

Advent in the Psalms: Sin

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[0:00] Psalm 51. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.

! Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. So that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

[1:04] Hide your 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 your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation.

And my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You will not be pleased with the burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

[2:11] Do good to Zion in your good pleasure. Build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings, and whole burnt offerings.

Then bulls will be offered on your altar. Trust you well today. Let's open with a word of prayer. O Lord, we need you.

Lord, it is true that every hour we need you. We especially need you in this moment as we consider your word.

Lord, and it is our prayer that you would do the miraculous, that you would speak through us, into our hearts today. Lord, that you would cause us to be transformed by your word.

Lord, that you would cause your Holy Spirit to do what only he can do. O Lord. Lord, refresh. Refresh your people, O Lord.

[3:17] Inspire your people. Grant us insight today. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. Amen. Today, we start a four-part series called Advent in the Psalms.

Advent is longing, waiting, and preparing for God's salvation through Christ.

Bluetooth. Bluetooth. both in his first and in his second coming. And while we are always to have that kind of mindset, that is to say, while we are always to look forward to his second coming and to be grateful for his first coming, this time of year is especially powerful.

So why, you might ask, why the Psalms? Why consider Advent through the Psalms? Well, I didn't choose it, but I'm going to speculate why.

Perhaps it is because in the Psalms, we find accounts of real situations, real life, real world situations we often confront.

[5:05] Things like sin, guilt, grief, and our need for grace. And in the Psalms, we find very rich context for us to highlight the message of Advent, having regard for those things that I mentioned.

Today's message is Advent in the Psalms, sin. We're going to be looking and considering Advent in the Psalms from the perspective of sin.

And specifically, we're going to be looking at, very closely, at Psalm 51. And in Psalm 51, we see David being very sorrowful about his sin and longing for cleansing and forgiveness, which you and I know can only come through Jesus Christ.

David longed for genuine forgiveness. Those of us in Christ receive forgiveness when we sin because Christ came and died.

And we longed for holiness, which we will receive when he returns. Psalm 51 is really, when you get to the bottom of it, is really about a broken relationship.

[7:04] It's about a broken relationship leading to a broken heart, which was restored by grace.

A broken relationship between David and God, which led to David's heart being broken, and eventually his heart, the relationship being restored.

But how many of you know that grace alone mends a broken relationship with God? And that is the message of Christmas.

And indeed, it is the gospel. That grace alone mends a broken relationship with God. Man's relationship with God was irreparably broken.

And God, through the gift of his son, made possible the mending of that relationship. During the season of Advent, we look with gratitude at what God alone has done and we respond with renewed commitment to holiness.

[8:31] To help us navigate through this psalm, Psalm 51, I've divided the message into two parts. Number one, a broken relationship.

And number two, a restored relationship. Let's now consider number one, a broken relationship.

Without raising a hat, of course, I wonder who can say whether you've ever had or been a part of a broken relationship.

Don't raise your hand. Perhaps it was a significant other. Perhaps it was a relative. Perhaps a friend, a co-worker.

A neighbor. Maybe someone you trusted highly. But the relationship was broken.

[9:54] If you have, if you have been in a broken relationship, and I know you have, then you know what it feels like.

Like we say in the Bahamas, things change after a relationship is broken.

The intimacy is no longer there. The trust is no longer there. Things you once talked about and shared are talked about and shared no more.

Indeed, chances are that you avoid the person altogether. And how many of you know that a broken heart often comes after a broken relationship?

not all the time, but most times. If the relationship is meaningful, generally a broken heart comes after a broken relationship.

[11:13] Many of you have had a broken heart. Don't raise your hand. Broken heart. See, in a moment, David's heart was broken.

As we consider this point of a broken relationship, I wish to do so from two perspectives.

What is to consider the cause of this broken relationship that David had with the Lord?

what caused it? Why did it happen? And then I want us to consider the effect of this broken relationship.

David had a broken relationship. What caused it? And how did it manifest itself? What was the result of this broken relationship?

[12:22] This broken relationship, what was the cause of this broken relationship? Let's consider it. Psalm 51. There's a context for Psalm 51.

David, as all of you know, was the king. And so, as king, David had an army. And David, the Bible tells us that David sent his men out to fight, which they often did.

But on this particular occasion, David did not accompany them. David stayed at home. and they all went out to fight representing the king.

And one evening, the Bible says, that David went on his rooftop and he looked over and he saw a young lady who was taking a bow.

And the Bible tells us that she was beautiful. David admired her and David said to his servant, inquire, find out who she is and bring her to me.

[13:54] The servant returned and said, this lady, her name is Bathsheba. David had her brought to him and the Bible says that David took her and he slept with her.

David knew prior to sleeping with her that she was married. Indeed, she was married to someone who was fighting on David's behalf.

His name was Uriah. Now, here it is, man fighting on David's behalf. David is sleeping with his wife. Having slept with her, she returned to her home and sometime later, she sent a message to David saying that she was pregnant.

David said, oh my goodness, I'm in trouble now. What am I going to do? David concocted this plan.

[15:14] He decided that what he would do is have Uriah return home or leave. So he sent to the chief of the army, Joab, and he said, have Uriah come to me.

And so Uriah came, and when Uriah came to David, David started to engage in conversation with him. David said, how is the war going?

How is Joab going? Undoubtedly, trying to distract him from any unusual cause that he might be thinking.

Why is it that I was the one brought here? And David said to him, you know what, young man, now that you're back, why don't you go home, wash your feet, and take some time off?

Because you know what David wanted. David wanted this man to sleep with his wife, to cover up what he had done. The next day, David got word from his servants, and the servants said to David, guess what, Uriah didn't go to his wife.

[16:44] Instead, Uriah stayed right here with us, guarding the palace. And David said, what? You've got to be kidding. What kind of man this is.

What kind, this is not a Bohemian. And so, so David, David was, he messed David's plan right up.

And so David called the man to him. David said, Uriah, you know, what's going on? You didn't go to your wife. So David said, you know what?

David said, I've got to figure this out. David said, why don't you stay an extra day? Stay an extra day, and then you can return tomorrow.

So David said, you know what I'm going to do now? I'm going to get him drunk. And so David decided that what he would do is have a meal with this man and get him drunk.

[17:45] And he thought then the man would go certainly and sleep with his wife. But Uriah said, there is no way I'm going to sleep with my wife.

Not while my brothers are in battle. I'm not going to do it. Not while the Ark of the Covenant is with them. I'm not going to do it.

More honorable than David. And he didn't go into his wife, the Bible tells us. And so David said, oh my goodness, what am I going to do?

I'm in trouble now. So guess what David did? David said, David wrote a letter and in the letter addressed to Joab, David says, here's what I want you to do.

I want you to put Uriah at the fiercest place where we're fighting. And when you get there, I want you to have the men to draw back.

[18:58] So that he is killed. And guess who David gave the letter to? To take back to the head of the army.

He gave the letter to Uriah. What an honorable man. He didn't open the letter. Can you believe that? He didn't open the letter. Instead, he took the letter to Joab and he gave it to him.

And guess what happened? Joab then, took him to the fiercest part of the fighting.

And not only was he killed, but several other men were killed. I want you to begin to see the picture here that is unfolding before us.

So not only was Bathsheba's husband killed, other men were killed as well.

[20:03] Not only did David cause the death of these men, he got his, the chief of his army involved in all of this.

He was implicated in all of this because he knew exactly what was going on. David had him killed.

And after he was killed, the word came back to David that guess what, Uriah was killed.

David said, okay, since he died, even though these other men were killed, that's all right.

That's all right. We're going to win this war anyway. And David immediately took back Sheba and he took her to be his wife, the Bible says.

And some time later, some time later, she gave birth to a child, a son. But then there was a prophet, his name was Nathan.

[21:23] And Nathan came to David, and Nathan relayed a story to David, not exactly this account that I just told you, but he told David about a similar, he gave him an analogy, in other words.

And David said, really? Someone would do something like that? He said, that person ought to be killed. And Nathan said, let me tell you, David, it's you I'm talking about. It's you I'm talking about. And David said, oh my goodness. And Nathan said to David, the Lord is displeased with you. This relationship is broken.

Because of what you've done, your wives, and David wives, David had many of them. Nathan, before Nathan said that to David, Nathan said, the Lord said, that I've given you this kingdom. I've given you these wives. I've given you wealth. And he said, I would have given you even more. But look at what you have done. And because of what you've done, I'm going to cause these wives of yours, I'm going to cause someone to sleep with them.

[22:43] Not in the dark as you did with Bathsheba, but in the open sun. And the sword will not be removed from your home.

And then he said further, this child that she gave birth to will die. And David moaned over this. David was broken. And it was in that context that David wrote this psalm had picked by God to be king.

Protected from Solomon, sorry, from Saul on many occasions. And everything that he needed. He became such a disappointment. But look at what, as David wrote in Psalm 51, let's take a look at it.

[24:02] See how David responds. Being broken. How does David see this broken relationship caused by his unfaithfulness, his greed, inability to be satisfied.

Look at what David writes in Psalm 51, verses 1-4. Have mercy on me, O God.

According to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Brothers and sisters, I want you to take a close look at this. Focus for a moment on verse 4. Let's read that again.

[25:37] David writes in verse 4, Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Here is a man who sinned against Uriah, who sinned against Uriah's wife, who sinned against Uriah's siblings, if he had any, who sinned against Uriah's parents, who sinned against Joab and all the other men who were killed needlessly, who sinned against his own child, and who as king of Israel, who ought to have been a good example to them, sinned against his people, yet he writes, against you, you only, he doubles down on it, he says against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your side?

What are we to make of this? Was David making light of the clear reality that he had sinned against all of these people at this point?

You don't think so. I don't think he was. What David was saying, brothers and sisters, is this, David was emphasizing that his actions, though sinful against all those people, ultimately, he was sinning against God.

When you and I sin, ultimately, we sin against God. Listen to what John Piper said in response to the question, what are we to make of what David said.

[28:21] John Piper said, sin, by definition in the Bible, is not wrongdoing, is not wronging another person.

It is assaulting the glory of God. It is sin, by definition in the Bible, is not wrongdoing, is not wronging another person.

It is assaulting the glory of God, rebelling against God. Sin, by definition, is a vertical phenomenon. These horizontal wrongs are horrible, murder, rape, the death of a baby that David elicits. That's horrible and wrong. And it's not wrong to call it sin. But the thing that makes it sin is its vertical dimension.

[29:37] It is disobeying God's law. It is denying that he satisfies your soul to keep you from needing to kill or rape.

It is sin in that it is an assault on God's authority and his right to tell you what to do.

Brothers and sisters, how profound, how piercing those words. David recognized all of the harm that he had done to all of these people.

While they could not be diminished, ultimately, he was sinning against God. But what was the cause of this broken relationship?

Not only what David did with Bathsheba. look at what David writes in verse 5.

[31:04] Verse 5 of this psalm, David says, behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.

this broken relationship. David is not here saying that his mother sinned as she conceived or delivered him.

He's writing about original sin. Man's nature is to sin. That's the point David is making. Man is fallen and corrupted because of Adam.

David sees that sin is not just what he did. It is in fact his nature.

Broken relationship because of man's very nature. Indeed, God knew from the very beginning that man needed a savior.

[32:22] Not just the law. The law which David had was not enough to deal with this sin nature that David had and indeed all of humanity had and have.

But if the law were good enough, Christ would not have had to come. But he did come as a child.

He lived a sinless life. But he was crucified for our justification because of this sin nature.

He was fallen because of Adam. Adam. So now that we've considered the cause of this broken relationship, let's now consider the effect of this broken relationship.

relationship. The word that best describes the effect of David's broken relationship is the word broken. David uses this word broken three times in the psalm.

[33:52] In verse 8, David writes, let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones you have broken rejoice.

Let the bones you have broken rejoice. David describes this brokenness metaphorically. Broken bones, he says, as it were.

Have you ever felt that way when you've had a broken heart? As if your bones were broken. You know, interestingly, a couple days ago, while sitting at my desk, I saw a cockroach running in front of me, and I decided that I was going to get him, and I ran after that cockroach, and I bucked my toe, and the cockroach got away, and I thought I had broken my toe, and in fact, I'm still limping, actually.

I really thought I had broken my toe, just a little toe. David says, listen, David didn't say, I feel like a bone has been broken.

David says, my bones, pluralized it. David said, let the bones, Lord, that you have broken, rejoice.

[35:17] rejoice. David felt immobile, didn't want to move, didn't want to do anything.

He perhaps even felt physical pain. Brokenness, sadness, sadness, sadness, overwhelmed with sadness.

Sometimes you come to a place where this brokenness is so severe, you don't even want to be confident.

You don't desire anybody to bring you relief. David says, let the bones, oh Lord, that you have broken. Rejoice.

Rejoice. Looking to the Lord. Because David understood that he couldn't muster this. couldn't, he could not himself get out of this.

[36:29] Get out of this stupor, as it were. And then he writes in verse 17. David says, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.

A broken and contrite heart, oh God, you will not despise. David was a man who agonized over his sin, and he had come to a place where his spirit was broken, his heart was broken, broken, he was a broken man.

He was sorrowful, and he showed genuine contrition. His actions brought him to this place. David did not try to justify his actions at this point. He had done enough to this point in David's life. There was no closeness in prayer with the Lord. There was no delight in worship. There was no meaning in scripture.

[37:58] David was a man broken, torn apart, and no one else could bring him relief. Have you ever been there?

Don't raise your hand. Where it didn't matter what anybody said to you, you were broken, and only time and the Lord could deal with it.

That's where David was. Broken relationship, broken heart, brothers and sisters. Can I tell you, the more we delight in sin, sin, the more distant God becomes.

Here, David, having delighted in sin, God had become so distant to him, and he's trying to get back, if you will, on track.

But David is finding it so hard. Broken spirit. Have you ever seen a man whose spirit is broken? Have you ever seen a man who seems like he has nothing to live for?

[39:17] Spirit is broken, his bones are broken, his heart is broken. And guess what, brothers and sisters? During this Advent season, we can look back at what transpired with David, and we can see that David had no mediator.

What David hoped for, we have received, brothers and sisters, David went to God and prayed. No mediator.

We have a mediator. Indeed, that's the message of the scriptures, that Christ is our mediator. God sent what David hoped for, his son, to be our mediator. Christ became flesh, and he died for our sins.

God could you imagine what David must have gone through all by himself? Brothers and sisters, let's consider how this relationship was restored, a restored relationship.

[40:50] and just for a few moments, I want to consider point number two, under two subheads, the means, that is to say, how the relationship was restored, and the evidence of the restoration, the evidence that the relationship was restored.

Let's now consider the means. Brothers and sisters, can I tell you that the means of the restoration of the relationship was the work of God himself?

Perhaps the most popular verse in this psalm is verse 10. I think most of us, if not all of us, know or have heard this verse before.

Create in me, O Lord, a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Create in me, O Lord, a clean heart.

Notice, if you will, that David does not say that he will do this. You notice that? David says, Lord, I'm going to turn myself around.

[42:29] Now that I've sinned, O Lord, you know what? I'm going to go to this particular class that's being offered down the road.

or I'm going to do X, Y, Z. No, David begs God to do a creative work in him and to renew a right spirit within him.

Brothers and sisters, David asks the Lord to do what only the Lord is able to do. Create in me, O Lord, David says, a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me.

Brothers and sisters, I'm saying to us that that ought to be our prayer. Lord, do what only you can do. I can't fake this for too long.

Yes, you can for perhaps a week, maybe even a year. But after that, the message of Advent is that God did not give us a ten-point plan to salvation.

[43:58] Instead, in Bethlehem, he gave us a Savior who gives us a new heart. it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

This creative work could only come through Christ, who gives believers a new heart, not a renovated heart.

God doesn't give us a renovated heart. Gives us a new heart. And David in this moment, listen, David was under the old covenant. David did not enjoy, brothers and sisters, what we enjoy today. We, because of what Christ has done for us, those of us who are believers can say that we have indeed a new heart.

moreover, under the old covenant, David could only expect God's spirit to rest upon him from time to time.

[45:14] David says, renew a right spirit within me. But the spirit did not reside in man under the old covenant.

under the new covenant, God's spirit resides in the believer. Brothers and sisters, can I tell you? I believe that when David prayed this way, when David says, oh, Lord, created me a clean heart. and renew a right spirit in me. I believe that David was also praying for affection for righteousness. What do I mean? I believe that David was saying, oh, Lord, not only do I want to do right, but I want to enjoy doing right.

[46:27] And beyond that, Lord, in the negative, I want to dislike doing wrong. Oh, Lord, create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me.

Lord, cause my affections to align with your will. Bluetooth Bluetooth Bluetooth! Bluetooth! Bluetooth Bluetooth What else do we see here? The means of which David's relationship with the Lord was restored. One of the things that we see in this psalm is David's often references to old covenant rituals like washing and hyssop, burnt offering and sacrifices.

Those were all intended to grant a temporary sense of forgiveness.

David received that. But under the new covenant, Jesus' sacrifice was complete and it is sufficient for all time.

[48:06] Now, because of Advent, because of Advent, we need not do as David did.

We need not have regard for washings and for hyssop and for burnt offerings and for sacrifices. We see the contrast between the old covenant and the new one.

One was temporary. The other was enduring. The other is enduring. One without a living mediator. The other with a mediator.

Jesus Christ, who lives forever. One filled with rituals. The other grounded in relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But what's the evidence that this relationship with David was restored?

[49:21] I think we find it in the psalm as David writes, as he prays to the Lord.

And can I say to us, even, that the evidence of this restored relationship, that joy returned.

Joy returns in verse 12. David writes about joy. Joy. Restore to me the joy of my salvation.

And uphold me with a willing spirit. All these things, David says, these are the fruits.

These are the results of a restored relationship. Joy returns. Evangelism returns. David says, then I will speak to others of your...

[50:33] I'll teach transgressions your ways and sinners will return to you. Deliverance returns. In verse 14.

And in verse 14 and 15. Genuine worship returns.

David says, and my tongue will sing a loud of your righteousness. Oh, Lord, open my lips. And my mouth will declare your praise.

Brothers and sisters, we see David here moving from a place of brokenness to a place where he says, Lord, cause me to return to you.

Lord, cause me to return to you. And as I return to you, Lord, joy will return.

[51:36] Evangelism will return. Deliverance will return. Genuine worship will return. But brothers and sisters, as brother Troy said to us earlier, as he led us in worship.

Advent is not only about the first coming of our Lord and Savior. it's also about the second coming it's about that day the scriptures tell us in 1st John chapter 3 verse 2 beloved we are God's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared but we know that when he appears we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is and everyone who does hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure brothers and sisters that is message advent that he will appear and when he appears we

shall see him as he is and we will be like him everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself as he is pure that is the hope that we have that we will be like him a brother shared a quote with me from an earlier Christian by the name of Cyril of Jerusalem who wrote we preach not one advent advent only of Christ but a second also far more glorious than the former for the former gave a view of his patience but the latter brings with it the crown of a divine kingdom brothers and sisters this Christmas let us not yes indeed let's look backwards for sure that's it that's our anchor let's look back at what the Lord has done for us but let's also look forward to that day when the Lord will return and can I say also that

Christmas is yes Christmas is a time to spend with family to engage in laughter and exchange gifts and to eat lots of food but let those temporary pleasures remind us of the eternal joy we will have with Christ when he returns and above all brothers and sisters let us live in view of the essence of the song we are going to sing in a moment we are forgiven because Christ was forsaken accepted because he was condemned alive and well because the spirit lives within us and because Christ came he died and he rose again what a blessed hope we have old brothers and sisters what a blessed hope what we have to look forward to

I hope today that your hearts were encouraged and will remain encouraged during this Advent season and beyond let us pray oh Lord Father we thank you for your word Lord we thank you that your word reminds us that you are the one who cleans our hearts you're the one who transforms our lives you're the one who gives us hope you're the one oh Lord who restores who renews Lord we look to you in this moment Lord we ask oh Father that you would forgive us for our many sins oh Lord sins that we've shared with others sins that we haven't haven't some oh Lord we are too ashamed to talk about we know oh Lord that you know what they are things we've done things we've left undone

Lord we ask that you would forgive us Father we are so grateful that because of Jesus Christ our mediator we do not stand condemned oh Lord thank you thank you Father our hearts are filled with gratitude oh Lord did it all for us you sacrificed your son for us you placed the penalty of our sin on his back for us he mediates for us oh Lord we can only stand oh Father with hearts of gratitude today as we do now we pray oh Father that we will live in view of this reality oh

[59:03] Father cause oh Lord the pursuit of holiness to be sweet to us to be a delight to us and cause us oh Lord to lock arms with one another in this regard in the name of Jesus we pray and all God's people say amen amen in the very song psalm 51 the psalmist spoke of singing to the lord and not only singing but singing loudly righteously to the lord so I invite us to please stand and offer up praise to our God as we sing you I'm forgiven.

I'm forgiven because you were forsaken. I'm accepted. You were condemned.

I'm alive and well. The spirit is within me. Because you died and rose again.

Sing again. I'm forgiven. And I'm forgiven because you were forsaken. I'm accepted.

You were condemned. I'm alive and well. Your spirit is within me. Because you died and rose again.

[61:04] Amazing love. How can it be that you, my king, will die for me?

Amazing love. I know it's true. I know it's true. And it's my joy to honor you.

In all I do. I honor you. I'm forgiven. I'm forgiven. I'm forgiven.

I'm forgiven. I'm forgiven. I'm forgiven. you were forsaken i'm accepted you were condemned i'm alive and well your spirit is within me because you died and rose again amazing love how can it be that you my king would die for me amazing love i know it's true and it's my joy to honor you in all i do i honor you you and you are my king you are my king jesus you are my king jesus you are my king amazing love amazing love how can it be that you my king would die for me amazing love amazing love i know it's true and it's my joy to honor you in all i do i honor you amen amen father let's pray father lord we thank you for the amazing love that you displayed to us through your son jesus christ thank you lord that you've chosen us to know this truth may the lord bless you and keep you and may the lord cause his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you the lord lift up his countenance upon you i give you peace amen amen brothers and sisters you're dismissed if you need prayer it will be our delight and pleasure to pray with and for you otherwise you're dismissed you