

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

Taught in Ambassador's Class of Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, California
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by
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Psalm 51:10-19, Lesson 29 November 18, 1979

David's Repentance Part II

We are now looking at David's famous psalm of repentance. It probably dates somewhere between Nathan the prophet putting the finger on David and the Lord taking home the baby which Bathsheba had conceived. It is one of the best prayers I have ever seen for dealing with the problem of guilt.

The tragedy of guilt plagues us all. It is a most destructive emotion. It robs us of our fellowship with God and our fellowship with others. It also destroys our self-worth. This prayer gives us a practical way to deal with the problem of guilt.

As we saw, David started out in verses 1 through 4 with a plea for forgiveness. He depended entirely on God's character not upon anything he had to offer. He did not rationalize in anyway. He did not try to excuse his sin in anyway. He ask God to forgive him. He fully confessed that he was wrong and God was right. He justified God. There is no forgiveness for sin as long as there is rationalization. As we saw last time, God has made absolutely no provision anywhere in Scripture for excusing sin. Even the sins of ignorance have to be paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ. The Day of Atonement was the day each year that all of Israel came before God to sacrifice for the sins of ignorance. First the High Priest took the blood into the Holy of Holies to sacrifice for his own sins. Next he took the blood into the Holy of Holies to sacrifice for the sins of the people. God never ever excuses sin whether it be of ignorance or willful rebellion or whatever. So if I excuse sin, I slam the door on forgiveness. I cannot have justification of Roe and justification of God. I cannot have excuses and rationalization for Roe and forgiveness from God. There is no provision for that in Scripture. So David didn't even try it. He just quietly said, "I'm wrong. You're right." He totally justified God and received forgiveness.

Then he sought more. Just forgiveness was not enough. When we sin, we scar ourselves, and it takes time for those scars to heal. So, in the next section, 5 through 9, David asked that he might have spiritual healing. True, the moment he justified God at the expense of himself, he was totally forgiven and cleansed from ALL unrighteousness. In Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 10, God says he forgets the sin, so there is nothing between David and God. However, there are consequences of sin. They are evident both in his spiritual walk and in the fact that chinks in his armor have been opened making him more vulnerable to Satan. So he prays for a healing, a spiritual healing.

Today we come to verse 10. It is the next step in the process of healing real guilt. David enters a plea for a restoration of fellowship with God. For a year now he has been playing the hypocrite and, as we saw in Psalm 32, has been wrung dry. He longs to have fellowship with his God restored. Apart from this active intercourse with God, there is no enjoyment, no spiritual victory, no walk with the Lord.

In 10-13 then we pick up this plea for restoration of fellowship.

Psalms 51:10:

Create in me a clean heart, O God; And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Thy presence; And do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; And sustain me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways; And sinners will be converted to Thee.

First plea to God is, "Create in me a clean heart." Up to now he has had a "dirty" heart, and he knows it. He wants a desire for righteousness, and he knows he cannot produce it in himself. He has just had one year of self-righteousness which is all he of himself can ever produce. So he starts right off with a plea for access to godliness which he knows will have to come from God. You notice there is no defensiveness about him. He does not try to defend himself along with his asking. His track record speaks so loudly that God wouldn't hear what he was saying anyway.

Then more than that he wants God to "Renew a steadfast spirit within me," a spirit that will hang in there. He wants a spirit that, when it is enticed by sin, will say "no" instead of "yes." He knows apart from God that is not possible either.

Have you ever tried to say "no" to sin in your own strength, tough it out, hang in there, "I am not going to do this. I am not going to think those thoughts?" The more determined I am not to think them, the more I reinforce the fact that the thoughts are there. Try as I might I cannot escape that memory. By my deliberate pressure I only emphasize the thing I am trying to forget; I reinforce the very sin I am trying to get rid of. Trying harder will not blot it out. It is only when in helplessness I throw myself on God and ask him in his power to blot out that sin from my thought life that it will happen.

God has a very special two step program; Romans 6:6 and Romans 6:11ff. The key to victory is that second step. Verse 6 tells you you have been crucified with Christ so your "Old Man" has literally been rendered inoperative. It doesn't have to live any longer. Then verse 11 says to reckon that to be true. Act like it is true. How? Stop going on yielding the members of your body to sin as weapons of unrighteousness. Stop doing something you are already doing, letting this stuff come into your life. Say "no" to it. Why? Because God says you can say "no" to it. You have been crucified with Christ. You have been identified in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. You are a dead man to that "Old Man," and dead men don't respond any longer. Have you ever been up to Alta Mesa Memorial Park? I've had funerals up there, and no matter what you do there, no matter what you say, there is no response, absolutely none! Why? They are dead. God says that is literally true in a Christian's life. You have died to the "Old Man." so, you can say "no." You can stop yielding your members to sin as weapons of unrighteousness. In the name of Jesus Christ say "no." but don't stop there. Immediately "present yourself to God as those alive from the dead and your members *as* instruments of righteousness [weapons of righteousness] to God, for sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace."

You are to take the same instrument used for unrighteousness and give it to God in thanksgiving to be used now as a weapon of righteousness. Just two steps. It will work every time if you take that second step. Faith is exercised first by saying "no" in the name of Jesus Christ, but faith fills the vacuum the second time by saying "yes" to God. "Here, God, you take it. Fill that void with something righteous." I cannot say this often enough. If you stop with saying "no," you will only reinforce the sin. You must claim that what God says is true and that you are not only dead to sin but that God is alive in you. You present yourself to God as one alive from the dead. You are beyond the grave. Old Adam is on the wrong side of the tomb. You need to present that member, the mind, the eye, the ear, whatever is the invasion route, to God as a weapon of righteousness, My Friend, you practice that, and you will have victory over sin as you have never had victory in your life. Practice that, and it will become a habit. Now, your flesh will not change; the attacks will not change; the lust will not change, but you'll remember you are dead to them, and that is called victory. That is called freedom.

So David issues this heartfelt plea for a spirit that is steadfast, that will say "no" when enticed by sin.

His next plea is almost a cry of anguish, verse 11, "Do not cast me away from Thy presence, And do not take Thy

Holy Spirit from me." He knows there is no possibility of a clean heart and steadfast spirit if God withdraws his presence or his spirit of godliness. What alarming example does David have of what happens when God withdraws his Spirit? Saul! Saul was God's anointed king over Israel. God did not set him up to fail, you will remember. He was set up to reign, and God promised him, "If you obey me, Saul, I will establish your dynasty forever." God doesn't lie and God doesn't play games, so Saul had the opportunity for an everlasting dynasty. He chose instead to deliberately rebel against God, against light. So God first took away his dynasty but left him the throne. Then God even took away his throne. He said, "I have replaced you with another, your neighbor who is better than you." How did Saul respond to that, repentance? No, he said, "No way!" and continued to hang onto the throne in spite of Jehovah. Now look at David. What was his sin? Exactly the same as Saul's, rebellion against Yahweh. When God removed the control of the Holy Spirit of God from Saul, what happened to Saul? Whose control took over? Demons, demonic power.

We are not talking, now, about losing salvation. We're dealing with an Old Testament passage. We are talking about control of the Spirit. The Spirit came mightily on Saul as king. The Spirit left Saul as king. It was empowerment. It was what we call the "filling of the Spirit," Ephesians 5. The word is probably better translated control.

Comment from Class: Isn't that like our nation today with the moral problems we have and the gradual moving away from God?

Bob's response: Sure we're open to the same demonic powers they were. However, I don't think our country has ever been under the actual control of the Spirit. Some of our founding fathers were more Unitarian than Christian. Some were Christians. Some were not. We are a nation under God, yes, but we are not necessarily a nation under Christ. I think we tend to read much into our founding fathers that is not really there. They were godly men in the sense that many of them were Christians, but then, on the other hand, many of them were not. This nation has never been a theocracy. It has always been a democracy. But [Israel] at Saul's time was a theocracy. It acknowledged that God was its king. So when the king stepped out of line, God set him aside and delivered him over to demonic powers. Remember David was the one who strummed the harp when Saul was insane. He had a very close personal view of what happened too a man of God who chose to go his own way. He was there. He almost got pinned to the wall two times by this maniac. So with this background he is terrified. He has just been through a year's experience of grieving the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God has not been taken away, but it sure has been grieved, and David has been through hell on earth.

So his plea here is "Do not cast me away from Thy presence, Don't take Thy Holy Spirit from me." He's aware of the tragedy of Saul, God's anointed, who before he died consulted not God but a Medium, a demon. He went to the depths. He never consulted God during the last days of his life. He went right to the source, the demonic powers controlling him.

Don't ever kid yourself that you can dabble in the occult with impunity. Whether you're Christian or non-Christian, never ever play with the occult. It is just deadly. I watched a movie one night that I knew I shouldn't be watching [I don't remember the name of it]. Deborah Kerr played in it and did a beautiful job. It was about two children, a son and a daughter, and an illicit love affair of two servants in a big household. It was absolutely chilling. It is demonic. The first time I saw it, I remember, this little tune they played went through my head and through my head and through my head. [By the way my son had that tune go through his head for a year. It was the most haunting melody you ever heard.] Years later the movie came by again. I remembered it had terrified me, but it was a tremendous play so I started watching it anyway. The Spirit of God said, "Stop it!" Well, I rationalized, "Oh, for goodness sakes it is only a movie, and Deborah Kerr is doing an extraordinary job. The acting is superb," and it was. The two little children were delightful. I watched that movie in defiance of the Spirit of God. By the time it was over and I went to bed, I was in the worst depression of my life. It is a demonic movie. It is brilliantly acted but it is about demonic possession. When God said, "Stop!" I didn't. I've got news for you; when it comes back again, I am not about to watch it. That night scared the living daylights out of me. I was in a battle the whole night long, and half way through the night I was afraid of losing the fight. Never ever mess with that stuff.

Comment from class: What do you think David was thinking? David knew all about Saul during this year he was rebelling against God. Do you think he just rationalized?

Bob's response: Sure, I was rationalizing myself. "So this doesn't please God, so we have a little drying up of our experiential relationship." The problem is the drier the relationship gets the less you want to be involved with the person. When you know deep inside you are not pleasing someone, you have no desire to be intimately involved with them. So little by little you get drier and drier, and turn more and more away from God toward the things that will at least gratify, TV, sports, business, whatever. Then somewhere down the road you suddenly realize, "I haven't read by Bible in a week." The problem is you haven't even missed it. Likewise you haven't been doing any praying. I have had Christians tell me that. Not very long ago a Christian told me they didn't pray at all and never read their Bible. Well, how do you get to that place? By just quietly leaving God out, disobeying God, until it is just as natural as breathing to leave God out. From both a spiritual and emotional standpoint, this person's life displayed that. In the beginning David realized he was disobedient, but you can sear your conscience until it gets harder and harder. Eventually you don't even realize you are leaving God out. It is just your natural lifestyle. When some calamity hits you though, you suddenly realize, as this person did, that you haven't read the Bible and prayed in a long time.

So David is desperately afraid now that this might happen to him because his sin is exactly the same as Saul's. So he says, verse 12, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; And sustain me with a willing spirit." He realizes that the experience of God's presence can only come from God himself. There is no way he can have joy apart from God. You have experienced that and so have I. My Bible says in I John 3, "He that is born of God can no longer settle down and make his home in sin because he is born of God." Because I am indwelt by the living God, I cannot go back to the old life. Sure, I can go back and try, but it is kind of frightening. There is no joy in the old life anymore. There sure was when I was a non-believer. Probably "happiness" is a better word. By the way, the fruit of the Spirit is never happiness. It is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness faithfulness" [Galatians 5:22]. It is not happiness. Happiness depends upon your circumstances. Joy depends on the indwelling salvation of the Lord. You can have joy and cancer, but you can't have happiness.

I discovered an astonishing thing one day after I came to Christ. I walked with the Lord a little bit, and then one day I said, "Aw, the heck with it. I'm going back." I found I couldn't go back. My old friends didn't seem quite so friendly. That nice bar that looked so great before didn't look quite so good anymore. The people weren't quite so wonderful. There didn't seem to be those stimulating conversations on great books and politics and religion anymore. Those wonderful people weren't quite so wonderful now. Mostly they were caging drinks. It was a pretty scary experience. I suddenly realized, "I have made a contract that I cannot break. I can't go back. I have to go forward." Well, I wasn't going forward, and I couldn't enjoy the past, and I wasn't enjoying the present with Jesus Christ. I was most miserable.

David discovered this. so he longs for God to "Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, And sustain me with a willing spirit." He wants the spirit that is willing to be godly, that will step out and be God's man.

Then he moves into verse 13, "Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways; And sinners will be converted to Thee." I love this passage. It tells us how to evangelize. When I am walking in obedience to my Lord, when I am experiencing the joy of my salvation, I do not have to worry about the four spiritual laws and witnessing to one person a day. When people see a life lived out in obedience to Jesus Christ, supernatural power above and beyond circumstances, joy of the Lord in the midst of circumstances, they will want that. Jesus Christ didn't have to ring doorbells. He just walked down the street and was surrounded by crowds. When people see that Jesus Christ lives in me and I am possessed by him, they will come to me.. So "sinners will be converted to you." I will not convert anybody. God will convert people through me. It takes the pressure off.

I can remember when I first became a Christian. They didn't say as much, but the implication was that being a Christian meant going to church 4 times on Sunday, Sunday school, church, Christian Endeavor and church at night, prayer meeting on Wednesday night, witnessing to one person a day, reading your Bible everyday and praying. If your witnessing wasn't up to snuff at the end of the day, you'd better collar someone before you got

home, or you hadn't met your daily quota. It was a miserable life. Now they didn't tell me to do that, but I watched the people and that was their lifestyle. Not all of them obviously, but vast numbers of Christians were doing exactly that. The quota system was nothing new to me. We had it where I used to work. However, when you walk with your Lord, sinners will be converted unto God as you share what Jesus Christ has done for you. God will do the converting. D. L. Moody had this down pat. He realized he was only a mouthpiece for God. He did not convert anybody. He ran into one of his "converts" on the streets of Chicago one day. The fellow was a panhandling drunk. He announced, "Hey, Dr. Moody, I'm one of your converts." Dr Moody said, "You sure must be. If you were Jesus Christ's convert, you wouldn't be like this." He understood the difference between winning a person to Christ by your own efforts and, on the other hand, allowing the life of Jesus Christ to reach out and convert others and pull them into the kingdom by that irresistible charge called Jesus Christ.

So David finally understands that he will be a tremendous vehicle for God. Sinners will be able to see, by the life of Jesus in David, that they can come to the same holy God in the midst of their sins. Romans 8:28 says, "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." God will take sin and make it work for righteousness. [That doesn't mean you get credit for your sin.] David understood that God could take his sin and demonstrate to the Jewish people that Yahweh would accept all sinners if they came to him on HIS terms. On that basis, even a willful rebellious sinner like David could walk in the presence of God and be totally forgiven. That was a tremendous truth. The gods around the Israelites were certainly not like that. They required constant payment, child sacrifice, sexual worship. And even with that you had no security as to where you stood. You had to buy their affection. You had to make yourself right for them. You couldn't go to them as you were and expect them to accept you and cleanse you and make you as they were.

Psalms 51:14

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Thy righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Thy praise, For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Verse 14, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness." That has the idea of blood violently shed."

"O God, Thou God of my salvation." Even as David asks for deliverance from bloodguiltiness, he knows that God has given him salvation. He has the possession of that, and he is secure in it.

"Then my tongue will joyfully sing of THY righteousness." Have you ever noticed that when you are out of fellowship with God that the doctrine of the righteousness of God, a wholly pure, totally righteous God who will not wink at any sin, is terrifying? Living in sin and thinking of a righteous God, a God of wrath, a God of thunderbolts, is pretty scary. Why? Because he is righteous. Because he has an inflexible standard. Because he has no favorites. Because he will not lower his standards one iota. I have no right to feel safe if I am living in sin, known sin, unrepentant sin. However, when I am obeying God, that same righteousness that can be so scary is one of the most wonderful things in my life. If my God is absolutely righteous and has an inflexible standard, he will accept nothing unless it is paid for in full. So I am totally secure. Jesus Christ could not have risen from that grave unless ALL my sins had been dealt with. God's standard makes no allowance for almost all. The proof that I am absolutely saved, totally saved, forever saved is that Christ rose from the grave. Whether I love God's righteousness or fear it, depends upon whether I am obeying or disobeying.

So David is saying that as soon as he gets rid of his bloodguiltiness, he will love the righteousness of God.

Verse 15. "O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Thy praise." David realizes that apart from the Spirit of God opening his lips he will never get back to a state of praising. We don't know how to pray, and we don't know how to praise either. My Bible says I don't know how to pray as I should, but it also says the Spirit of God takes my prayers and conforms them to the will of God. I know I should pray when I am hurting, but I don't always know what to pray for. However, as I begin to pray the Spirit will help me in my weakness. [Romans 8-26ff] The word literally means 'pick up a part of the table,' a part of the load. That will not occur, however, until

I begin praying, but the moment I feel my dependence, sink to my knees and begin praying, the Spirit of God will pick up the front end of the table and take it straight to the will of God.

David sees that here. He wants to have worship that is acceptable to God. For one year he has been mouthing pat phrases, none of which have been worship. So he wants God to "Open my lips, That my mouth may declare Thy praise."

Verse 16. "For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering." There is no provision in the Old Testament for sins of willfulness. "I have nothing I can offer you, Lord. Even if I did I couldn't offer it because my heart hasn't been right. I sure couldn't offer you a burnt offering which pictures one totally consumed with the Father's will because for a whole year I haven't been there either. Under the Mosaic system I have nothing to offer you at all. All I have is me, just as I am, and that I willingly offer to you."

Verse 17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite [crushed] heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." "What you really want is not the ritual, which has no value apart from commitment, but a fellow who has a crushed heart and a broken spirit." When we sin we are playing God. When we know something is wrong, and God has said it is wrong, but we do it anyway, we are choosing to sin. We are choosing to play God. We are putting our will in opposition to His will. Since God has died for my sin, it frees a holy God to lay down whatever terms he chooses for my salvation or restoration. His holiness has been satisfied. Now, for salvation or restoration, God's terms are my will returned to him by its own choice. Those are the terms he has laid down, and they are inflexible. David sees that here, and that is why he offers himself, "I have nothing to offer you except exactly what you want. You don't want the blood of goats. You want me. So I offer you me." And he understands that God accepts that.

Then he asks for one more thing. We never sin as an island. We always hurt others. So in 18 and 19 he pleads for forgiveness of the effect his sin has had on his people. David's sin was known, you remember, and the enemies of God blasphemed Yahweh because of it. Apparently the people had also become kind of sloppy because their king was leading them in worship while in unrepentant sin; adultery, murder, covetousness, etc. "If God accepts him, then God will accept us in a kind of sloppy way too." So little by little they began to slide away. So David pleads for them in verse 18:

Psalms 51:18:

By Thy favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.

"By Thy favor," by your grace, restore them. It is interesting that although David was the cause of their becoming sloppy, he says, "They had a choice they could have made too. Yes, I am at fault in presenting them the opportunity to sin, but they could have chosen righteousness." So he asks God to be gracious on their behalf. They have no excuse either, but he wants his people, the ones he had caused to stumble, to be restored now too.

Psalms 51:19:

Then Thou wilt delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Thine altar.

When they become right with God, then their sacrifices become righteous. It is not the other way around. My sacrifices do not make me righteous. My righteousness makes my sacrifices righteous. In modern terms, my going to church, praying on my knees at five in the morning, giving my all to the ministry, memorizing Scripture do not make me righteous. They are simply religious rituals if they are not done with the right spirit. But if I come before God with a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart, my commitment, my attitude toward my God will make all my actions righteous. We are not just talking about my prayer life, my Bible study, my giving, but also my business, my recreation, my family life, anything I do will become a sweet incense in the nostrils of God. "Then you will delight in righteous sacrifices, in burnt offering and whole burnt offering." It depends entirely upon

me. That is what is so fascinating about it.

And the proof? I love the last line, "Then young bulls will be offered on Thine altar." You know the law in Leviticus 1 for offerings. There are a whole series of options. The most expensive was the bull. Then you could sacrifice a goat or a ram. They were also pretty expensive. Then you came down to birds, turtledoves, pigeons. Apparently as the people began to slide in their worship of God and their love affair with him, they began to offer the cheaper sacrifices, and maybe some with a blemish rather than unblemished. "When they get back to righteous sacrifices, they are going to start offering young bulls again." Why? What happens from your standpoint when you get to walking with your Lord again?

Class: You give your best.

Bob: Yes, and why do you give your best? Why would you offer a young bull to Jesus Christ rather than a goat or a lamb or even a bird? Let me ask you another question? When you got engaged to your wife, why did you go in hock for the next twenty years for that engagement ring? You didn't go down and buy some little chip that fell off the jeweler's table onto the floor. Why did you buy something you knew you couldn't afford? Yeah! Your heart was with your fiancée. You were in love with her. You wanted the best for her. David sees that here. When his people fall in love with their Lord again, and they repent and come back to Him, there is going to be a shortage in the bull market.

This is a beautiful psalm of repentance. How do you get rid of guilt? You go to God for forgiveness, take your spiritual scars for healing and get a restoration of fellowship with him. Then you will have acceptable worship, a heart with a desire to praise God, and a deep longing to reach out to others that they might experience what you are experiencing. Then you will understand what it means to be forgiven, cleansed and with sins forgotten.

Next week, II Samuel 13. Back to the soap opera.

David committed two sins, adultery and murder. God says there are going to be consequences of those two sins. Watch when you read 13 and 14 how parallel the sins are. You do not sin with impunity.

Father, we thank you so much for your word and for the way it opens up the heart of God and let's us see inside you and what you really want. How it gives us an opportunity, Father, to be part of you and really understand your mind and your will and your actions and really get to know you and love you. Father, how wonderful it is to read a psalm like 51 and know the background of it. We may be adulterers, murders, coveters, hypocrites, Father, no matter what we are you are ready, willing and able to save us, ready, willing and able to restore us, forgive, forget. All it takes is our desire to be back in love with you no matter what it costs us. Thank you, Father, for this marvelous provision for our needs in such a glorious manner in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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