

# Come and Let us Return to the Lord

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- [ 0 : 00 ] I'm going to sing to God's praise from Psalm 51. Psalm 51, from the beginning down to verse 7.
- After thy lovingkindness, Lord, have mercy upon me. For thy compassions great blot out all mine iniquity. Me cleanse from sin and thoroughly wash from mine iniquity.
- For my transgressions I confess my sin I ever see. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned. In thy sight done this ill, that when thou speaks thou mayst be just and clear in judging still.
- Behold, I in iniquity was formed the womb within. My mother also me conceived in guiltiness and sin. Behold thou in the inward parts, with truth delighted art.
- And wisdom thou shalt make me know within the hidden part. Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me. I shall be cleansed so. Yea, wash thou me, and then I shall be whiter than the snow.
- [ 1 : 15 ] And so on. These verses 1 through to 7 of Psalm 51. After thy lovingkindness, Lord, have mercy upon me.
- After thy lovingkindness, Lord, have mercy upon me.
- For thy compassion, O God, have mercy upon me. All mine iniquity.
- Be cleansed from heaven and truly washed.
- From my iniquity. For thy trust, O God, have mercy upon me.
- [ 2 : 52 ] Be cleansed from heaven and truly washed. Be cleansed from heaven and truly washed.
- Behold, I iniquity. Behold, I iniquity.
- What form the womb within. My God, O God, have mercy upon me. My God, O God, have mercy upon me.
- My God, O God, have mercy upon me. In guiltiness and sin.
- Behold, I iniquity. Behold, I iniquity. Behold, I within the Lord. I have mercy upon me. For God, with grace upon me.
- [ 4 : 10 ] With thrifted life in the heart, and wisdom thou shalt make me know.
- Within the hidden heart, to the witheth of victory, I shall be blessed as Lord.
- Ye washeth me, and then I shall be white and white as snow.
- Amen.
- And to the earth. Many are of the opinion that the day that the prophet Hosea laboured in is very much akin to our own.
- [ 6 : 33 ] We know that there are many similarities between the present spiritual condition of the nation, and the former situation that applied in the days of the prophet.
- If you go back to the previous chapter, chapter 4, we read there, Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel.

For the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor measure, nor knowledge of God in the land.

By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, They break out, and blood toucheth blood.

And so on. And then in the next chapter, chapter 7, We read in verse 8, Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people.

[ 7 : 45 ] Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, And he knoweth it not. Ye grey hairs are here and there upon him, Yet he knoweth it not.

And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face, And they do not return to the Lord their God, Nor seek him for all this.

Now these are just two parts, two passages. And there are many of the same throughout the prophecy, Descriptive of the spiritual condition, Into which the prophet is sent, Where he is to labour in God's name.

And just as in whose day, And in our day, The only standard people have to live by, Is the lifestyle of those who are their equal, Their co-workers, Their friends, Their neighbours.

As long as they adhere to what they believe in, And what they do, Then they feel relatively at ease.

[ 9 : 12 ] There is no greater standard, By which they apply themselves. We know that there is a greater standard, We know that the word of God is our standard, That it is what we must look to, And learn from, So as to know what is good, And what is not good.

But, If you do not look there, Then you must look somewhere, And when you look, Somewhere, Other than God's word, You open yourself to all kinds of, Problem behaviour, And problem outcomes.

One of the, Better known Scottish divines, Of our past generation, Thomas Poston, He was preaching in, Verse 4, Of chapter 6, And this is what he said, And I suppose, That people, Were more tolerant of, The kind of, Preaching, That Boston, Had, Than, Many in our generation, But, The preaching of Boston, Was greatly blessed, In his own day, And he was speaking, At our communion, And this is what he said, The case of many, At our communion today, Is such that, When they are at them, It seems a pity, They should ever go from them, Till they sit down, At the table above,

And when they are, From them a little while, It seems a pity, They should ever go, To them again, When they are at them, The smell of their communion frame, Is, As the smell of a field, Which the Lord hath blessed, When they are from them, The smell of their ordinary walk, Is as the smell of a field, Which the Lord hath cursed, Smelling, Rank of the root of bitterness, Hence the question, What shall I do unto thee, O Ephraim, O Judah, Now what he was seeing, In his own day, And, We have a habit, Of comparing, Our day, With the previous generation, That generation, With our previous generation, And, I firmly believe,

That every generation, Has its own, Woes, Has its own, Challenges, Has its own, Spiritual, Decrepitude, That must be, Answered to, Whether it is, In our locus, Or elsewhere, And the prophet, Hosea, Was somebody, Who lived a hard life, God used to, Mightily, But, In his own life, He had, Many torments, To go through, There is much, Symbolism, Within the prophecy, But it is, Necessary, And it was, Necessary, To highlight, The spiritual, Condition, Of the people, Of his own, Generation, And as we read, This book, Despite what we read, About this people, And I suppose, This is the, The significant thing, Yes, There is sin,

[ 13 : 00 ] Yes, There is, Need for condemnation, Yes, The role of the prophet, Is to highlight, The need that there is, To turn to God, But the wonderful thing, Is that God, Is there for them, To turn to, And that he makes that, Through the prophet, Abundantly plain, That there is, No doubt, In the mind of the prophet, Or in the mind, Of the people, Were they to listen, To what he had to say, That God, Loves, His own people, And that, I suppose, Is further testified, To the fact, And we dare not, Ignore that, That God, In giving his servants, To the people, To continue, To proclaim his word, To them, To remind them, Of the need, That they had, To repent, And to turn, To the Lord, It is a symbol, It is a, A signal, Of God's love, It is,

A testimony, To his willingness, To receive, To receive a people, To himself, And, It's not clear, How long, The prophet, Labored amongst, This people, There is no point, Given to us, With any degree, Of certainty, At which his ministry, Began, With a great deal, Of research, And sometimes, It's not easy, With any accuracy, To, To, Insist, On the exact, Time, That, That the prophet, Began to labor, Or, The time, At which, His ministry, Came to an end, But it wasn't brief, By any manner of means, He labored, For, Some say, Up to 60 years, Certainly, Over 50 years, Amongst this people, And maybe, With not much, Fruit, For his labor, But the message, Was the same, He was calling,

The people, Back to the Lord, He was calling, Them away, From their sin, To the Lord, And, It is, It is, Foolish, For us, To think, That if we, Emphasize, The love of God, That we are in some way, Downgrading, The, The awareness, That there should be of sin, That's not right, It is, Not something, That God is willing, To shut a blind eye to, Or turn a blind eye to, That there is sin, And that there is a need to repent, There is a need to return, To himself, Just because he loves, Doesn't mean, That he does not, Chastise, That he does not rebuke, That he does not require, Repentance, And that's what,

Many people, Mistakenly believe, That if they preach, The love of God, That they dare not, Preach, About God's, Hatred of sin, I can't remember, Which one of, The commentators, Was saying that, It doesn't matter, It was a, He's a well known, Preacher, And teacher, And he was, Preaching over in America, And he, He spent a week there, Or maybe longer, Preaching in a certain, Congregation, And he took note, Of the fact, That while he was there, A lot of the worship, Was focused, Upon praise, And thanksgiving, And, And, Celebrating, The name of the Lord, And he, He, He was so, Alerted to it, That he took note, Of the,

The songs, That they were singing, The hymns, That they were singing, That there was never, A mention, Of sin, Or the need to, Answer, To a holy God, Or to recognize, That there was, It was all celebration, It was all rejoicing, It was all, The, The, The, The pointing, In the direction, Of Christ, And, The Christ, To secure salvation, Salvation, From them, Without too much emphasis, On what needed to happen, In order for that, To, To be so, And he says, I, I spoke to the minister, And he says, Sometimes he says, You can have too much celebration, You can have too much rejoicing, And the minister, Was taken aback, By what he said, But what he meant, By it was, That there was almost, A,

[ 18 : 02 ] A, A, Wholesale, Overlooking, Of the fact, That, We are sinners, And we do sin, And our sin, Offends God, And we need to turn, From our sin, When we sin, And we need to come back, To God, Because when we sin, We go away from God, And we, We overlook that, At our peril, And that's not, What we have in this book, It's a book, That is, I suppose, Balanced, In the sense that, It speaks of the love of God, That sends a servant, To preach, That love, Into a context, Where the people, Need to be reminded, Why they need to come back to God, Because they've gone away from him, They've neglected him, They've gone their own way, And done their own thing, And God has not featured, In the, In the lives, That they are leading, John L. Mackay,

In fact, In his own, Commentary, And it's an excellent commentary, A quite detailed commentary, He says, Despite their sin, The Lord refused, To abandon them utterly, On the other hand, He did not, He did not, Resort to a weak love, Which accepts, Compromise, In the face, Of intransigent, And misguided behaviour, I will care for him, Is the pledge, Of a love, That will work, Through lengthy, And painful, Discipline, To achieve, The spiritual, Change, Which is required, To restore, The harmonious, Relationship, And usher, In an age, Of eternal, Satisfaction, You understand, What he's saying, And I think, There is, At times, An imbalance, In the way, The gospel, Is presented,

We, We may, At times, Be guilty, Of, Of, Having an overbearing, Emphasis, On sin, Maybe that's, A genuine, Criticism, That can be levied, Against, Some preachers, But to ignore it, Altogether, Is worse, To pretend, It isn't there, Is, Faithful, Because, If we live, In our sin, And continue, On in our sin, How can we appreciate, The provision, God has made, In Christ Jesus, For our sin, And our sinfulness, If we don't, Experience, The, The, Kiss, Of God's, Mercy, Somebody said, Of the, Mercy of God, He said, If there was no need, For the,

Mercy of God, It would have, Lay dormant, In his heart, And nobody, Would know, About it, Why should, Anyone know, About it, That God, It's one of his, Characteristics, That he is a God, Of mercy, And yet, It is just, Because, There is a need, For it, That it is, Revealed, And it is, Made known, And we, Are, The very people, We need to hear that, But I want us to, Focus, Really, On the words, Of our text, And, Reading these words, You know, You understand them, Don't you, The prophet, Is saying, Come, And let us return, Unto the Lord, For he hath torn, And he, Will heal us, He hath smitten, And he, Will bind us up, After two days,

Will he revive us, In the third day, He will raise us up, And we shall live, In his sight, Then shall we know, If we follow on, To know the Lord, So on, Now are these the words, Of the prophet, Or are these the words, Of the people, To whom the prophet, Is speaking, That's not an easy question, To answer, Because the words, Are the words, You would expect the prophet, To be declaring, And, They are the words, That the people, Should utter, If they respond, To the preaching, Of the prophet, But, There's two separate, Opinions, As to, What exactly, Is happening, Because when you, Carry on down, To verse four, You have these words, O Ephraim, What shall I do, Unto thee,

[ 23 : 07 ] O Judah, What shall I do, Unto thee, For your goodness, Is as a morning cloud, And as the early dew, That goeth away, There is, A significance, Attached to these words, Bearing in mind, The confession, That comes before them, Now, Looking at these words, The words are appropriate, They are, Appropriate to a sinner, Who needs to repent, Of a sin, Come, And let us return, Unto the Lord, For he hath torn, And he will heal us, He hath smitten, And he will bind us up, You, You understand, What these words, Mean, What they are saying, They have gone away, From the Lord, And when they went, Away from the Lord, They know, That because, They have gone away, From the Lord,

He has afflicted them, He has torn them, And smitten them, They understand that, They understand it, You know, They are not daft, The prophet has preached, But more importantly, Their providence, Is telling them, What we are going through, Is caused by something, And, With the light, That the providence, Of God, And the word of God, Gives to them, They are able to say, God has done this, He has smitten, He has torn, And the reason, He has done that, Is because, Of our sin, But along with that, As you would expect, There is the understanding, That, The same Lord, Is going to heal them, And revive them, Upon their return,

Now that's good theology, Is it not? You understand, That if you sin, You don't sin, Without a cost, And the cost, As far as God's people, Are concerned, Is the anger of God, The chastisement of God, If there is people, You know that, If you are a Christian, You know that, You read it in the scripture, I don't think, Any Christian, In here tonight, Should be surprised, That God would chastise, You, If you do wrong, It's what you expect, Because, He is your heavenly father, He has promised, To correct you, He has promised, To bring you back, To himself, If you stray, From the way, So the words, That we read here, They are not surprising, And yet, Despite the appropriate,

Confession, There is a suspicion, Whether it is a valid, Suspicion or not, That it lacks, The appropriate, Understanding, Of how serious, Their situation, Face, John Blanchard, Puts it like this, Vital, Elements, Are missing, There is, No sense, Of guilt, No confession, Of sin, But merely, Acknowledgement, Of the mess, And the pain, That sin, Has caused, To make, Matters worse, There is, The presumption, That in response, God will come, Running, And take care, Of all their problems, Now not everybody, Will agree, With, Blanchard's, Opinion, But it is an opinion, And it is shared, By a good number,

Of people, Looking, At this, These words, You would expect, There to be, In the words, An understanding, Of sin, And an appreciation, Of what sin does, When you sing, These words, Of psalm 51, Or psalm 32, Words, Composed, By David, Who knows, All too well, What sin, Has done, In his experience, The pain, And the grief, That it has caused him, As a concept, But there is, A grief on his part, For that sin, And for the offence, That it has caused God, Now surely, You would be right, In expecting, That to be contained, Within this confession, And I think, What most, What caused my, Caught my, Most of all, Was,

[ 28 : 15 ] Almost, The blasé, Understanding, After two days, Will he revive us, In the third day, He will raise us up, And we shall live in his sight, Now maybe, Maybe we should not, Understand that, As being, You know, A number, That is, Speaking about, Two, Literal days, As if, Whoever is saying this, Well, In 48 hours, God is going to, Come to us, And revive us, But rather, An understanding, That at some point, This revival, Will come, This quickening, This awakening, This return, To him, Will occur, But not so much, Occurring, On our part, Or their part, But on God's part,

This is what is expected, God is going, To return to them, Because, They have expressed, Sorrow, For their sin, Well, Whether we, We think of these words, In that way or not, And I think there is, Difficulty with them, In one sense, What you read, You understand, The appropriateness, Of, The words, The meaning, That you could attach, To the words, Is, Is there for you, But whether, It is, Words, That are uttered, By genuine, Penitent, People, Who understand, Their sin, And understand, Their need, To turn to God, Is another matter, There is,

An express desire, To respond, To something, That they know, God is doing, But I'm not sure, That if they appreciate, Their sin, Or what God is doing, You know, Sometimes, Our focus, Falls often, On, On the need, That there is, For the church, To grow, And our preoccupation, With the growth, Of the church, Is, A numerical, Growth, Forgetting, That there is also, Areas, Where we could, Grow, As individuals, Without, Necessarily, Experiencing, Numerical growth, Look at the way, Jesus speaks, About, The vine, In John, Chapter 15, He speaks, About his father, Being the vine dresser,

And he tells us, Of what takes place, That the vine dresser, Prunes the vine, In order that, There be fruit, Now I'm not a gardener, I've said it often, But I know, I have a rose bush, In the garden, And if I do, My job as a gardener, I prune that, Rose bush, Very, Very, Much, Down to the, To the core, As it were, If I don't do that, It doesn't mean, That the rose, Will not produce fruit, Next year, But if you compare, That rose, To a rose, That's been pruned, You'll see the growth, Is spindly, And you'll see, That it is weak, And, That it is exposed, To disease, Whereas, The one that is pruned,

Grows, More vigorously, And, Stronger, Now, That's what God does, In the experience, Of his people, And, We know, That what is soft, Is desirable, But we must also agree, That, Before what is soft, Is accomplished, There must be, Within, Each one of us, The right spirit, In order for that, To happen, These people, Were not without teaching, They were taught, Their need, They were taught, That the sin, Was the cause, Of that need, They were taught, Their way back, To God, And how to follow it, But it doesn't mean, That they, Observed, Everything, To the letter, Or fully understood, What God was doing, Or why, And what the result, Of what he was doing, Would be, John Calvin's comments,

[ 33 : 25 ] May get to the very core, Of what, The prophet is, Confronting here, When he sees, This people, And how they behave, It cannot be, That men will obey God, With, True, And sincere hearts, Except, A taste of his goodness, Allivers them, And they can, Certainly determine, That they shall, Return to him, In vain, If not, That obedience, That is necessary, But that he will, Certainly pardon them, Or, Perhaps more accurately, That he is more ready, To pardon them, On their return, But they won't, Do it, Unless they appreciate, The need that there is, To return, And the reason, That there is for it, I think, When we look at, What the prophet,

Is encountering here, We see, It replicated, Throughout the word, Of God, In the old testament, And in the new testament, In our own experience, Personal experience, Not looking anywhere else, Looking at ourselves, The word of God, Repeatedly shows, Encouragement given, Even to the wicked, To forsake their ways, And turn to the Lord, And when, We return to the Lord, With a fully guided, Intellectual appreciation, Of his ability, To show mercy, To those who need it, Then that's when, Our turning to him, Our returning to him, Is as it should be, But you notice, That it is not, A solitary action, That he, Is speaking of here,

The people are talking, About returning, Let us return, Unto the Lord, He will revive us, And, I think, That needs to be, Highlighted, In the experience, Of the church, That is envisaged, A corporate return, We can't, We can't point the finger, Outside of ourselves, But we cannot imagine, That our return, Is all that is expected, Of us, The church, I think, Is weak, In this area, In that, We do not appreciate, The, The need, For, Corporate, Repentance, Corporate repentance, As,

Congregations, As, Denominations, As, A church, Of a generation, And, There shall lethargy, Of spirit, That, Permits, The atmosphere, That we breathe, That we breathe, That, Necessitates, Us being, Reminded of it, Come, And let us, Return, To the Lord, Whatever the context, Whatever, The doubt, That we may have, Concerning, The genuineness, Of that statement, What lies behind it, Whether it is, Lacking in understanding, Or appreciation, Of the need, That there is, To return, The words, Themselves, Are indicative, Of a need, That there is, In the lives, Of the church, At any given, Moment, And not looking, For God, To stir us up,

To that end, Is, Itself, Something that is, Potentially harmful, When you look, For people, Who write about, The, The grace, Of repentance, One thing, That they, Almost universally, Insist upon, Is this, That, God, Will always, Be ready, To just, Chastise, His people, And nothing, Will deflect, Them from, That justicement, Because, He does it, With the view, To restore, It is not, It is not, To, To curtail, Their growth, Or their development, Or their progress, It is, In order, For that, To continue, A pace, His justicements, Are productive, His justicements, Are indicative,

[ 38 : 29 ] Of his love, And the need, That we have, To appreciate, That should not, Should not, Deflect our attention, From what the word, Of God is saying, In the book, Of daily readings, On the books, Of the old testament, There is a collection, Of different, Reformed writers, And one of them, Is David P. Murray, The former, Minister of the, Stornowick, Free Church, Continuing congregation, And he is writing, About the, The last few verses, Of this book, In, In the, In the prophecy, And, He asks a question, And you think, The question is absurd, Who, Would want, To be, A king, Of a self, Destroyed people, Who, Would want, To be a king, Of a self,

Destroyed people, And you know, The answer, Chapter 13, It tells you, I think it's in verse 7, Therefore, I will be unto them, As a lion, As a leopard, By the way, Will I observe them, I will meet them, As a bear, That is bereaved, Of her whelps, I will rend, The call of their heart, There will I devour, And make a lion, The wild beast, Shall tell them, O Israel, Thou shalt destroy, Thyself, But in me, Is thine help, I will be thy king, Where is any other, That may save thee, In all thy cities, And thy judges, Of whom thou saidest, Give me a king, And princess, I gave thee a king,

In mine anger, And took him away, In my wrath, The iniquity of every, Must bound up, His sin, His sin, And so on, I will be, Your king, And, It is the king, That is, Ensuring that his people, Return, With hearts, That are rent, That he himself, May, Repair, The tear, That he has made, May bless to us, These few thoughts, Let us pray, Ever blessed God, Our lives, Are a tapestry, Of many, Many, Rich, Declarations, Of your, Saving interest, There are many, Colors, And many hues, In the lives, That we live here,

In this world, Some of them are, Are gloriously bright, And yet, Some of them, Are of a darker hue, And they are descriptive, Of our, Of our, Sorrows, Of sadnesses, Of griefs, And our, Our departure, Into the darkness, Away from, Your own light, We give thanks, For the lives, That we live here, In this world, Under the, Gaze of your, Majestic, Merciful eye, Here our prayers, We ask, Cleanse us, From every sin, And draw us, To, Trust in, The God of heaven, More and more, Each day, Forgive us, In Jesus name, Amen, Our closing psalm, Is psalm 25, And to sing in Gaelic, From verse 6, Psalm 25,

From verse 6, To sing in Gaelic, RUSSELLS RUSSELLS Thank you.

[ 43 : 56 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 46 : 26 ] Thank you.