

True Repentance Leads to Change

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Preacher: Mr Stuart King

[0 : 00] Well, it's wonderful to be with you. To my own shame, it's the first time I've actually been with ourselves in the congregation, we've always put together, so I pray the Lord would speak to us this evening and that we would be able to see his face as we open up his word and that we'll be blessed by it. I'll take our call to worship from Psalm 63.

Psalm 63 in the first four verses of the psalm as we come before the Lord. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. To see thy power my glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary, because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall face thee. Thus, O I, bless thee, while I live, I will lift up my hands as I am aid.

And we pray that we will be able to see the Lord as we open up his word and sing the praises to his name today. So, we begin our public worship of God this evening by singing Psalm 40.

Psalm 40, the first five verses of the psalm. Psalm 40, the first five verses of the psalm. Lord my God, and he should need it bear. At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear.

He took me from a fearful pit and from the mighty plain, and on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way. He put a new song in my mouth, O God, to magnify. Men shall see and shall fear, and on the Lord rely. O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies. Respect him not the proud nor such, as turn a sin to lies. O Lord my God, though many are the wonders thou hast done. Thy gracious thoughts to us were far above all. Thoughts are gone. In order none can read the things to thee if them declare, and speak of them, I would be more than can be numbered up.

[2 : 15] So we'll sing these verses, verses 1 to 5, down to the end, the double verse, mark 5. Sing these verses to God's grace. I waited for the Lord my God, and they shall leave it bear.

I waited for the Lord my God, and they shall leave it bear.

And from the mighty way, and from the mighty way, and from the mighty way, and from the mighty way, our God, our Lord, He set my feet, He shall leave it bear.

And the mighty way, and the mighty way, and the mighty way, and the mighty way, and the mighty way, We shall see it that shall fear, and on the Lord rely.

O blessed is the mountainous rise, upon the Lord relies.

[4 : 35] Resetting not the pride or such, a star of sight to rise.

O Lord, my God, who let me out, the one that God has done, Thy gracious law to us were bad, Of all the hopes are gone, Then our gardener can rest from them.

To thee is then be clear, And speak of them, I would be more, Than God may comfort us.

Let's bring together a few here. Now, our blessed Father Lord be, Come before you and thanks and awe for how awesome you are.

We thank you that when we look to you, We see a sovereign God, We see a just God, And we see a loving God. We thank you that if you come before you, We know you are not a distant God, You are not one that does not hear our voice.

[6 : 47] As the psalmist says, I love the Lord, And call my voice, And prayers hear this hear. We give you thanks Lord, You do indeed hear our prayers. We thank you that you have a love for us, That it was so evident in the cross, And sending of your only son.

We thank you that you sent him, Who you know sin, To be sin for us, So that in him we may be made righteous. Lord, And we thank you for that glorious day. We pray Lord, As we come before you, As you worship your most holy name, That we are not forgetful, Of what happened at the cross.

We are not, We are not sanitised what happened there, And we remember, Even the brutality of what happened there, As that blood was shed for our sins. It is not just a glance at the cross, But let us continually gaze towards it, As we seek to remind ourselves of that wonderful gift, And that wonderful sacrifice, That none here are deserving of, Not one of us deserves that glorious gift of salvation, Yet in your love, And in your will, Lord, you saw fit, To send that gift for us, And we pray, That we would be reminded that, We don't require anything of us, We don't require us to reach a certain status, We don't require us to achieve a number of objectives, That gift is given to us, For us, That pure grace, That sees that gift coming for us, Lord, And we give you thanks, That it was instituted even before time began,

Lord, That that salvation plan, That golden thread, That runs through your word, So we pray, As we turn to your word this evening, And as we turn in our own devotional times, In our own times of worship, And family worship, We pray that whatever page we turn to, That we would see Christ crucified on the page, That we would see that golden thread, That runs through your word, That salvation plan, That we would see Jesus on every page, And then we would be pointing to the cross, We pray for that this evening, And as we open your word, That we grant us an opportunity to see your face, That you would reveal yourself to us in your word this evening, That you would reveal your peace, That you would reveal your light to us, And that we would go away, And that we would meditate upon that word, That we would chew upon that word, That we would spend time in it, That we would not just run through passages, And run over these verses, Lord, That we would sit down, And that we would consider them carefully,

And that we would be asking you to speak to us in that word. We pray, Lord, That you would be with this congregation, We give you thanks for them, And ask that you would continue to go before them, Particularly in this time of vacancy, We ask that you would be with them, And that you would set it upon the heart of one, To come in and to serve, As one who did so diligently before, Lord, We pray that you would indeed be with those, Prayerfully, Considering who to call, Lord, In the weeks or months ahead, We pray that you would be in that situation, I think, We would be seeking your will, Not the will of man, Not the will of self, But we would be returning to you, For all wisdom and all counsel, And we pray, Lord, Not just for your situation, But for all vacancies on our islands, As we see them continuing to increase, Lord, We pray for each and every one, Lord, And ask that even in those difficult times of vacancy, Lord, There would be blessings, That there would be much blessing as well,

[10 : 29] And we pray, Lord, For the interim moderator here, In Davis, Lord, And ask that you would be with him, In preparations for food, Pits, Supply, And all that comes with that, And we pray for other interim moderators on our island, As we see them, And ask that you would be with them, That you would go before them, That you would equip them, And that you would give them wisdom, And how they get started, And we pray for the office they receive in this congregation, Lord, And ask that you would continue with them, Lord, And that they would also be seeking your wisdom, That they would be seeking your guidance, And what you wish for them to do, Lord, We pray for all who come into this house, To hear your word, We pray for each and every soul here, In the community, We particularly come before you those this evening, That have no desire to be here, Who have maybe woken up this, Your day, With no thought of you, And are preparing to go to bed this evening, And throughout these hours have not felt once of you, Lord, We pray for them,

And ask that you would make yourself known today, That you would grab opportunities for those in the congregation here, To have a word in the community, Maybe in their own homes, You would grab those opportunities to take these chances to share the gospel with them, To share of eternity, For we know there is eternal life, Or there is an eternal death, Or eternity is before each and every one of us, Lord, So we pray for those who have made a conscious decision to not be here, Who have maybe thought little of you this very day, Even this very hour, Lord, We pray for them, And ask that you would grant us those opportunities, And the courage and the boldness to take the many opportunities that already present themselves, To share your word, To share the gospel, To be salt and light in this community, Lord, We pray that this congregation would radiate that light, But also a warmth that comes with that, Lord, As I see myself in the warm welcome, Lord,

We pray for each and every person that comes over these doors, Lord, That they would be warmly welcomed in here, But that it would be the word that speaks to them, Lord, That you would grant opportunities for that word to pierce into their heart, Lord, To arrest their hearts, Knowing that eternity is near to some, Is nearly distant to many at the moment, None of us know when our time period on earth will come to an end, But today is indeed the day of salvation, Lord, So we pray that you would bring eternity before us, That we would be reminded that once we enter into eternity, We will each become believers, But we will be separated by those that have trusted in you, And those that have realised that truth too late, So we pray, Lord, That we would be speaking to those that we know are lost, That we know are far from you, That are distant from you, That we would be speaking to them, As the doctor or the surgeon, We would speak to the patient that is terminally ill, Lord, That we would be imploring them to take the treatment,

To come before the cure, Lord, And they would be coming in there seeking your grace, And seeking to have their hearts turned from hearts of stone, Into hearts of stone. So we pray for those opportunities here, Not just in this community, But wherever you've placed us, We know our mission for you is as long and as broad as our own feet, Wherever we are, You have a calling for us, Lord, And that we ought to go and make disciples, For those that we interact with, Lord, So give us those opportunities to do so, Lord.

We pray for those unable to be with us this evening, Maybe through illness, Maybe struggling at this time, To vulnerable to them, We pray for them, We pray for those who will be spending these days, That are very much ones that we spend with our family, Maybe in hospital, We bring them before you, Lord, And ask that you would be that comforting hand for them, Lord, We know that you can, You are indeed a great physician, And we give you thanks for that, Lord, But we pray for those who are really lonely at this time, Maybe this is a time that is something that is raw for them, Whether through even a recent loss, Whether through even a not so recent loss, We pray that we would be taking our comfort in you, And not in anything else of this world, Lord.

[14 : 48] And we pray for those young ones in the community, Lord, Young ones that are here with us today as well, Lord, We pray for them, And ask that they would be coming to you in the days of their youth, Lord, That they would not be putting it aside for a later time, That they would be living their life rooted and grounded in you, Lord, That they would be able to go and to share their faith with the young ones in school, Lord, And we pray for our nation, We pray for our nation, We pray for the leaders in our nation, We pray for our nation, And for the work being done to plant churches across our nation, Lord, Of where there is that darkness, Lord, And ask that you would be a nation, And ask that you would be a nation, A nation that was once well acquainted with your work, Lord, And is no longer the case, It's a dark place, So we pray, Lord, That you would be with these young ones here, And that they would indeed be able to go out, And share that glorious message which we cherish so dearly.

And we pray for our denomination, And for the work being done to plant churches across our nation, Lord, We think of each and every corner, Of where there is that darkness, Lord, And ask that you would be there, That you would be in those places, And that you would place someone of your own choosing into these places in the world, Lord, Where the gospel can be shared, Where Christ's crucifier can be shared, And that your name would not just be a confanity in these places, But your name would be someone that they turn to, And that they would be there, Intimate, And they would have an intimate relationship with you, As their Lord and Saviour of our Lord.

So we pray that you would go before us in all that we do, Lord, And as an opportunity to hear you speak to us in your work, Lord, Go before us in all that we do, Be round us, Keep us, And pardon our many sins, And in Christ's precious and most glorious name we pray, Amen.

And we will sing again, This time from Psalm 119. Psalm 119 and verse 33 of the psalm.

Psalm 119 verse 33 through 40, And through the■ my sight and eyes from viewing vanity, and then thy freedom wholly be pleased to quicken me.

[17 : 23] Confirm to me thy gracious word, which I did gladly hear, e'en to thy servant Lord, who is devoted to thy fear. Turn now away my fear and reproach, for God thy judgments be, will fall thy peace as I have lost in thy truth. Quicken me.

We'll send these verses to 33 down to 40 to God's grace. Teach me O Lord the perfect way of thy patience divine unto our seven to the end I shall my heart and find give others a thing up to me so keep thy lost shine!

In with my own heart I shall observe it for thee.

In thy love shall make me through all I need thy name.

My heart and my testimonies are not in me in mine.

[19 : 30] Turn thou away my sight and eyes from pure and vanity.

Have did thy gift and holy way be pleased with me.

Confirm to me thy gracious word, which I did gladly hear.

In to thy step, my Lord, who is devoted to thy fear.

Turn thou away my dear great road.

[20 : 52] For good thy judgment see. Roe for thy priest as I have longed.

Then thy truth quicken me. Turn your Bibles to the Old Testament.

Looking good at Psalms. And we'll read from Psalm 51. Spend your time this evening focusing on parts of the Sabbath.

But we'll read the whole Psalm. Psalm 51.

To the chief musician, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet, came unto him after he had gone into Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness.

[21 : 59] According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, ye only, have I sinned. And burn this here in thy sight. That thou mightst be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Behold, I was shaken in iniquity, and in sin that my mother conceived thee. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Be good in thy good pleasure and desire. Be filled thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shall they be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, burnt offering and whole burnt offering.

[24 : 15] And now just before we come back to that passage, we'll sing again. That's Psalm, Psalm 51. We'll sing the first seven verses of Psalm 51.

■ was formed the womb within, my mother also may conceive in guiltiness and sin.

Behold thou in the inward parts, with truth delighted art, and wisdom thou shalt make thee know within the hidden part. Do thou with hiser sprinkle me, I shall be cleansed so, ye wash thy way, and then I shall be quieter than this noble.

Send verses 1-7 of Psalm 51 to God's grace. For thy loving kindness, Lord, a mercy upon thee, for thy compassion's grace brought out all my name.

Just unclear and just in still Behold thy infinite liberty Was born the womb within My man
also be conceived In guiltiness of sin Behold thy wind the inward parts With wisdom thy
child make me whole

Within the living parts To the will this song speak of me I shall be blessed so In wash of
me And then I shall be whiter Than the snow Just before we turn back to God's word Lord
we're going to pray and ask the blessing of God We turn on the blessing of God Lord we
ask You will speak to us in your word

You would grant us an opportunity To learn more about you And that we would go away from your house And that we would read into this word Lord that we would continually Exercise ourselves in your word Lord that it would not be something That is unfamiliar to us And at the same time It would not be something That we would be complacent with Lord that we would be turning to your word And that we would be seeking your guidance In all that we do Whatever you have placed us And we would say to our employment Wherever it may be Lord We pray that it would be your word That leads and guides us In all that we do Lord So God it is this opportunity To see your faces this evening Lord And be round us Keep us in part of our name In Jesus name we pray Amen Amen If you turn back in your Bibles To the psalm that we read Psalm 51 We are just going to focus Really on Really just the first verse Of the psalm Have mercy upon me O God According to thy loving kindness

According unto the multitude Of thy tender mercies Block out my transgressions Now in my preparation I was thinking of change And how we see a change In the life of David There is a recognition Of the sin in his own life And I came across this story Of a well known man Who may know the person It is a man called Alfred Nobel Many of you will know Alfred Nobel As the man who The Nobel Peace Prize Is named after One thing in my preparation I was in Because he also was the inventor Of the thing right Of the dynamite So you can see very different Things all together In terms of how he ought to be remembered And I was just going to read A little bit of one of the articles About Alfred Nobel And what he thought his invention Was going to do And how it made a slight change In his life So he believed That this invention of dynamite

[31 : 24] Would make war so horrible That it would never happen again It would be so awful And so terrible That no one in their right mind Would be willing to inflict That kind of terror on somebody Which as we know Even in our own day and age We still see explosives being used And it was not what Alfred Nobel had expected But the turning point in his life And there is a story about Or I am not even at all It is quite a long article But something interesting happened In the life of Alfred Nobel One morning Around the turn of the century He eloped to read And get this It was his own epitaph That he read in a newspaper And it said Alfred Nobel The inventor of dynamite Who died yesterday Devised away for more people To be killed in a war Than ever before He died a very rich man That was all it said In this newspaper But it said that he passed away The previous night But it wasn't him It was actually his older brother That passed away So the newspaper had made a mistake

But Alfred Nobel In reading that It arrested him And he thought That's not fair I want to be remembered So what did he do? Well he founded The Nobel Peace Prize Which we know is an award For scientists and writers Who foster peace And often that's now What we think of When we think of Alfred Nobel We are not thoughtful of The fact that he invented dynamite But it was something in his life That made him think What do I want to be remembered Or how do I want The rest of my life To go And he saw Change was needed In his life And that's what I want us to think about As we think of this first verse In Psalm 51 The change itself Can be so disruptive But it's necessary In a lot of aspects Of our life Of our life Not many people will enjoy The process of change Or maybe anything to do with change It's like things It's like things the way they are But it's something that's inevitable And it's not something that any of us can avoid Whether that's change in a work situation

Whether it's change in a family Or a church situation There will always be something that is inevitable Even in Even in I was speaking in the best year before My own Father-in-law passed away just over Just under two weeks ago now And even just the changes that we're starting to see Christmas will be different Everything will be different So there will always be that change You don't have to go too far back Only a few years ago Covid completely turned everything upside down Not least our church life But it's inevitable that change will happen Not everyone likes change And I mentioned about the workplace In my role I work in the health board And I deal with organisational change quite a bit And most people They get absolutely fearful When they think that organisational change is going to happen Something's going to happen My job's going to be done I'm going to be out of work And there's an inevitable reaction of fear And anxiety when they think of change I think it doesn't just happen in work It happens in our own lives

It happens in churches The congregation yourselves You're going through a change at the moment Through a period of vacancy But there's blessings to be found a lot of the time In my own testimony Which obviously I won't go into today I actually came to faith through a period of vacancy In Downvale So there is still blessings to be found Although it's sometimes hard for us to see And so it is of the sinner And an example here for David When we look at him Was one where he saw the need For a genuine longing for change And it's a question I want to ask all of ourselves today Can we truly claim that we're confessing our sins If we're not committing to change Thomas Boston, the well known writer Says this It's a sorrow for sin as sin Not only for the guilt of it But the loathsomeness of it Not only for the ill it does to your selves But the dishonour and wrong it does to a holy, gracious God True repentance

Only comes out of being authentic with ourselves Facing the reality of the sin in our lives Think about your own desires Are we for a genuine repentance And a change in your own life Only you can answer it I can't answer it I don't know your own heart You don't know my own heart But we need to think Particularly for those of us That have professed our faith Are we continually bringing before the Lord Our desire to change And to live a life that is pleasing to him On the flip side of that If you feel you're able to repent of your sins But you're not truly committed to that change You're not ready to change Then it's something you ought to be praying about In your own lives Don't need to go there in your Bible But in Psalm 32 verses 1 to 2 It says Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven Whose sin is covered Blessed is the man unto Unto while the Lord imputed not iniquity And in whose spirit there is no guile

[36 : 32] Blessed is the man unto While the Lord imputed not iniquity And in whose spirit there is no guile Blessed are those who are forgiven And this psalm, Psalm 51 It serves a poignant reminder for us Of the need for that repentance in our lives And as we explore these verses I want us to open up our own hearts To that transformative power of God's grace And his mercy as we read so clearly in that first verse And that he would speak to us this evening But before we delve into the passage itself I want us to understand a little bit of the backdrop As to where we are in this heartfelt prayer So we know David Him who was well known and wrote many of the Psalms He was a man after God's own heart He committed a grievous sin In a moment of weakness David succumbed to the temptation Leading to adultery and to murder We see that at the beginning of the Psalm We read here

There is a historic account that we are looking at here There needs to be no assumptions made here About what this Psalm was about What it was trying to tell us It is clear right at the beginning To the chief musician A Psalm of David When Nathan the prophet came unto him After he had gone in to Bathsheba We are told that David wrote it And he wrote it on a particular occasion And that was when Nathan challenged him Concerning his sin Morgan one of the commentators said This great Psalm Pulsating with the agony Sin-stricken soul Helps others to understand The chupendous wonder Of the everlasting mercy of our God Now we don't need to read it here You can maybe read this In your own quiet time this evening After supper But 2 Samuel chapter 12 Is the passage that tells us Where Nathan pointed out to Count David That his own actions were not in keeping With his own judgment of others How easy it is for us to condemn others

Now again You can go there in your Bible If you want to Matthew chapter 7 But I'm just going to read the first 5 verses Of Matthew chapter 7 Just as a reminder of how easy it is That we maybe find ourselves Even today In 2024 At the tail end of it Condemning others For their lives But we're told here in chapter 7 Of Matthew Judge not Like ye ye not judge For with what judgment ye judge Ye shall be judged And report the measure ye meat It shall be measured to you again And why behold this thou the mould That is in thy brother's eye But considerest not the beam That is in thy own eye Thou hypocrite First cast out the beam Out of thy own eye And then shalt thou see clearly To cast out the mould Out of thy brother's eye So we see that it's so easy for us And it's easy for our own lives And I speak to myself first Before I speak to anyone else It's so easy for us To condemn others And this is what Nathan was challenging David about Yet despite the fact that David knew

That what he was doing was wrong He continued to try and conceal that sin In his life He came into temptation And let his eyes wander with Bathsheba Not only that But he was hopelessly overwhelmed By the need to cover up what he had done That led him to commit murder Of one of his faithful soldiers Again, one of the commentators Warren Weirby Says in this passage Before you yield to temptation Look back and recall God's goodness to you Look ahead and remember the wages of sin Look around and think of all the people Who may be affected by God you knew And look up and ask God for strength To say no This is one of the lowest points in David's life This is, as we said earlier The man after God's own heart Even the Bible tells us He is a man after God's own heart Yet he uses disguise He uses dishonesty

To cover up his adultery God then begins to deal with David He thought what he had done He had maybe done in private Yet God knows and sees all things In all of our lives We can conceal absolutely nothing from him What he had done privately Was not private at all And it reminds me of I can't remember who he was preaching Someone in Tarbert Recounting a story of a preacher in Tarbert And I think it was in a children's address About their lives And being mindful of the lives that they are living And the little illustration that he gave them Is where they were all sitting in pews And if you imagine On the back of our own head There was a little television screen That was just constantly going round With all of our thoughts All of the things that we've done Just even our thoughts Would you be happy for the person In the pew behind to watch it?

[41 : 35] And I think it may be I said it Speaking to myself first and foremost The last thing I would want If there was a big screen here Would be for people to hear And see my own thoughts My own actions Because it's a reminder to us That although we may think it's private There's absolutely nothing private With the Lord So how do we know then When we read this passage That David was genuinely repentant?

Well let's just first consider One of our first points So we'll just look at this Across three points The first is David's cry We'll then look at David's confidence And then we'll look at David's cleansing Just laterally So we'll look at David's cry In the first instance Like a glimmer of hope Amidst darkness David's repentance shines forth At the beginning of our passage He comes to the Lord With a broken, contrite heart Acknowledging his sins And seeking forgiveness And restoration Just look at that first verse He says I have mercy upon me O God According to thy loving kindness According unto the multitude Of thy tender mercy Flought out my translations We see a cry from his very soul As it pleads for mercy It doesn't plead for justice He pleads for mercy David acknowledges his sins Without making excuse He doesn't try to justify his actions

As we may be doing our own lives He doesn't try to blame others True repentance begins with acknowledging Our wrongdoing before God Not looking to the right But looking inwardly to our own lives And we must humbly admit our sins Bringing them into the light of God's truth And David's plea for God's mercy And David's plea for God's mercy Sorry David pleads here for God's mercy Understanding that God's love And his compassion Are far greater than the depths of his sin Likewise he should come before the Lord today Not in despair But in hope Knowing that his love and his mercy Are far beyond measure David realises that sin is not merely a mistake Or a slip up Or something he just did by accident It's an offence against God himself And that's what's said That sin is separation from God It damages our relationship with God And with others And when we repent

We recognise the seriousness of our actions And their consequences As we seek that restoration Now this cry from David Comes from a realisation That he has so terribly Terribly sinned That he has nothing But deserving of God's wrath And when he himself Can't reverse or fix what he's done He can't turn back time He can't click his fingers And it all just goes away There is nothing That any of us can do To buy back favour with God And the question would be Why is that?

Well sin is not something We are able to repair We simply cannot do It's not the inner gift To pay God back No matter who you are No matter what gifts you have We cannot give anything back to God And we live in a world That it glamourises sin That it trivialises sin And its consequences And we must understand The significance of acknowledging Lamenting And ultimately seeking forgiveness For our transgressions That sin separates us from God And it hinders our spiritual growth But we ought to grieve sin in our lives And I don't use that word lightly We ought to grieve sin in our lives We may be hearing it I want to ask yourself Do you grieve the sin in your life?

[45 : 19] None of us will be free from sin It's just a reality We are all sinful Even those of us who have come to know the Lord We will still sin But do you grieve that sin? And just hurt you into the core of yourself Every time you sin And if it doesn't We are maybe becoming immune to it And we need to check ourselves And come before the Lord But before we can grasp the concept of grieving that sin We must first comprehend the nature of sin itself Sin is that rebellion against God's perfect will It's an act that violates His holy standard It disrupts our relationship with Him It damages fellowship with others And it often tarnishes our own souls Sin manifests itself in various forms Whether it's in our actions Or thoughts or attitudes Just at that television on the back of our head It can be shown in lots of different ways But its consequences are far reaching Romans 3, 20-D reminds us that For all have sinned

And come short of the glory of God No one is exempt No one here is exempt No one in the community is exempt No one says I'm not religious I don't really want to go to church They are not exempt from this None Absolutely none For all of us are exempt And come short of the glory of God None of us are exempt from that So grieving sin is a vital response to our fallen nature As followers of Christ We should have a godly sorrow for our transgressions A genuine sorrow over our sins Leads us to seek forgiveness and transformation While a worldly sorrow merely leads to guilt and despair Through that grieving of our sins We acknowledge our need for God's mercy and grace One of the Puritans One of my favourite writers Actors, Thomas Watson Said this very short Really powerful sentence He says Till sin be bitter

Christ will not be sweet Till sin be bitter Christ will not be sweet That first step towards eating sin is recognizing its presence in our lives We must honestly assess ourselves and confront the areas where we have fallen short of God's standard And this process requires humility It requires introspection And let the Holy Spirit To reveal our sins The only hope that David had Was to truly repent And it is the same for us today This evening here in Calvary We must remember however That David was a servant of God Yet he doesn't petition for you by saying Have mercy upon me your servant Look how you've used me God Have mercy upon me Because I've had so much for you No He says Have mercy upon me O God The one to whom I am accountable And the one who will rightly judge me for my sins When they have true genuine repentance The sinner will realize

That they are the mercy of God And God alone David pleased for God to cleanse And recognizing that only God Can purify our hearts And make us clean It's through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ On the cross that our sins are washed away God's grace is a powerful force That could turn even the most broken heart Into something beautiful David desires a renewed heart And a steadfast repentance Involves not just asking for forgiveness But seeking that transformation And that change in our lives I'm going to take a wee part of God There are a young person here So I'm hoping that I can maybe ask a question You don't need to respond to me But do you like popcorn?

You can just nod to me Or a thumbs up Do you like popcorn? Do you like it? When you get the bottom of the packet And then a seed You just munch those seeds They're good aren't they? Do you like the seeds?

[49 : 19] I'm not a fan of the seeds I always think they're the worst bit They can break their teeth But we all I love popcorn as well As you can see I've probably had too many packs But I always think When I think about this transformation Think of the popcorn It's so hard Nobody buys a pack of seeds And just eats them It has to go through heat It has to go through a change And then it transforms Into something that we like the smell of We like the taste of And it's something that we're then attracted to And we must follow God To change us from the inside out Unlike that popcorn that just goes through some heat We have to go through the Lord And ask him to change us from the inside out Purifying our hearts And renewing our spirits And it's in God's case That he not only forgives us But he also restores us To a place of joy and intimacy with him The day that longs for the joy of God's salvation To be restored in his life When we truly repent We experience the overwhelming joy Of being reconciled with God

The weight of guilt and shame is lifted And we can walk in the freedom and joy That comes from knowing we are forgiven And loved by our Heavenly Father But what is mercy?

Well it's when someone does something for you Purely out of compassion They seek to act for your good Not because you earned it Not because you deserved it But purely out of that love and kindness If David was clearly in a state of distress here Yet he knew it would be a lot worse If he was to die in the situation he was in He would have absolutely had eternity in view He knows he would not have been A fit and proper candidate for heaven So he pleads to God to act mercifully And to show favour on him Is that a position that you can identify with this evening?

When you come to the Lord knowing That you have absolutely nothing in your locker To marry his mercy And all that you can do is simply ask for that mercy And to be forgiven Have you ever felt that true repentance Where you are under distress There is nothing to relieve you of that Other than coming to him Who knows you inside and out If not, that's not something That you may be recognised in your own life Then I would urge you to do so today And again I speak to myself first and foremost When I say that We should be coming to the Lord Asking that he who knows us inside and out Would be allowing us to recognise the sin in our lives And we would be turning to him for mercy So we see that in David's cry That's our first point Moving on to the second one Looking at David's confidence We've seen David's cry We now move into David's confidence And a true genuine repentance Is not simply that cry for mercy It's important to understand Where that mercy cry is being directed to

Just like with a child that hurts himself They often cry out for help And not just in anyone Their daughter is two and a half Lights falling over apparently And tends to do it quite a lot Did it in church Not this morning but last week And the first place she'll go to Is either to myself Or to my wife So she doesn't just go to the first person she sees This will go to the first stranger she comes across No she'll go to the one that she knows will help her And it's the same here with David's cry He's kind of a God that he knows is full of love and full of mercy Look again at verse 1 There have mercy upon me O God According to thy loving kindness According unto the multitude of thy tender mercy brought out my transgressions According to thy loving kindness His plea is now God that is steadfast in love and abundant in mercy Therefore he knows he has a hope And we have a hope here today

[53 : 17] What feels like a long time ago I used to work when we were on the mainland I used to work for Scottish Power And I This is shortly after leaving school And I would be in the call centre Taking phone calls hopefully From nobody here Taking phone calls from those That were something they'd be building up a debt And what would often happen is They would say Well I've maybe got a thousand pounds outstanding on my account Can I set up a plan I've not got the money to pay it all just now And the organisation would say Make sure we get a commitment from that person Whether they pay 10% Or they pay something up front So that we can get that commitment from them And when that person owed money They would often commit to paying later Maybe later in the year Maybe over a series of months We would always be told to ask them To put something towards it We would want to see their desire And their commitment To paying off that debt in their great time And sometimes it's like that with the sinner We can reduce our sin Or we minimise it

Or we maybe weigh it up with our church attendance Maybe we say I know I should have done that But I've been doing prayer meeting for the last however many years I'll never miss a service We can sometimes weigh that little balance in our own lives Maybe our prayer time Where we're spending a lot of time in prayer We're very exercising God's word And maybe we try to hold that up against the sin in our lives And it's completely the wrong approach to God Unlike the example where somebody has built up a debt And we would want to see a commitment from And they would put something forward towards it God doesn't expect any contribution from you And the reason for that is because we can't contribute Our hearts and our minds are so defiled They are all things sinful It's in Him and Him alone Who must do the work to cleanse and to wash us All we can do All you can do And all I can do Is come to Him crying That He will deal with us mercifully And that's what we're seeing here

This perfect example here from David Just look at verse 16 Just a little bit further on David says here For thou desirest not sacrifice Else will I give it Thou delightest not in burnt offerings David himself is telling us clearly That God will not delight in these sacrifices His hope does not lie His hope does not lie In being able to offer up sacrifice Or offer up burnt offerings But solely by the steadfast love And abundant mercy of His Lord When the sinner truly opens Of the sins that they grieve They are acutely aware of the gravity of their sins It's not something that they'll brush off and just say Well nobody was around Or maybe went on to that website Nobody else is bothered Nobody was affected by it The true repentant sinner will That the gravity of that sin will be immense They don't just try and brush it away On the flip side If you look at the unrefined sinner

They will often try to minimize And to negate the seriousness of their sins It can't have been that bad Other people have sinned A lot worse than I There's far more people Maybe in my next door My neighbours They've done a lot worse than I have They'll often minimize their sins Which is something we ought not to do If that's something that is recognizing in your own life I would encourage you to pray into that And ask that the Lord would reveal the gravity of the prayer And the sins in your own lives Maybe that surely God understands the pressure I'm under The pressure at work Maybe even the pressure in the church In the church That's what maybe Maybe put me in a situation where I've sinned Such a sin If you have a small view of sin You will not see the immensity of God Matt Smithers Is a quote similar to that He said We have never committed a small sin Because we have never offended a small God There is no such thing as a small sin Friends if it's you

Today And you've not got that sign of a truly repentant heart Maybe you're blaming others Or you ignore the responsibility that you have For the sin in your own lives Then I urge you to pray to the Lord And ask that He would reveal Himself to you this evening Each of us ought to be conscious of our sinful wretched hearts By sharing in David's confidence That our hope is in God A God who is full of abundant mercy And steadfast in love That is why David cries in such a way That we see of in verse 1 of chapter Psalm 51 We however have one advantage that David did not have At the time of praying this psalm We are the events as we think of it This time of the evening particularly of Jesus' birth We have a death and His resurrection to reflect upon David was looking forward to the ultimate sacrifice that was to come We see the answer to David's longing in this psalm at the cross

[58 : 27] If anyone ever doubted that the God of heaven is loving and merciful Then we just need to look to the sending of His only Son to die on the cross Perhaps this evening you are overwhelmed by your sins Maybe you are not overwhelmed And you may be blaming others or reducing them in your own life Then I urge you to look to God and ask Him to have mercy on you So we have seen that David's cry We have seen that repentant cry And we have seen the confidence where that cry is directed Not to anything else other than to God and God alone I want to just as we close to look finally at David's cleansing in this verse True repentance is not just about crying to God The God that is steadfast in love and abundant in mercy But it is also a cry for cleansing Let's look at the end of verse 51 Let's look at the end of verse 51 Chapter 51 Chapter 51 verse 1 sorry According unto the multitude of my tender mercy Blot out my transgressions He did blot out my transgressions

David was acutely aware that for these sins to be neglected by him Was to see him destined for a lost eternity He knew these sins needed to be erased from this record on the day of judgment Hence the words blot out my transgressions And this is a core issue with all of mankind Each and every one of us are born sinners Full of selfishness, lies and hatred We are full of all kinds of little sins from so young Just think of the young child that lashes out in a hateful anger We mentioned earlier about our own daughter She is two and a half now Lying, you would never think it But she has been doing it for a long time You ask her did she do that?

Did she eat that chocolate? No, she had chocolate all around her mouth So even in our youth we are sinful We are full of these little sins in our own life We grow up and our sins get more and more complicated Maybe they get darker Or then we are equipped to try and conceal them But we can never do so The well known American dealers Jonathan Edwards I think he was 19 when he wrote A series of resolutions This is a challenging one One of the resolutions he wrote Was that he resolved never to do anything Which I should be afraid to do If it were the last hour of my life He resolved never to do anything Which I would be afraid to do If it were the last hour of my life Is that you? Is that your approach to life?

That you won't waste anyone These sinful things of the world And the reality is that we were all told We have one hour left Would we spend our time scrolling through our phones?

Would we spend our time watching television? I think we probably wouldn't It is an important and challenging reminder And resolution for us to consider So just as we come to our close I want to ask We accept that sin in our lives Need to be dealt with And the most important dilemma Facing us today Is not the economy Is not the wars that are going on around the world It's not what Prime Minister is coming in What President is coming in The cost of housing on our islands It's our sinful hearts And our need for forgiveness It's only today God would erase our sins from our records And welcome us into Heaven All other issues in life Should be reduced to the smallest of problems that they are And the question to ask is Will God open the record book of your life And say that the sins have been dealt with And say well done good and faithful sir Lord You can pray for the ministers on our own island And our denomination And for your own future minister of the Lord's choosing

[62 : 17] We see across many denominations That the issue of sin and hell They are not dealt with I'll often when I'm driving up the road Sometimes listen to Radio 4 And you've got the thought for the day And it's a red wound It's someone down south of England sometimes And they'll do their little thought for the day Over a few minutes You don't hear Christ You don't hear sin You don't hear of heaven or hell or eternity Everything has just been diluted to the niceties That are of no help to anyone Many will shirk away from the responsibility that we have In sharing that we are sinful And there is an eternity to look forward to And I pray that many across our nation Could not be leading people down a rose tinted path To a lost eternity with these niceties We need today to hear the Lord's voice speaking to us For all he asks of us to be the pent of our sins And ask for forgiveness To say as the psalmist said

Have mercy upon me And block out my intransgressions Have you done that yet? Have you gone to God and said Have mercy upon me? Have you encouraged those around you Those who you really know are lost To turn to the Lord?

Have you invited them to church? Have you invited them to come in And to hear of God's word? David understands that God desires a genuine repentance And a contrite heart More than mere religious rituals True worship flows from a heart That has been humbled before God Seeking His forgiveness And surrendering to His will Let us remember Let us remember that repentance is not just a one time event But it is a lifelong journey of Jesus Sorry Just as King David turned to God and repent We too must continually examine our hearts Confessing our sins and seeking God's forgiveness Remember the words of Thomas Watson Until we sin in our lives be bitter Christ will not be sweet Through repentance We open ourselves to that transformative power of God's grace God's grace Experiencing the joy and salvation And the restoration of our relationship with Him May we like David

Be people who humbly acknowledge our sins Seek God's mercy And allow His grace to cleanse and renew us Let us be bearers of His forgiveness and His mercy Leading others to that transformative power of repentance What are those that are really not Christians among us all?

I will not be much longer as we Look to those that are really not yet believers Look at verse 10 of the Psalm Create in me a clean heart O God And renew a right spirit for you need David emphasized that he wanted God to work in the inner parts of his being He doesn't say Lord help me to create a clean heart in myself He doesn't say Lord tell me all I need to do in order to change my own heart No he says create in me a clean heart O God The change that has to take place in our hearts Is not something that any human being has the power to create I don't have the power to create in you That salvation and you don't have the power to create it in yourself That's why like the well-known hymn We just have to say nothing in my hands I bring Simply to thy cross I cling Simply look up to him

[65 : 58] And thank him for being a merciful and loving God Something that is so evident in the setting of his only son Who died for your sins Just remember that popcorn kernel I was talking about there very briefly We must trade our hard hearts to one that is sweet And give off a wonderful aroma of Christ Jesus Ask him to have mercy on you today And that the records in heaven will have your sins allotted out Amen And may the Lord bless you very short reflections on this work We'll say a word of prayers before we complete our singing Thank you And the

recognizing it in our own lives that we would be grieving that sin, but that we would not be trying to sort it in and on ourselves, that we would be seeking your faith, that we would be seeking your strength, that we would be coming to you in repentance by simply saying the words, have mercy upon me, O God.

Not according to that which we can do, not according to all that we can bring to the table, but according to your steadfast love and abundant mercy. Lord, we thank you that you are a God that came down.

As we think of this time of year, we pray, Lord, that we would be reminded of, not just the birth, but the birth, the death and the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour. We thank you for it.

And pray that you would grant us those opportunities to share it with all of those around us, that we would, as the old writer said many hundreds of years ago, that our backs would not be to the light facing that which it eliminates, that we would be turning to the light itself, recognising that in all the things that are around us this very day, around this time of year, that we would not forget the true light, the light that the darkness cannot overcome.

Lord, we give you thanks for your son, for sending him, and for all that happened on the cross. Lord, and we pray for those, particularly this evening, who don't know you. Ask, Lord, that you would make them aware of the sins in their lives, that they would repent in the way that David did, and that cry that would be coming from them would find its confidence in you, and a cleansing that can only be done by you blotting out our transgressions.

[68 : 46] Lord, so, be with us just now, Lord, take each and every person home safely, get a journey of mercy to those near and far from your house here, Lord, and go before us into the rest of this week, in Christ's name we pray.

Amen. Well, just as we conclude, we'll sing just last three verses of Psalm 72, well-known verses, verses 17 to 19 of Psalm 72.

Amen. His name forever shall endure, lastly the Son of the Son, and shall be blessed in heaven, and blessed all nations, shall be called out.

Blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel, for he alone the wondrous works, and glory that itself, and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity.

