

The "Truths" About Forgiveness

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- [0 : 0 0] All right, please be seated. Please take out your Bibles. We're going to be in Psalm 51. Before I get into the sermon, I just want to say it's great to be back.
- I was actually longing for the weather that you guys had last week, right? That was pretty cool weather, right? For my 44 degree time in California, I was longing for the coolness of Squamish.
- In case you're just getting caught up a little bit, I just spent the last month down in California studying for my doctorate. It's my last class, so I don't have to go down anymore.
- Thanks to you guys for giving me that time away. It's kind of a special time, bittersweet in some ways. Just a lot of mentors, a lot of friends. Was able to study with men from over 20 different countries.
- If I remembered them correctly, we had Vietnam, Japan, Zambia, South Africa, Colombia, Romania.
- [1 : 1 6] Yeah, there was just a lot. We even had people from Quebec, if you can believe it, right? So, the gospel was well represented around the world. It was exciting to be a part of that.
- And I thank you dearly for giving me up for these past several weeks. So today, as I said, I want to conclude our series on forgiveness. Last month, when I talked about this, we were talking about more transactional forgiveness.
- The forgiveness that exists between us, our friends, and our families. But today, I want to get into what forgiveness looks like before God, both in our actions and the fruits or the consequences of those actions.
- And there's probably no better passage to study on this subject than Psalm 51. To give you a little bit of context of this psalm, the context is actually found in 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12.
- 2 Samuel 11 and 12. Tells us about the sin of David, right? How one day, when his army was waging war, he sat out in his palace and he gazed upon a naked woman.
- [2 : 3 3] A woman who was married to one of his soldiers. David invited her into his home. He lay with her and she became pregnant.
- David subsequently called her husband home from war, hoping that he would lay with her and think that the child would have been his.
- But the man, being an honorable man, a Hittite man of all men, believed that because his men could not enjoy this type of rest, why should he?
- So David tried another means. It didn't work. So finally he sent this man back to war, where he was given instructions to be at the most vicious part of the fighting, whereupon he was killed in battle.
- Upon hearing of his death, David took Bathsheba to be one of his wives. After a year, Bathsheba still not having given birth, David is visited by a man named Nathan, who is the prophet of God.

- [3 : 47] We read this in 2 Samuel 12 and I will read it here for you. And the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, And he said,
- Because he had no pity. Nathan said to David, you are the man. David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord.
- Caught! David's sin is revealed. Not only has sinned against Bathsheba. He sinned against his own army, Uriah.
- Uriah wasn't sent up individually to fight the battle. He would have had a squad. He was a leader of men. Other men would have died along with Uriah.
- And here he is being called out by Nathan for this sin. Here are David's thoughts as written by him in this psalm, which is described as, This 51st psalm is perhaps the classic statement in the Old Testament on the question of repentance.
- [6 : 04] Indeed, there is a sense in which it can be said that it is perhaps the classic statement on this whole matter of repentance in the entire Bible. Psalm 51 is about getting right with God.
- Psalm 51 is about David seeking forgiveness from God. And Psalm 51 is about David restoring fellowship with God. Today, I want to look at six truths about restoring our relationship as David did with God when our relationship has been marred by sin.
- Does this apply to anybody? Applies to us all, right? And we're going to look at it's divided. I kind of divided into three actions and three fruits or three, let's go with three actions, three fruits about what happens in this process.
- Before I go any further, let me pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, I pray that you'd give my voice clarity. May your word go out strong, O Father.
- May we both see who you are. May we be fearful at who you are. But in the same time, O Lord, may we give worship to you to who you are as we see who you are.
- [7 : 30] That forgiveness is possible. Your grace abounds. May you give us ears to hear and an understanding to apply it into our own lives.
- We ask these things in your name. Amen. Amen. So anyhow, the first truth we see about forgiveness is that it requires godly sorrow. Forgiveness, repentance, when we come to God, requires godly sorrow.
- As we note in verse 13 of 2 Samuel, David simply says, I have sinned against the Lord. I sometimes wonder if we understand the magnitude of our sin as we get caught up in our own selfishness, right?
- David sinned against Bathsheba. Sinned against Uriah, his soldiers, his family, his kingdom, yet ultimately against God. When we are confronted with sin as David was with Nathan, something should be stirred up in us.
- When that happens, our attention is being transferred to others from ourselves. Have you ever come to a point when you realize how much you've hurt someone?
- [8 : 52] I remember years ago, an old friend sat down and basically said, I've been struggling to be friends with you because of this sin you committed against me.
- And I knew I had done something to offend him, but I did not understand the magnitude. It hurt. It hurt that someone who is such a close friend that I could have hurt him so much.
- Usually our first response being when confronted with sin is embarrassment, right? It's being revealed. I don't want anybody else to know about my sin. So that's the first response we have.
- But soon that passes when we realize how much someone has actually been hurt by. Us. Now notice in Psalm 51, David uses some very personal words here.

He says, Have mercy on me. Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity.

[10 : 02] And cleanse me from my sin. David gets it. There's no excuses offered. David is owning this sin.

And he's pleading before God. David understands the magnitude of this sin. What is interesting about David's reaction here, it's not towards the punishment of the sin, but who the sin is against.

Do you get that? Usually, we are more worried about the circumstances or the consequences of the sin rather than who the sin is against.

C.H. Spurgeon makes this observation. He says, Many a murderer is more alarmed at the gallows than at the murder which brought him to it.

Godly sorrow is caused by an understanding of who the offense is against rather than the consequence.

[11 : 22] So the first truth we see about seeking forgiveness from God is that it requires godly sorrow. The second truth we learn about forgiveness is that it requires our understanding.

Now think about that for a minute. Understanding of what? I'm going to go over five things that we need to understand about our sin.

The first one is really obvious. That we have sinned, right? We need to accept the fact that we have sinned. Note in 2 Samuel 12, When David is confronted with Nathan with his sin, he doesn't offer any excuse.

He doesn't claim. He did not understand. He doesn't claim that he was tempted. He simply states, I have sinned against God. The reality is, you and I both need to stop and look at ourselves.

The reality is, we know there is often sin in our lives, yet we busy ourselves so that we don't have to think about it. Here's David, a king, one who knows God, right?

[12 : 32] This man's been intimate with God, knows his power since he was such a young man, yet he commits adultery, commits murder, marries the woman, and he's preparing to have the son.

I wonder how he felt when news came from the front Uriah's dead. Did he feel like he dodged a bullet?

Was he relieved? What he does next, the Bible doesn't tell us, but we can safely assume that he went back to making war, collecting taxes, ruling his people, and solving kingdom's problems as if nothing had happened, all the while waiting for the birth of his new child.

That's us, isn't it? We are more excited about dodging the consequences than owning up to the sin. So we get back to life.

We don't worry about it anymore. We put more hours at work. We get busy with our kids' lives. We get into our sports. Throw ourselves into our study. Perhaps it's the TV, internet, or reading.

[13 : 56] But do we ever stop to think what type of person we are before the Lord? So the first thing we need to understand is we have sinned.

So, yet, when confronted with others' sin, we are yet proven to be so ready to judge others.

So the second thing we need to understand is the nature of our actions. What's interesting is that David actually uses three words to describe his sin. Did you notice that?

Transgression, sin, and iniquity.

And there's three very specific different meanings for these words. The first word is transgression. Transgression is described as rebellion.

It's usurping the authority on placing yourself above the law. It is a deliberate choice. It's a deliberate act of defiance.

[15 : 03] And it's ultimately a direct sin against God. What David's claiming here is, I knew it was wrong, but I still did it.

I transgressed. The second word, which we tend to be very familiar just with the word sin. It's living as we know we are supposed to.

It's not living the path that is marked out by God. It's not measuring up to his standard, his words. I'm sure we're all familiar with the thought of legalism.

We keep the standard, but in our hearts, sometimes there is a defiance against God. Right? Ultimately, I call this kind of sin being a fool.

And thirdly, we see that there is a word here called iniquity. This is defined as an act that is twisted and bent.

[16 : 05] There's another word for it. It's called perversion. Have you ever had that thought in your head? How perverted I must be to think of such a thought?

Now, some of you might say, hey, hey, hey, hey, I'm no murderer. I'm no adulterer. But the fact of the matter is, perverted actions are jealousy, envy, malice, desiring evil to come to someone else, dislike when someone else is praised, or even thinking evil thoughts.

That, my friends, is iniquity in you. The reality is, sin is a nature of our being. And sometimes it comes out in our fantasy or daily thoughts.

And the third element to understand is that our sin is against God and before God. Note, verse 4 of Psalm 51 says, against you, you only have I sinned.

Note doesn't say, I was trapped. What was I supposed to do? She played me. You don't understand.

[17 : 19] Uriah was a horrible man. Horrible father. The guy's always away. He did not deserve her. One author simply states, remorse is the realization that you've done something wrong.

Repentance is the realization that you did it against God. Remorse is the realization that you've done something wrong. Repentance is the realization that you did it against God.

You see, our sins are judged against the divine rule. Not our rule. Not societal acceptance or what society approves and disapproves.

You want to know how sick our society is? I think you guys pretty much have an understanding. But on May 5th, there was a talk given in Germany. You guys heard of those TED Talks? where some supposed expert in the field kind of gives this talk for 10-15 minutes.

Well, the subject of this talk that TED Talk actually had to deny was that pedophilia was a normal part of sexuality. Can you believe that?

[18 : 36] That's being put out by a university in Germany as someone trying to get their views out there. It's crazy.

My friends, if we are going to live our lives by what this society tells us, it's going to be pretty easy. But it's going to get pretty messy.

Because what society considers acceptable is not what the Lord God considers acceptable. So the fourth thing we need to understand is that we have no excuse.

Verse 4 again, against you, you only have, I, son, and done what is evil in your sight. So that, God, you are justified in your words and blameless in your judgments.

David here is not arguing this standard is too high. Hey, I didn't have that right kind of family. I wasn't taught that that was really all that wrong. David offers no argument.

[19 : 37] There's no excuses, no alibis, there's no blame shifting. He simply says it's evil. It's not weakness. It's not an accident. It's sin and it's evil.

In God, you are justified in what you say. And the fifth thing we need to understand is that our very nature is corrupt.

Verse 5, Psalm 51, simply says, Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. He's not talking about some illicit relationship his mother had or he's talking about depravity that we are just tainted by Adam's sin.

But he's saying that every one of us has been tainted, that our very nature is corrupt. Romans 7, 18 says, For I know that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh for I have the desire to do what is right but not the ability to carry it out.

In understanding what we are, what we've done before God, we need to admit that A, we have sinned. Two, we need to understand the nature of our actions.

[20 : 49] Three, our sin is against God. Four, we have no excuse. And five, our nature is evil. Perhaps this sounds unfair.

Perhaps you feel that God is rather hard on you. If that's true, it's safe to say that you may not understand yourself as well as you do.

Several years ago, I was listening to John Piper speak at a university and there was a Q&A; period with some of the students and one student got up and she was weeping over this idea of hell and I believe she was very sincere and torn up about friends and family that she might know are in hell and she said, how could a compassionate God ever send people to hell?

And Piper compassionately responded. He said, my dear, God doesn't send people to hell. it's where they choose to go because they fail to recognize the magnitude of their sin.

David understands this very well. so this is the second truth that I just described and the five things we need to understand. The third truth of forgiveness is the good news.

[22 : 23] It requires God's mercy. Forgiveness requires God's mercy. David understood that the only person who could save David was the one who he sinned against.

Think about that, right? The one you've offended is the one who saves you. Here is David relying on God's steadfast love and abundant mercy as we see in verse 1.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. Only God can do this. Notice in verse 7 he says, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

What he notices is he needs God to do the cleaning. Why? Because he's unable to. And he continues. He says, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Commenting on this verse, Spurgeon simply writes, scarcely does Holy Scripture contain a verse more full of faith than this.

[23 : 28] Considering the nature of his sin and the deep sense the psalmist had of it, it is a glorious faith that he is able to see in the blood sufficient, nay, all sufficient merit entirely to purge it away.

My friends, this is foreshadowing of the cross of Jesus Christ. Amen? It's the understanding that the blood which flowed from the cross is the only one to clean us.

Luke 18, 13 clearly exemplifies this attitude when it states that the tax collector standing far off would not even lift his eyes up to heaven but beat his breast saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

And that is who we should be. what we see in the fourth point is that forgiveness which leads to true repentance produces holiness.

Notice in verse 10 it says, create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit in me. David realizes that it is not enough to just recognize his sin but to be forgiving of his sin and then decide to live a better life, right?

[24 : 55] That's not what it is. David understands unless God does something radical in the depths of his being he's entirely lost. See, this is the hardest thing to accept about the gospel and that is morality can't save us.

It can't. I remember over 10 years ago, you guys remember the promise keepers. I remember being a part going to the promise keepers when I was young I was in university. So that's what, five, six years ago?

You know, and I remember getting into the movement a little bit and reading the books that came out and one of the things that I was interested in learning is that a lot of men made promises. They were promising to be better husbands, better fathers, they were going to be better employees, these type of things.

But what was interesting is that studies found that men could only keep their promises for about six weeks. Now, and I know your women are saying, BK, you're telling us something that we already know, right?

But the reality was is because they were making those promises and doing it in their own strength. Do you understand what happened? There was no heart change, it was a behavior modification.

[26 : 13] And although for those six weeks, a lot of wives would write saying it was entirely glorious, but my husband ultimately went back to his old habits. And what happened was they taught a deficient gospel.

It wasn't the true gospel that there's nothing you could do to fix in yourself. So what does man need? He needs to be born again. Amen? But I'm going to tell you something.

The world hates this doctrine. Did you know that? It's called the doctrine of regeneration. The world despises this doctrine. How do I know this? Well, Christ was crucified for this doctrine.

Do you remember Stephen in Acts? He was stoned to death because of this doctrine. We have these apostles that the Bible tells us were all killed for this doctrine.

You see, the reality is no one ever objects to a sermon that says, hey, I'm going to give you five ways to improve your lives, right? If I started preaching this, we'd pack out this church.

[27 : 14] We'd have to build out that balcony on top, right? Because people want to know how to improve their lives. How can I be better? Right? If we live a better life, people never object to it.

People will never admit that they're 100% perfect. But if I told you you needed to live a better life, you'd say, yeah, you know what, you're right on that. You're right on that. I sometimes leave the ketchup on the counter and my wife has to clean up for me.

I gotta fix that. Now, if I preach a sermon that says that you're actually 100% rotten, we find that insulting.

Why? Because if we are 100% rotten, then we cannot make ourselves right. perfect. We like teaching that tells us how to live better lives.

That's why in Christian bookstores, even spiritual self-help books sell. However, the truth of the matter is this Bible that stands before me tells the complete opposite.

[28 : 27] No, we're not 100% perfect, but we are 100% rotten. Why does this offend us?

Because we want our efforts to count, don't we? We want the gold star. Every day, put it up on the fridge, right? That's how you get your kids to do what you want them to do, right?

You get to see which kids of yours are competitive and which kids are really rotten and you'll have to live with them for the rest of your lives, right? But some of us want our faith to actually be credited to us.

But the reality is the doctrine of regeneration is a humiliating doctrine. It's humiliating. Why? Because it offends our pride. It offends our self-satisfaction, our self-esteem, and our self-confidence.

Verse 6 of this psalm reminds us that without God we are nothing but fools. You know what a fool is? I always describe a fool as like a guy in a car driving down a hill. He's got no brakes.

[29 : 35] He's going towards a cliff and everybody's kind of yelling, right? Hey, get out of the car. Get out of the car. You know what the fool says? Hey, I got this under control. I got this under control.

Fire's coming out from under the hood and that fool still says, hey, I got this. I got this. I remember the first time I met a real fool. I was young. I'm working on a highway crew and there's this car coming down and they had blown a flat.

We actually had a big truck and we're trying to stop them to help them with this flat. But they wouldn't stop and as they were going the rubber rips off the tire and it's grooving into the pavement which we just fixed by the way.

And they're just grinding and they're like yelling at us get lost, get lost. We're like, no, we're trying to help. We're trying to help. We got a truck. We can tow you. No problem. And they just kept yelling, we got it, we got it, we got it.

And just grinded their way until they ruined their car, right? That's us. That's why we need someone outside of ourselves to diagnose our problems because we are fools.

[30 : 51] But you see, this is the message of the cross. Those that cry out to God, those who realize they need a clean nature within themselves, that it is God who does, it is God who makes into a new creation.

Paul reminds us very succinctly in 2 Corinthians 5, 17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away.

Behold, the new has come. Amen, right? That's what he does for us. And although it might be humiliating to see our sin for what it is, and we try to make excuses for it, the best way is just to seek God for forgiveness and be done with it.

And knowing and understanding that he has mercy on us. I have two final points for this. One, the forgiveness that leads to repentance produces something called obedience, right?

Verse 13, David says, God, David will teach God's ways, David will sing God's righteousness, and David will declare God's praises. There's something new in him.

[32 : 11] The spirit is alive. David recognizes that he is guilty of murder, yet realizes that God does forgive and show mercy on him, allowing him to sing such praises.

God requires a broken and contrite heart. Without one, there is no entering into God's presence. I have a friend who lived this out.

He was literally a murderer. They actually made a movie about him and his friends. I don't know if you remember, I might be dating myself. There was actually a story called The Billionaires Boys Club, and they were the sons of rich parents.

And what they did is they would kidnap one of their buddy's parents, hold them for ransom so they could get their inheritance. So one day, him and his friends got the one guy, and he died in the car, the father.

All the boys were convicted of this murder, and my friend went to jail. thinking he was going to be there for the rest of his life. In the prison, he hears the story of God's grace, becomes a Christian, and for some reason, a lawyer loses some of the key evidence, and of all the guys that are allowed to be let go, he's the one.

[33 : 28] He's now a pastor in Central California, continuing to preach this message of grace. He didn't contest it. They just said, hey, we can't convict you, you're out.

And the last and final point is forgiveness that leads to repentance produces glory to God. Amen? There's no glory that we get from any of this story.

It is glory that goes to God. It's why we are here to worship him. It's why we are called together to be around this table. It's to remember the work that Jesus Christ has done for us.

God, knowing that we have short memories, asks us to do this action on a regular basis as we come together to not only remember, but to think about what he's done for us.

So today we are going to have communion. I'm going to ask you,