



Sermon Growth Guide

May 16, 2021

What David Knew - Forgiver

Psalm 51

Key Verse: Psalm 51:14 "Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness."

Big Idea: God receives my contrite heart and forgives me by dying in my place on the cross.

Foundations

God does not forgive cheaply. Kingdom forgiveness is the real deal that holds together the full range of God's attributes. God's love, justice, truth and beauty are not tainted by His forgiveness.

How is this possible? God receives my contrite heart and forgives me by dying in my place on the cross. God does not pretend like our sins are little, inconsequential actions that don't hurt others or profane God's holiness. Neither does God condemn all humanity to the grave, justice without the cross.

We learn in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that "God made him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." We are forgiven on grounds of God's own sacrifice. Justice is satisfied and we are redeemed, behold the atonement of the cross! Love, justice, truth, beauty and forgiveness dance together in the Kingdom of Light.

Rejoice together that God is a forgiving God! Pray that you each receive God's forgiveness in gratitude. Pray that God protects and uses your time together for His good purposes.

Understanding God's Word

David has violated Bathsheba, killed Uriah and broken the trust of his nation. Why does David rightly say in verse four that "against you (God), you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight"?

What is David's request in verses 10-12?

We learn in verse 17 that true repentance includes "a broken and contrite heart." What does a broken and contrite heart look like?

Applying God's Word

God receives my contrite heart and forgives me by dying in my place on the cross.

Knowing that God is Forgiver, in what ways can you cultivate a deeper ability to walk in "a broken and contrite heart" before the Lord when you sin?

Witnessing God's Word

David declares in Psalm 51:14 that as a result of the Lord forgiving him, his tongue will sing of the righteousness of the Lord. Following David's lead, how can you sing of the righteousness of the Lord to those around you, especially the yet-believing community (see also verse 13)?

No matter where you are, there is a Psalm to reach you and lead you back home to God.

Feel free to turn to your neighbor and ask, “Have you ever blown it big time?” We’re in the middle of our series on King David and today we see that King David blew it big time. Adultery and murder are big time. Whether or not adultery and murder are in your blown-it-memory-bank, we’re all in this together. We’ve all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And maybe that’s not an “amen” reality for you yet, but I pray it will be by the time this hour of worship is up. And as much as we like to rank sin, all sin is sin. Adultery is sin. Murder is sin. But so is coveting your neighbor’s green grass and taking ungodly pride in how many church services you’ve attended. We’ve all blown it and we all need a **Forgiver**. We need this message today: God is **Forgiver**.

David knew God as Forgiver; do you? Today we’re in Psalm 51. Psalm 51 has perhaps the most eye-catching superscript of any of the superscripted psalms: For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. The crux of the matter is in that superscript. The king has fallen. Sin is in the center of the camp. And the king tried to sweep it all under the palace rug because apparently it took Nathan, a prophet, to call king David out. But look too, it’s “a psalm of David.” David finally responds to his sin as a born-again child of God through true faith in his Forgiver-God and eventually writes this prayer-psalm, perhaps within hours of Nathan walking out of the room.

David knows something’s gone

terribly wrong in his heart. In another one of David’s songs, David shows his need and our need with these words: “Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god” (Psalm 24:3-4). You see, one reason David is remembered as “a man after God’s own heart” in both the Old and New Testament is because of his deep love for Yahweh. David knew who God was. In his most honest moments with himself, David knew that his soul was wired to love God, to be in union with his Creator and Lord. And David knew that meant holiness on both sides, God’s side and our side. We must be holy to be with God. Have clean hands and a pure heart. Don’t trust in anything except your heavenly Father. Don’t swear, don’t point to anything except the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

And here in our passage we see a man after God’s own heart whose very soul has been in torment as a direct result of trying to hide from God. But God won’t allow it. “David, come back over here, I love you, I am a forgiving God.” And in this God-rescue space God sends Nathan the prophet to David. And then David does what any born-again child does, he cries out to his Forgiver-God: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil



in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.”

Friends, let’s be very clear, there is no other way to get right with God than what David is modeling for us here: “Have mercy on me, O God!” Yet so many of us are stuck in this works-based-righteousness-nonsense where we presume to be completely capable of making up for our sin through being “good.” Sin, any sin, completely destroys your access to God. Sin is dynamite blowing up the eternal relational bridge between you and God. Can you repair that bridge? Its pavement is purity. Its foundation is holiness. Its supporting structure, its cabling is righteousness. Its anchor is majesty. Its tower is glory. And you and I have blown it sky high with our sin. Don’t buy the lie that sin is not that bad or that God is not that special. Do you have the tools to make this kind of repair? When we try and fix our own sin we’re like ants trying to build the San Francisco Bay Bridge with nothing but a pile of dirt. We can’t do it.

David couldn’t do it either! But he tried. Have you ever tried to cover up your sin? At first you think it might work. David’s one-night stand bears the fruit of a child. Coverup time. Bring Uriah back from battle, Bathsheba’s husband. Tell him to go home. Uriah refuses on grounds of cultural decency. No problem—kill

Uriah, marry Bathsheba, that’s the fix. “I can repair that bridge I’ve blown up,” thinks David. And then time passes. No repentance. How’s that going for David? “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer” (Psalm 32:3-4). David’s soul is in turmoil. Do you know that feeling? It breaks my heart to think that there are souls listening to this sermon that are in this kind of turmoil, but maybe this is your day of liberation. Are you open to that? It may feel ironic, but that sickness of heart that is preventing David’s breath, and perhaps that’s making your blood pressure rise right now, it’s actually the strong, merciful hand of God on the sinner leading him to repentance. True repentance is the only thing that can save David now. “God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance” (Romans 2:4).

It is God’s kindness that sends the prophet Nathan to David. Remember the superscript of our passage today? For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. (Psalm 51) “The Lord sent Nathan to David.” (2 Samuel 12:1a). David sinned. The Lord sent. That’s the gospel. You sin. God sends His son, Christ, to save you. Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Samuel 12:13). David’s running is over. The hound of heaven has once again chased down the sinner and caught him, pinned him down. No more running. God is a forgiving God and His children are a repentant people.



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David's attempt to cover up the mess he made, your attempt to fix all the messes you make, they are like building a bridge out of toothpicks and popsicle sticks. It doesn't take a 5-year-old to not trust a cheap repair, a cheap solution, cheap forgiveness.

God's not in the business of cheap; God's in the business of real rescue through rebuilding the bridge with good material, the same material as the first bridge, in fact. The theological word for what I'm getting at is "atonement." Atonement is reconciliation. Reconciliation is forgiveness of sin. God is a forgiver and David knew it. Kingdom forgiveness is restoration without compromise. It's rebuilding the bridge without compromise. So if its pavement really is purity, if its foundation really is holiness, if its supporting structure, its cabling really is righteousness, if its anchor really is majesty, and if its tower really is glory, then we need something, or *someone* who is pure, holy, righteous, full of majesty and glory to forgive us our sins.

Jesus is pure (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus is holy and righteous (Acts 3:14). Jesus is full of majesty and glory (Hebrews 1:3). Dear ones, David knew that God was a forgiving God, not "forgive and forget," but "forgive and make a way for things to be right." John the Baptist stood in the waters of the Jordan and cried out some one thousand years after David cried out in Psalm 51, "Look, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Jesus is our atoning sacrifice. "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole

world" (1 John 2:2). God is Forgiver.

No one wants cheap forgiveness, forgiveness that is structurally unsound. And David didn't just know God as Forgiver. David knew and we know that God is loving and good and just. Cheap forgiveness spits in the face of justice and goodness and love. But Kingdom forgiveness is just and good and loving because it rebuilds the relationship with real strength: purity, holiness, righteousness, majesty, glory. Jesus did on the cross what we will never be able to do ourselves.

King David seemed to have the inside scoop. "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise" (Psalm 51:16-17). Here's David, a thousand years before Christ, many days dreaming of building the temple himself, having already purchased a place to make sacrifices, what will be the temple mount, a location, by the way, often attributed to where Abraham was told to sacrifice Isaac. But what did God do when Abraham raised the knife? That's right, God made a way—a ram caught in a bush, a sacrificial system to show what was to come, the Son of God, true God of true God, hanging on a cross so that all the times we violate and murder one another in our hearts each and every day there can be true, strong forgiveness of sins. David knew that he had a forgiver-God.

"Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you. Deliver me from the guilt



of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise” (Psalm 51:13-15). David says that out of his heart of gratitude he will teach the wayward the way home. David says that out of his heart of gratitude he will sing of the righteousness of God. David says that out of his heart of gratitude he will open his lips and declare the praises of the God of Israel who is a forgiving God. We too must take this posture for it is good and right to do so. Shout it from the mountaintop: God is Forgiver!

God is Forgiver. And we are called to model our behavior after God. You and I are called to be a people of forgiveness. When you and I fail to forgive one another, indeed, anyone who wrongs us, we allow poison to decay our souls and we functionally reject God’s forgiveness of us. Recall the superscript: For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. When we look at the three names in this superscript we’re given a tremendous case study, if you will, in kingdom forgiveness: Nathan, Bathsheba, David.

Nathan. Pastor Tim slipped this book under my door in preparation for this series: *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny* by Chuck Swindoll. (Page 204) If God has called you to be His messenger (A Nathan), then do it skillfully and do it humbly. Do it right or don’t do it. If God calls you to be a confronter, confront. People still long for, hunger for the message of God. When you encounter an

individual who has willfully stepped on the wrong path, face it with him. Call it what it is. Certainly at the right time and in the right way, but do it! Don’t hedge. Don’t try to redefine it. Don’t explain it away. Call it sin. And in doing so, remember that you, too, have sinned. So, stay humble and full of compassion... but speak the truth in love. *Culture says everyone is on their own, God says circle up and walk in Kingdom community.*

Bathsheba is the victim in this scene. In one broad sense, we will all of us be sinned against by another person at some point or another. But let me take the opportunity to speak to the person who may be in a really terrible situation right now. **First**, I implore you to not walk alone. Let someone you trust into your story; find support. **Second**, trust God. Trust that God will give you the strength you need to take the course of action He will lead you to take. You’re going to need to discern that course of action, but refer back to #1 and don’t walk alone. **Third**, be open to how God might redeem your pain. Scripture is not a pain cancel culture, it’s a pain redeem culture. Let the hope of heaven in. God is a redeeming God. He is a warrior-redeemer. He looks evil in the face and doesn’t dismiss the evil, but shines the light of heaven, causing beauty to grow beside the pain. Matthew 1:1, 6b: “This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:” David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah’s wife. God saw Bathsheba and said, “I’m going to take this mess and stand beside it to bring forth the Savior of the world.” This kind of redeeming is not a promise in



the here and now for every person hurting, but it should give you a reason to look up to heaven and have true hope. God can redeem the darkest night. **Fourth**, forgive the one who does evil against you. This may feel impossible, and you may be shouting at me right now in your heart, “but you don’t know what he did to me,” but your only options here are to forgive or to let your own soul be poisoned by bitterness. There are a lot of Christians who are really poor at forgiving. But God is a forgiving God. Christ Himself demands that we take this posture: “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15). *Culture says when you’ve been wronged to let pride take root and to put yourself on top, God says forgive.*

And **David**, today the perpetrator of great evil. When you look at this chapter in David’s life, it’s fair to ask why in the world is David remembered as “a man after God’s own heart”? Because David, in God’s perfect timing, brought before God what God wants most from His people, a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, broken because of sin, but ready to be redeemed by God. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. When David finally repented, he was doing at least four things. **First**, he took complete ownership of his sin. No blame-shifting or downplaying. And a part of ownership is owning the full consequences of your sin. **Second**, his heart was truly repentant: no fluff, no pretense. **Third**, he was contrite.

He was truly heartbroken by his sin. David loved God. And David was God’s beloved. “Daw-veed” means “beloved.” **Fourth**, he accepted God’s forgiveness. He put his pride to the side and let God forgive, really forgive. David let the healing waters flow into his heart. Someone needs to hear this loud and clear—in Christ you are forgiven. Own and rejoice in your forgiveness. Don’t reject God’s forgiveness of your sin. *Culture says to hang the perpetrator, “guilty, life sentence without the possibility of parole, no restitution possible.” God forgives the contrite heart, the truly repentant are forgiven fully and forever in Christ.*

David lived with the consequences of his sin for the rest of his life. He lived knowing he was a murderer. David and Bathsheba’s first child was killed as a direct consequence of David’s sin. Consequences are real and you need to face the consequences of your sin. Consequences are a part of the package of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not about ignoring the pain. Forgiveness is about letting the Kingdom of Light triumph over the Kingdom of Darkness. David knew that God is a forgiving God. And when it counted the most, David fell into the forgiveness of God in true repentance.

What about you? Do you know that God is a forgiving God? Do you know that you need God’s forgiveness? God perfectly has what you most need: forgiveness. Therefore, fall into God’s arms of forgiveness and be saved.

