoicing in the LORD and praising the LORD *because we aren't valuing Him as really that great*
      - i. Something else is greater: reputation, comfort, honor, power, etc.
    - c. Therefore, David recognizes that his praise will return when the reality of his sin is fully exposed to the reality of God's mercies
      - i. Then, he will teach rebels more truly when the LORD teaches him wisdom in the inner places, the hidden place, the heart where the unseen desires reside

## 2. CONFESSION OF SIN: MY SINS THEY ARE MANY

- a. Admission of guilt
  - i. He calls it what it is in very stark terms:
    - 1. Transgression, sin, evil, that which stains or ruins, bloodguilt, iniquity
- b. Doesn't pull any punches or make any excuses
  - i. There is no blame-shifting here.
  - ii. There is no rationalization.
    - 1. You don't see, "But being a king is exhausting...I was in a weak state...Bathsheba didn't have curtains."
  - iii. You simply see an acknowledgement of "making evil"
- c. Recognition of sin's betrayal of God first and foremost
  - i. V4 – "Against you, you alone, have I sinned...and made the evil in your eyes"
    - 1. The word "you alone" is a word which simply means "separated"
    - 2. The idea is not that David did not sin against Bathsheba, which he did, or Uriah, which he surely did, or even against Joab, whom he commanded to carry out his despicable and cowardly murder of Uriah.
    - 3. Instead, it is that, while also wronging each of them, the foremost one against whom he sinned was God Himself
      - a. His sin wasn't less than an abuse of power, sexual immorality, tyranny, and murder...it was all of that and much, much, more
  - ii. In order to use Bathsheba, he must first use God in his heart
  - iii. In order to betray and murder Uriah, he first betrayed and murdered God in his heart
- d. How is sin against God first and foremost?
  - i. Consider pretense, lying or deception, or bearing false witness:
    - 1. When you begin to hide the truth, color the truth, shade it and alter its perception in the eyes of others so as to serve your own purposes
    - 2. This means that you are worshiping your own reputation, your own status, your own honor, more than you are a lover of the truth
      - a. Your standard of truth and goodness has now become higher than God's
      - b. At the root of every sin is a rejection of God as worthy and an elevation of oneself as more worthy

- c. Sin is betrayal of God, cosmic treason, an attempt at a coup d'état of Heaven's throne
  - 3. This is why idolatry in the OT is likened to spiritual adultery, a rejection and betrayal of God
    - a. It is saying that this "other thing" – reputation, wealth, power, influence, honor, comfort, ease, etc. – is more important to me than the God whom has loved me so well
  - 4. This why John calls any sin "walking in darkness" against the "God who is light", and with whom we have "no fellowship" when we sin.
    - a. "the truth is not in us" – "his word is not in us"
    - b. There is separation of fellowship, a breaking of intimacy with God, that is at the root of every sin and our pretentious covering it up shows that we would rather have such disfellowship than give up whatever we are loving more
- ii. Martin Luther once commented that violating commandments 2-10 of the Ten Commandments ultimately began with a violation of the first commandment.
  - 1. "You shall worship the LORD your God and serve Him only."
    - a. I love the thing which I steal more than I love the Lord (worship)
    - b. I love the lie which I tell more than I love the Lord (worship)
    - c. Sin is a love issue, not merely an action issue
  - 2. David breaks all ten commandments here...and he realizes that it begins with the first and highest
  - 3. David sees this and clarifies it with this one simple statement, "Against you, above all, have I sinned..."
- iii. Look at another example, of a man who had an opportunity to sin in very similar ways as David, but resisted: Joseph, when he was actually tempted by Potiphar's wife (unlike Bathsheba!), resisted consistently
  - 1. Genesis 39:6-10
  - 2. All sins are against God first. Joseph didn't think of sin as breaking some abstract rule, but breaking God's heart.
  - 3. Had he thought "well, if I do this, I might get caught", he would never have resisted. But instead he considered what an evil it would be against Potiphar, who had entrusted him with so much, but even more, he said, "So how could I do such a great evil and sin against God?"
  - 4. That is a whole different way to think. Sin will always present itself to your mind under a false guise. It will never admit that it is a stab at the heart of God himself. We have to unmask it like Joseph did, not like David did not.
- e. Before we can ever get to the joy of our salvation, we must face into the ugly reality of the depths and depravity of our very hearts
  - i. Sin is not merely a breaking of a command.
  - ii. Sin is primarily the breaking of a heart – the heart of God.
    - 1. It is profoundly relational, not simply legal.
    - 2. "In fear-based repentance, we don't learn to hate the sin for itself, and it doesn't lose its attractive power. We learn only to refrain from it for our own sake. But when we rejoice over God's sacrificial, suffering love for us — seeing what it cost him to save us from sin — we learn to hate the sin for what it is. We see what the sin cost God. What most assures us of God's unconditional love (Jesus's costly death) is what most convicts us of the evil of sin. Fear-based repentance makes us hate ourselves. Joy-based repentance makes us hate the sin." (Tim Keller, *Counterfeit Gods*)
  - iii. Until we know, sense, and grasp this underlying reality, our confession will steer more toward "remorse" than true and joy-producing repentance.
    - 1. Remorse is self-centered, self-pitying and full of fear
      - a. I killed my friend and I really miss him (it's about me!)
      - b. I wish that I hadn't ruined my reputation with my military officers like that

- c. Tell me what I have to do to get back in your favor again...to get back your blessings
      - d. Remorse grieves the consequences as the greatest loss, rather than the cost to God as the greatest consequence
    - 2. Repentance is God-centered and other-centered
      - a. Repentance longs for the “righteousness” of the LORD to be honored and glorified
      - b. Repentance desires fellowship with Lord, because it losing this is the greatest loss and it is my heart’s greatest desire
      - c. It is a restoration of the first commandment – I love the LORD my God more than anything else
        - i. My friendships may not recover
        - ii. My military respect may not recover
        - iii. My mighty men will never look at me the same
        - iv. My family may never be the same
        - v. But what matters is what I have done to the LORD
      - d. Grieving over what we have lost due to sin is proper and right, but the greater grief belongs to what sin has done to our hearts and to the reputation and honor of the LORD
    - iv. Repentance is a new self-knowledge of how deeply broken I really am
      - 1. Our sins are not random events which come from nowhere, they are symptoms of a deep inner brokenness in our character, in our hearts
      - 2. Repentance is a new or deepened self-knowledge of how true this is
        - a. “This new perspective on his sin, as self-assertion against God, opens up a new self-knowledge. 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 faulty stock he sprang from.” (Derek Kidner)
3. RESTORATION OF JOY: GOD’S MERCIES ARE MORE
  - a. INTEGRITY: David’s restoration is evidenced by integrity
    - i. Sin is disintegration – it separates what should be whole and brings together what should be separated – sin tears us apart
      - 1. “Sin puts asunder what God has joined together and joins together what God had put asunder. Like some devastating twister, corruption both explodes and implodes Creation, pushing it back towards the formless void from which it came.” (Cornelius Plantinga, *A Breviary on Sin*)
    - ii. You saw this disintegration in David’s own life, and in his own words
      - 1. You could not describe David’s inner or outer life as “whole” and one of “integrity”
        - a. He had become more than one person and this dissonance was felt deeply and resulted in numerous destructive ways
        - b. V6 – “you delight in faithfulness in the inner being”
    - iii. He knows that he needs a “renewed *spirit*” and a “willing *spirit*” and a “pure *heart*”
      - 1. He wants a unified commitment to truth, to who God is, a real love for God from the heart
      - 2. True repentance always includes a restoration of this inner being to the Lord
        - a. No longer murdering him in our hearts, or treating him like he’s dead
        - b. No longer betraying him in our hearts, or treating him like he’s worthless
      - 3. No more divided heart between loves, only an integrated heart which loves the LORD above all and our neighbor as ourselves
  - b. INTIMACY: The longing of the repentant heart
    - i. What a repentant heart wants more than anything is a renewed fellowship with the LORD
      - 1. “Wipe off my sins!” “Cleanse me!” “Wash me with hyssop!” – “whiter than snow”
      - 2. “washing of hyssop” is the process by which a leper was cleansed and restored to the Temple of God, to go into the presence of the LORD
    - ii. What repentance longs for is a renewed intimacy, a restored fellowship, with the LORD

1. This requires cleansing, purification, preparation
  2. What his sin had destroyed, fellowship with God, he was asking God to answer for
  3. “Don’t cast me away from your presence!” “Don’t take your holy spirit from me!”
    - a. Though it was David who had run away in his heart, who had spurned fellowship with the Lord for fellowship with power and pleasure, he now wants to be restored to fellowship
- iii. There is a huge difference between hearing “I love you” and experiencing the presence of their love
1. Both are important, but being present is superior
- c. MERCY:
- i. Like sin, grace and mercy are the same – “in the eyes of God” is what matters
    1. Therefore, whether or not people forgave David was not as important to him
    2. Rather, it was God’s mercy “above all” that he so desperately needed
    3. It is God’s judgement of me that matters, and if God shows mercy, then I can rejoice in His salvation
  - ii. David asks for grace in verse 1, and the “faithfulness of heart” and “wisdom in the secret places” is what He asks God to create in him!
    1. Do you see this?!
    2. The very thing which God delights in and which God demands is exactly what David recognizes that he cannot be and cannot do apart from the sovereign grace of God on His behalf
      - a. Therefore, he asks for it!
      - b. “The pure heart which you delight in – create it in me!” (v10)
      - c. “The willing spirit inclined to do your will – prop it up in me!” (v12)
      - d. “You make me clean!”
      - e. “You make amends for me!”
      - f. “You wash me”
        - i. And I will be whiter than snow!
  - iii. Ultimately, it is the extravagance of God’s mercy and love that makes repentance produce joy and not fear, praise and not pandering
    1. David can respond so honestly because he knows that God’s faithfulness is deeper than his own
    2. David can ask so boldly because he knows God’s promise, “slow to anger, abounding in covenant love”
      - a. Therefore, he pleads for such mercy *because God gives it*
      - b. It is also true that our pleas are admissions that we are not capable to produce fellowship with God, only God is
        - i. This is why repentance is difficult – one must admit that they are so pernicious, so heinously far gone, that my sins go to the core of my character and the root of my being
          1. That I was born into sin, conceived in it, even
          2. I am sinner through and through
        - ii. Repentance means that whatever morality that I think I have is worthless – that I am just as incapable and needy and destitute as the most immoral man alive
        - iii. “The gospel, by telling us that our salvation is free and undeserved, is really insulting! It tells us that we are such spiritual failures that the only what to gain salvation is for it to be a complete gift. This offends moral and religious people who think their decency gives them an advantage over less moral people.” (Monergism)
        - iv. “Faith is not the boast of the strong, but the pleas of the weak.” (Piper)
    3. One of the reasons that we don’t confess our sins, that we don’t walk in the light, that we seek to cover up, which leads to greater and greater sins, is because we don’t really believe that God is that merciful
      - a. We don’t trust His ways because we don’t trust His heart.

- b. We try and make it up, fight it out, make it work...
    - c. In the end we simply hate ourselves, instead of our sin
- iv. The cross of Christ Jesus demonstrates the righteousness of God and the mercy of God in one single stroke
  - 1. This reality, this historical reality of God's mercies and the depths of His love, is not some esoteric wish into the darkness
  - 2. It is the verifiable goodness of God
  - 3. Grasping this enables us to:
    - a. run towards God when we sin, to run into the exposure of our sins and foolishness, rather than hide them, because we trust the mercies of God, and
    - b. it sets us free from self-pity and self-hatred because the love of God has been poured out upon us in spite of the reality that I am deeply offensive
- v. It is grasping this reality that actually changes us, not merely behaviorally (which it surely does!), but from the heart, from the loves, from the desires of the inner man
  - 1. It is what makes us "faithful in heart" and "pure in heart" and "restored in spirit"
    - a. "If you know what He has done at infinite cost to himself—He's put you into a relationship so that you'll never be rejected by Him—then your motivation when you sin is to go get Him. You want fellowship with Him. When the thing that most assures you is the thing that most convicts you, you'll be okay because when you're convicted of sin in a gospel way it drives you toward God. Without the gospel we hate ourselves instead of our sin. Without the gospel we're motivated through all sorts of awful fear and pride to change and it doesn't really change our hearts; it just restrains our hearts." — Tim Keller, *How the Gospel Changes Us*
  - 2. Grace generates godliness, and the freer God's grace the greater the pursuit of holiness which springs from it,
    - a. By providing for our bloodguilt with the blood of His only worthy Son, it actually spurs our repentance, our honesty, our broken and contrite spirit, and also our faithful obedience from a heart longing to walk in the light and fellowship with the Lord
- vi. Then, when the heart is restored to God in fellowship, in walking in the light, the deeds of repentance, the works of righteousness, the "bulls offered up" are worthwhile to the LORD
  - 1. Without the heart which loves Him above all else, all the moral acts which we do are empty and devoid of being counted as worthwhile to God
  - 2. But with a heart broken by its sin, a heart dependent upon His mercies, and a heart believing that He is truly that merciful, gracious, and loving to workers of great evil, then our moral acts become like precious pearls around our necks and fragrant spices in His nose

So what shall I do with my guilt? Expose it and confess it with brutal and thorough honesty. And we can do this with joy because the mercies of God are greater than all our sins. And when our hearts condemn us, when exposure is not only of actions, but of the heart and character of such perversity that it produced wicked behavior, remember the promise of God given to John, "God is greater than our hearts." So, walk in the light as He is in the light, and have fellowship with God.

And you must remember the mercies of your Father. He gives greater grace, James says. He is opposed to the proud, but to the humble he gives grace upon grace. He dwells with the lowly and broken-hearted. God dwells with you as you are exposed and confess, and in His creative redemptive power, He has promised to give you a pure heart, a restored spirit, to wash the stain of your evil out of the fabric of your heart, to purify you for His presence, to dwell with you, to draw you in and draw you up. He restores the joy of your salvation in the fullness of His own joy.

How? Because Jesus paid it all. It is His blood-payment which cleanses our blood-guilt. It is the water from His side which purifies us for God's presence. What we could never do, Christ Jesus has done for us, and thus God creates what we cannot create – purity of heart. And blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.