

# Everyday Life: Sin, and Repentance

## Intro ~ 5 mins

- Perhaps I should start by saying all that we will cover today is an introduction into the concept of sin, repentance, amongst other things. It will not be exhaustive but it is meant to help shed light into our hearts
  - We will tackle Psalm 51:1-9 today and God willing, we will tackle the rest at a later date

## Advent

- Advent is upon us and there is an excitement and festive nature that accompanies this time but I do want to stress that **Christmas is first an indictment before it is celebration.**
- It is an indictment because it speaks to the need of reconciliation between man and God.
  - **On one side is man, and on the other God**, with a great chasm called Sin between us...after all, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God
  - Sin has separated us from God...and we are not victims...not at all, we are willing participants, usually shaking our fists at God

- **We not only sin, we twist whatever meager form of good we do into self-righteousness**
- **The reason for the first Advent and all other Advent is the longing heart of the Father who seeks reconciliation with man.** This has always been the heart of the Father. So in Gen 12:2-3, Gen 18:18, and Gen 22:18, God gives us a foretaste by promising Abraham that He will bless the nations of this world through him...and the fulfillment of that promise is Christ
  - Do you see how it was gentiles, the Magi, that came seeking for Christ while those of Israel were blinded to the Messiah in front of their eyes?

## The Gift of Years

- **The wages of sin is death - not simply physical death but eternal separation from God.** However we do wrestle with death, here and now in the physical. It is an inevitability save for the second coming of Christ. We will all die....
- As somber as that sounds, **what I want you to see is that you have been given a gift of years.** We do not know how much further we have here but we have been given a gift of years
- **Looming death has a way of arranging your priorities and so I want to speak to you of an invitation that is truly beyond your comprehension**
- Matt 4:17 records the beginning of Jesus ministry where it says - **From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."**

- **This isn't saying repent so that when you die, you can avoid hell or you can go to heaven. Not at all.**
- **This is announcing the availability of life with God.**
- I am choosing my words carefully when I say:
  - With the Gift of Years you have been given, you have also been given the greatest opportunity ever.
  - The greatest opportunity you have is this:
    - **You have been invited into a life of union with God, an invitation of deep interpersonal friendship with the Triune God.**
    - I cannot cover what all of these means but here are some scriptures for further study:
      - John 15
      - John 17:20-26
      - *We are in Christ* ([2 Cor. 5:17](#); [John 15:4](#), [5](#), [7](#); [1 Cor. 15:22](#); [2 Cor. 12:2](#); [Gal. 3:28](#); [Eph. 1:4](#), [2:10](#); [Phil. 3:9](#); [1 Thess. 4:16](#); [1 John 4:13](#)).
      - *Christ is in us* ([Gal. 2:20](#); [Col. 1:27](#); [Rom. 8:10](#); [2 Cor. 13:5](#); [Eph. 3:17](#)).
  - Said another way, **you have been given the opportunity to become like Christ...to become an apprentice of Christ**
  - There is no other anchor or reason that is worthy of the gift of life you have been given. Everything else is shifting sands. There are no permanent foundations on this side of eternity

- When Jesus speaks of repentance, he isn't issuing a threat. He is calling for a change in direction
  - **Repentance is the doorway to changing our direction so we can accept the invitation of life in the Kingdom of God, the invitation of union with the Triune God, the invitation of becoming Christlike.**
    - **Repentance is the doorway and path we continually walk to accept this invitation**
- And so we come to the text of the day

## Context ~ 6 mins

- To summarize, David is King, he lusts after a married woman, invites her over and you have to imagine it's a big deal to be summoned by a King. We are not sure of what exactly happens but he sleeps with her, conspires and kills her husband when he hears she is pregnant and then marries her
- Nathan the prophet approaches David, tells a story to show David's sin and then
- In biblical lore, very few come close to the level of success David had - both materially and spiritually
- **David is most assuredly Israel's greatest King outside of Christ. He is after all the one God promised that he will establish the throne of His Kingdom forever - pointing to the fact that Christ will come through his lineage**
- David is the man God called "**a man after my own heart.**" in 1 Sam 13:14, and Acts 13:22.

- This is the most prolific author of psalms...and **he authors a number of psalms prophetically pointing to Christ**
- Yet it is this same **man who commits heinous crimes because of sin**. Let me recap some of David's sin on this particular circumstance
  - **Lust**
  - **Adultery**
  - **Betrayal - Uriah was one of David's 30 strongest men who fought for him when he was a fugitive**
  - **Deception**
  - **Murder**
    - Not only of Uriah but of all the men who had to die in the move Joab pulled to Kill Uriah as directed by David
    - Consider those who lost their fathers in that move
  - **Rejection of God - this is always where Sin starts**
- As King, David is supposed to uphold the law and yet he subverts it using his position
- If you know the story, you know David was reconciled with God and this was not his end, pointing to the mercy of God
- **Yet I listed David's accomplishments to show you that Sin is no respecter of persons.** None of us is **beyond sinning and quite frankly we are desperately in need of repentance...dare I say, continuously.**
  - As John Owen said, **be killing sin or it will be killing you**

- **Let this story be a mirror to your soul.** You, not your wife or cousin or kid or friend or boyfriend or political opponents or coworker, are the focal point
- This isn't exhaustive, and my focus here is more on repentance before God. I say that cos you do this, he will then guide you on repenting to others

## Text:

- 2 Sam 11, 12:1-7
  - 2 Sam 11:1-5, 14-17
  - 2 Sam 12:1-10, 13-14

- Psalm 51:1-9

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

**2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

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

**4** 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.

**5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

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

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

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

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

## An Overview of Sin (vs 3-5) ~ 12 mins

- Sin is such a pervasive topic that it is hard to cover Sin in its entirety. **What I hope to do here is to see sin from a couple lenses that are by no means exhaustive.** My aim in doing that is for us to **hold our hearts and examine it through those lenses**
- Sin as rejection of God (vs 4)
- **In a sense our Sin has always been, is and will always be a rejection of what God offers.** It is us saying that God is not enough. **It is our thirst for self sovereignty that leads to sin. We bristle and reject the idea that another (God) is truly the master of our fate, and the captain of our soul.**
- Sin isn't just a violation of a set of rules or moral code. It is so much more than that. Sin is a rejection of God
- **Pick on any sin at all (manipulation, being short with a spouse, irritation at a friend, being envious of a sibling, anger at a spouse, etc.) and when you peel the layers of its root cause, we see that we don't trust God so we seek to handle things our way leading to the irritation, manipulation, lies, anger, envy, etc.**
- And so when David says "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,"

he isn't denying or minimizing the enormity of his sins against Uriah, Bathsheba, the citizens of Israel and everyone else affected, rather **this might be a way to heighten the sense of offense by acknowledging that sin is a violation against God.**

- **1 Cor 1:18 shows us that sin can be against oneself and the admonition to love our neighbors as ourselves show that we can sin against neighbours.**
- By **setting sin as against God, David is also acknowledging God as the rightful judge of sin and pleading with Him for restoration**
- Confronted by Nathan, **David is deeply pricked by his own sinfulness and this is shown as he looks beyond the symptom of sin to the heart of his sin, which is a rejection of God**
- **Do you see your sins as a rejection of God?**
- Sin as Depravity (vs 5)
- **Very often we tend to think of ourselves as being good. We are usually so unawares of our own sin and even when it comes up, we tend to play the victim as if we were powerless.** We, me as a poster child of this, tend to deflect and reflect sin.
- We usually **point to someone or something else as the cause.** We point to another or the circumstance or having a bad day or a headache or something in our past as the cause. While there might be correlations to these and maybe some vestige of truth, we are generally making excuses.
- Here are some scriptures that generally make us cringe



- **5** The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Gen 6:5)
- **9** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jer 17:9)
- **15** The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom **I am** the foremost. (1 Tim 1:15)

- He says **I am** not necessarily because of his abiding sense of sinfulness but because he recognized himself as always having the status of “sinner redeemed”

- We tend to want to take these scriptures as speaking of people that are more sinful than we are. We want to see ourselves as being in some class of good sinners and we just find it hard to believe that these scriptures are speaking about our hearts
- **The very fact that we are quick to put separation between ourselves and these scriptures show that these scriptures are meant for us.** They are a mirror we are meant to look into
- **Sin reaches into every aspect of our person (physical, emotions, intellect, motivations, social constructs, spiritual, etc).** This is what David affirms in verse 5, when he says **5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.**
- There's a quote that has been haunting in recent weeks and I am not sure who authored it but it goes something like this
  - Your system is perfectly designed to produce the result you are getting

- This haunts me because I cannot attribute **my sin to some anomaly or a freak convergence of incidents. I cannot excuse myself and I am left to face the results before me**
- David **isn't speaking against his mum or the process of conception, rather he is owning up to his sin and would not excuse himself**
  - Speak on Total Depravity
- Question
  - **Do you seriously hold up tough scriptures as a lens through which you examine your heart?**
- Sin as an Illusion/Costume (vs 3)
- There is a natural **force field of denial around Sin, and this is why find it unnaturally to quickly admit and own up to our sin.**
- **More scary is the fact that we become so skilled at excusing our sins** and we become renowned experts in picking out the speck in another's eye. **We are too very adept at tolerating in ourselves, the very things we attack in others**
- This is the deceitfulness of sin - the subtle deceitfulness of sin that is so beautifully captured in Heb 3:12-13
  - **12** Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. **13** But exhort one another every day,

as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

- Let me **read an excerpt** from Paul Tripp to make this point
  - Sin lives in a costume; that's why it's so hard to recognize... In order for it to do its evil work, it must present itself as something else but evil.
  - Life in a fallen world is like attending the ultimate masquerade party.
    - Impatient yelling wears the costume of a zeal for truth.
    - Lust can masquerade as a love for beauty.
    - Gossip does its evil work by living in the costume of concern and prayer.
    - Craving for power and control wears the mask of biblical leadership.
    - Fear of man gets dressed up as a servant heart.
    - The pride of always being right masquerades as a love for biblical wisdom.
  - Evil simply doesn't present itself as evil, which is part of its draw.
  - ...Now, what this means personally is that as sinners we are all very committed and gifted self-swindlers. We're all too skilled at looking at our own wrong and seeing good.
- Question
  - **What costumes do your sins wear?**
  - **What costumes have you become so comfortable with that you now call evil, good...and perhaps good, evil?**
- There are other lenses through which we can see sin but we cannot tackle all of it today

- What I want you to get from this mini overview is **that you and I are helpless against Sin. We are infected and the infection affects all areas of life. There is simply no escape. This is why Paul cries out about his own struggle in Romans 7**
  - **15** For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.
  - **18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.
  - **19** For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.
  - **24** Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
- And then Paul gives the answer in the **very next verse when he points to Christ as our hope and restoration.**
  - **25** Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

## • Christ, our Hope (vs 7) ~ 10 mins

- **Understanding the root of your sins and even being remorseful about it doesn't equate to solving it. And more importantly it says nothing about impending judgement.** Lest you forget sin is first vertical (against God) meaning there should be **divine justice... which none of us dare face**

- **Restoration begins and ends in God and He has given us up Christ, crushing him for our sake, and this is the reason for Christmas**
- **To begin, the very fact that David was receptive to Nathan's words is a work of Christ.**
- In David's cry for restoration from verse 6-9, he begins with God as the initiator.
  - Behold, you (God) delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
- Actually in verse 6-8, there are a series of statements that are futures such as
  - Thou shalt teach me wisdom
  - Thou shalt purge me with Hyssop
  - Thou shalt make me hear joy and gladness
- **What this underscores is God's willingness to get into the trenches with you in your sin. You are never left alone in Sin. There is simply no sin that is too great or too dire for God.**
- **And in divine forbearance, he passes over your sin with the hope that you accept Christ so he can input Christ's righteousness to you**
- **As initiator, wants access to your life, to help restore you to himself.** Let me read an excerpt from a commentary to summarize this text
  - God seeks open access to those parts of our lives that we have chosen to keep deeply hidden within our inner world...By hiding we protect ourselves from the vulnerability of being truly known.

- The confessing nature of Psalm 51 runs counter to this kind of self protective secrecy. The psalmist “unplugs” the inner barriers and allows the streams of honest self reflection and self revelation to flow again

- **And God accomplishes this through the person of Christ which David alludes to more clearly in verse 7 when he says** “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

- **The term hyssop should take you back to Lev 14:1-7** where the process of pronouncing a man clean from leprous diseases (skin diseases in general is detailed). Let me read a small portion of the text I want to focus on

- **5** And the priest shall command them to kill one of the birds in an earthenware vessel over fresh water.
- **6** He shall take the live bird with the cedarwood and the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, and dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water
- **7** And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed of the leprous disease. Then he shall pronounce him clean and shall let the living bird go into the open field.

- Here are the allusions I want you to see, **one bird is killed and sacrificed with it's blood used for purification..**

- **Does that not speak of Christ Jesus and his sacrifice on the Cross where God made him who knew no sin to become sin so that you and I might become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus**

- The other bird is dipped in the blood, and allowed to fly free. Is this not representative of you and I escaping the wrath due our sins, especially when Sin is always a rejection of God?
- David speaks of these realities without seeing the person of Christ while we have the benefit of seeing the sacrifice of Christ!
- The point I am making is this - what empowers confession, owning our sins and repentance is the sacrifice of Christ which secures for us the truth that we are always loved and accepted...if we are willing to come to Christ
- On his part, the arms of Christ are always opened and extended to you. The question is whether or not we will allow our pride to stand in the way
- I say this because of scriptures like this
  - **9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. (John 15:9)**
  - **3 the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.(Jer 31:3)**
- Let that sink in - that Christ loves you the way God loves him - and you think sin is enough to put a dent in that love
- If you want to meditate on more scriptures to anchor you in Christ love, look at these
  - Rom 8:31-39
  - Heb 6:13-20
- Question

- **Out of the two thieves crucified with Christ in Luke 23:39-43, which one are you?**
- **If Christ is our hope and has secured the way back to God, how does this work itself out in our everyday lives?**

## ● Repentance (vs 1-5, 8-9) ~ 12 mins

- **The way we work out all we've talked about so far is through confession and repentance. What I primarily want to touch on is not the methodology behind repentance but the heart... and some steps to take.**
- We have all been given the gift of life, the gift of years.
- **Life with God, union with the triune God is the greatest opportunity we can ever hope for. And this is what Christ came to present to us.**
- **Our sin, which at its core is rejection of God, holds us back from life in the Kingdom. In and of ourselves, we are helpless against sin.**
- Our only hope of reconciliation lies in God through the sacrifice of Christ
- At its core, **Repentance is primarily a turning to God. It isn't crying or showing remorse, it is literally changing how you think** - it means to think differently
  - We will continue to discover new layers of our un-surrendered self and that is why repentance is all of life like Martin Luther said.
- **Sin is the refusal to let God be God, and we play here daily.**



- **Repentance is letting God be God**

- What are some concrete steps we can take towards Repentance?

- **Awareness of Sin**

- Repentance is first and foremost a work of God in us. **We cannot make ourselves aware of sins or make ourselves repent.**

- **When you are convicted, God is the one working on your heart**

- **Due to our immense capacity for self deception, accurate self awareness is a grace from God**
- So to become aware of our sin, we are dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit. **And so we regularly ask God to show us our sins. This should be a constant feature in our prayers.**
- **When we come across a convicting scripture or message or thoughts, we ask for grace to subject our heart to those scriptures/messages/thoughts.**
- We **humble ourselves enough to question our true motives**, peeling away the familiar layers of self deception so we can potentially see our sins.
- **To be aware of our sins mean we become progressively sensitive to our weaknesses, our delusions, and our defensive inclinations.**
- **It means we are not quick to shut down suggestions or thoughts that show our weaknesses. We give room for the Holy Spirit to move.**
- **We learn to take a double take when our heart and conscience is pricked.**

- **We do not hastily move on in a bid to avoid the vulnerability that admission of our sins require**
- In the painful moments of accurate self insight, we are being loved by God. **The pain in your heart per conviction is a testament of his love.**
- **Knowing we are flawed and yet deeply loved by Christ gives us enough comfort to not be defensive**
  - It is important that we are **vulnerable before God**. It's sort of funny to speak of vulnerability before God as if we could hide anything. However, the **vulnerability is for our own good**
- There is also **benefit in being specific with our sins as we walk this path of repentance. It helps to name them as that often leads to the next step of Acknowledging or Owning or Sins**
- **Owning Sin (vs 1-5)**
- **As God initiates the process of repentance by giving us awareness, we have an opportunity to respond by acknowledging and owning our sins**
- This entire psalm is an admission and ownership of sin.
- It is **offensive to our self sufficiency to admit that we are sick, we are cripples in need of crutches...** yet this is the **exact path Christ calls us to.....why?**
  - **Because for us to receive what Christ offers, self-sufficiency (our pride) has to die.**

- For where our pride and self sufficiency is still in play, **we will reject the help Christ offers.**
- Pride, which includes self-sufficiency, is a real and intent filled preference for another way above the way of God.
- **Pride rejects God and so it is the anti-God state of mind. This is why pride is called the mother of all sins.**
- What immediately jumps out to us in this psalm is how **David owns his sins by the use the words “I”, “me” and “my” in the first 5 verses**
  - Have mercy on **me**, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out **my** transgressions.
  - **2** Wash **me** thoroughly from **my** iniquity, and cleanse **me** from my sin!
  - **3** For I know **my** transgressions, and **my** sin is ever before **me**.
  - **4** 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.
  - **5** Behold, **I** was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did **my** mother conceive me.
- In addition, **David makes no excuses for his sins. He owns it outright from the same verses we just read. It is very clear in the later part of verse 4 where he declares God as**
  - Justified in your words (God convicting or accusing him of sin)
  - Blameless in your judgment.

- No excuses are given. **He isn't pointing to another as being responsible for his sin. He didn't say Bathsheba was bathing or she was dressed inappropriately.** He didn't point to his past. **He knows, by the grace of God, that this is not an aberration of his character, even if it is the first time.**
  - He isn't saying **"this is not me."** He isn't giving the excuse **"this was just a mistake,"** he simply owns it
- And in verse 8, where David says " **Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice,**" **you get the sense that there is an appreciation of the experience of broken bones, which is representative of the consequences of his sins.**
- David isn't asking for healing, rather **he is anticipating and longing for restored relationship with God, which usually comes from a place of being humbled - which cannot be so unless he appreciates the grace of broken bones**
- In owning your sin, **I encourage you to dig deeper than the manifestation or external expression of your sin.** We know that sin wears a costume to be effective. For example
  - Greed can wear the costume of ambition and a zeal for stewardship
  - Sometimes, irritability hides pride, self righteousness, and moral superiority
- **Sin is often a form of therapy to sth else going on and it operates in a pack. Sin rarely ever attacks you from one angle, it comes as a flood attacking you from various angles**
  - For example, the sin of **lust might have as its companions boredom, laziness, loneliness, resentment, envy, etc.**

- The sin of **greed might have as its companion covetousness, vainglory, seeking the praise of men, envy, etc.**

- So let the Holy Spirit help you walk the length and breadth of your sins, which has an effect of throwing you at the foot of the Cross

- **An Appeal to Mercy (vs 1-2, 9)**

- **David starts this psalm crying out to God saying Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.**
- David appeals to the mercy of God as he knows **there is forgiveness and redemption with God.**
- He cries out for help and deliverance, employing **no half hearted measures** hence the repeated use of the phrases **“blot out my sins/transgressions, cleanse, wash me, purge me”**
- For David, sin wasn't simply an act, it's a parasite he needs deliverance from. **And so David runs to God, confesses his sins, naming his sins, and throws himself at the mercy of God**
  - **Today we have the benefit of the Cross with Christ throwing himself on the Cross for our sake**
- For his relationship with God to continue, **David calls on God in verse 9 to Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities**

- And this is exactly what Christ accomplished on the cross as described in Col 2:13-15
  - **13** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,**14** by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.
  - **15** He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.
- You are deeply loved by God. Confession and Repentance is food for your soul.

**Confession should be the bread that is consistently in your mouth**

- **It shows you your limitations**
- **It shows you the love and mercy of God**
- **It helps you truly love your neighbor as yourself**
- **It humbles you, and makes your heart more broken and contrite, which opens you up to God**
- **Confession ultimately focuses you on the love of your father**
- **It frees you of performance**
- I must ask you some questions
  - how often do you own your sins?
  - Is true and heartfelt confession and repentance a regular part of your interaction with God or is your heart becoming hardened by the deceitfulness of sin?
- Come to the Cross so that Christ might wash you clean.

- Come, though your sins are scarlet, the blood of Christ will make them white as snow; though they be crimson, he will make them wool, and blot them out forevermore,

## ● Homework/Exercise

- Practice setting aside time to reflect upon the patterns of sins in your life.
  - You could take one of the 7 deadly sins and reflect on how often it shows up
  - You could take one of the fruit of the spirit, and reflect on its absence
  - You could take a period of time in your life - maybe a particular season of life - and reflect on patterns of sins in your life
- Read one of these scriptures Luke 18:9-14
  - Imagine yourself praying next to the Pharisee and then next to the tax collector. What do you notice?
  - Do you find yourself avoiding the notion of your sinfulness with God? Consider why that might be the case and bring it to God in prayer
  - Have there been areas of blindness to your sins, where you now clearly see? What was the movement from blindness to sight like?
- Consider reading John 21:1-23 and leveraging some of the same questions above.