

# God's Mercy Revealed

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     So as you heard before, we are in Psalm 19, so please take out your Bibles, turn to Psalm 19. A couple of things that I want to say before we go any further. When Steve Howe is talking about wine, he's talking about communion wine.

He's inviting you guys up to have a genuine time of communion. One of the things that I'm excited about the Howes is they're kind of in this place, I don't know if Steve will mind me saying, but because they've said yes to Jesus in some aspects of their life that they hadn't said yes to in a while.

And I think it was letting him in the door that God is preparing and protecting them as they take this next step. So today I'm going to speak to you guys about a word that I am told that I'm not supposed to speak about.

It's not the elders that are telling me not to speak about this word, but if you were to talk about church gurus or church growth people or how to make people feel welcome in your church, they tell you to avoid this word at all times.

I'm sure you know what that word is. That word is sin. Even the word sounds sinister, doesn't it, right?

[ 1 : 1 4 ]     Sin. Sin. In his book, Whatever Became of Sin, psychiatrist Carl Menninger wrote, the word sin seems to have disappeared.

It was once a proud word. It was once a strong word. It was an ominous and serious word.

But the word has gone away. In fact, he says it's almost disappeared. And he asked the question, doesn't anyone sin anymore?

Doesn't anyone believe in sin? In fact, he charted all the presidential prayers in the U.S. And he noted that the last time sin was ever mentioned at a presidential prayer was in 1953.

And it was when President Eisenhower was actually quoting Abraham Lincoln who said the term in 1863.

[ 2 : 1 7 ]     So as Dr. Menninger observed, as a nation, we officially ceased sinning over 50 years ago. C.S. Lewis once wrote, the barrier I have met is the almost total absence from the minds of my audience of any sense of sin.

D.A. Carson in 2001 stated, the most frustrating aspect of doing evangelism in universities is the fact that students generally have no idea of sin.

They know how to sin well enough, he writes, but they have no idea what constitutes sin. It would appear from these observations that the whole idea of sin has virtually disappeared from our culture.

Many seminaries teach that when preaching, me as a preacher, I'm not to use the word sin. It makes people feel uncomfortable.

It makes us squirm in our seats a little bit. And it makes us not feel so great about ourselves. But if you do well to notice that King David in Psalm 19 speaks the word sin.

- [ 3 : 42 ] In fact, he also uses the words faults, transgressions, and errors. As you all know, if you've been with us, we've been in Psalm 19 for three weeks.
- This is our third week. The first part of this sermon series, we learned of God's glory as it's stated to us in creation.
- God himself calls him, I am Elohim, God Almighty, the God creator of all. And we learned that as he creates this, he's communicating to us that he indeed exists.
- And we see him throughout all of creation. From this, we are to learn and understand that we are not the ones who run the show.
- But just because we realize there's someone greater than us does not mean we are on good terms with him. In fact, according to Romans 1, in the example of the time before Noah, knowledge of the creator, in fact, condemns us.
- [ 4 : 50 ] We are unable to come to a proper conclusion of who God is and what he requires of us for our relationship. We are lost.
- Last Sunday, we understood, as you begin in verse 7, you'll notice the word Lord. That is the covenantal God, Lord God, Adonai, Yahweh.
- That is God personalizing himself for us, entering into a relationship. What this tells us is that God did not choose to remain far off.
- But God, as God, we will learn, is a covenant-making God. He's a God who wants to be personally known and wants us to know him.
- Just as he personally knew Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David and formed covenants with these men. By doing so, we see God's love demonstrated to us in his word.
- [ 5 : 55 ] We learn that God's word converts the soul. That it brings from a state of decay to a period of lifefulness.
- That God brings wisdom for living. And once saved and living wisely, we experience joy when we obey his word.
- Because it is God's word, it is sure, it is right, and it can be trusted. So perfect, David writes. He writes, moreover, by them, God's laws, your servant is warned.
- In keeping them, there is great reward. But there's something that happens just because we know God's law does not mean we are in a proper relationship with God.
- Scripture tells us quite clearly that mankind is a slave to sin. We are told that we are children of wrath. We are told we are sons and daughters of disobedience.
- [ 7 : 02 ] In fact, Paul writes in Galatians 3.10, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law to perform them.
- So in knowing God's law, God's perfect law, we are doomed just as we are in seeing creation. So what does it take to get right with God?
- That is the subject of today's sermon. I've entitled this sermon, God's Mercy Revealed. God's Mercy Revealed.
- It is what he, that he does provide a way for us to write our relationship with him. So let's take a look at Psalm 19, verse 12 to 14.
- And we will begin with this. David, simply by stating these great truths of God creator, then God, Yahweh, the personal God, writes, Who can discern his errors?
- [ 8 : 14 ] And he's talking about himself here. Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins.
- Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgressions. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight.

Oh Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Here we learn four things from this psalm about writing our relationship with God in a way to experience his mercy.

Whether you are here and saved. Whether you're here, confess to be saved, but have drifted away. Or whether you're here and you've never heard about Jesus Christ and are an unbeliever.

I believe God leads you to perfect understanding of who he is through this passage. And he gives us these instructions. And I'm going to tell you simply what these instructions are.

[ 9 : 27 ] One, humble yourself before God. If you want a right relationship with God, you need to humble yourself before God. Two, you need to confess your sins before God.

Confessing is acknowledging what those sins are. Three, you are learning to obey God. And four, to pray and praise God.

So the first one, to experience God's mercy, we need to humble ourselves before God. What this means and what this psalm makes so painfully aware is that next to God we are nothing.

He is great, we are not. He is big, we are small. The world would like to tell us that we are special and perhaps to our moms we are special.

But in the scheme of creation and in reality, we are finite beings with finite minds and finite lives.

[ 10 : 32 ] Self-realization all begins with knowing God. And that means understanding who we are in respect to God.

It's like I said several weeks ago. We are only, we are very content to rate ourselves next to people, right? We like to rate ourselves to other people. Because we can always find someone better than us.

But we can certainly find someone worse than us, right? If we want to look at ourselves and esteem ourselves, what must God, how must he see us? We just have to open our eyes, look around, ignore those who are better, and focus on those who are worse.

Our first realization is that when it comes to measuring ourself, I quote John Piper when he says, No one goes to the Grand Canyon to increase self-esteem.

There is greater healing for the soul in beholding the splendor than there is in beholding self. The song that we sung today, this morning, behold our God.

[ 11 : 41 ] The reason it is such a beautiful song, it's we are lifting God up, seeing him in his glory. We are not beholding ourselves, but beholding God.

So the first way to begin to experience God's mercy in our life is to understand who he is. And by understanding who he is, we understand ourselves and that we are humbled before God, the almighty creator.

The second way to experience God's mercy is we need to confess our sins before God. Take a look at verse 12. David simply states, Who can discern his errors?

Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Notice David already acknowledges that we are warned by God's word and we are blessed when we keep them.

But what's the first thing that he does? He simply asks this rhetorical question, Who can discern his errors? And the question he's asking is, How can we possibly know all our sins?

[ 12 : 50 ] If you come from a Catholic background, The Catholic teaching is that you're supposed to confess every single sin before God once a year. If you're Catholic and you didn't know that, I'm just telling you a little bit about your faith.

Alright? But that's what you're supposed to do. But the reality is, what he's telling us here, Is we don't even know all our sins. That sometimes they are so beyond us.

In our stupidity, our selfishness, our blindness, We're not always aware of the hurt that we cause, And the laws that we break before the Lord.

Spurgeon marked, That do we suppose that we can count our sins on our fingers? He says, How true this is.

And that is what David is asking for confession here. He's asking for forgiveness from hidden faults. In the Jewish sacrificial system in the Old Testament, They had sacrifices for very specific sins.

[ 14 : 12 ] And they also had sacrifices for the sins that you are not even aware of. So this is the second thing that David does.

He asks God to forgive him his sins, Even the ones he doesn't even know about. The third way that we can experience God's mercy, Is to obey God.

Take a look at verse 13. It says, Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion, Or it might mean rule over me.

Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgressions. Now I want you to note in David's prayer here, He says, Declare me innocent from hidden faults, But keep me back from presumptuous sins.

What is a presumptuous sin? Presumptuous sin is the sin that we do on purpose. It's the sin that we know is wrong, And yet we do it.

[ 15 : 26 ] It's the law that we know the law, Yet we violate it. Anybody here been caught speeding? You know, It's pretty natural for us to offer an excuse, right?

Officer, I did notice it's a new car, It's got 450 horsepower. I didn't even know it could go over 60 miles an hour, right? I have to be somewhere. We naturally make that assumption.

We make that defense. Mostly when a guy's driving a car 450 hours, The response is, Man, I'm impressed you caught me. Right? To the officer.

But what he's saying is, There's this presumption sin. You know you do it. You know you shouldn't do it, But you do it anyway. For men, It's wrong to steal that second glance, And lure at a woman.

For wives, Perhaps it's speaking wrongly about your husband. For some, It might be stewing in anger. For men, It might be giving into pornography.

[ 16 : 31 ] Spurgeon comments, There is a natural proneness, To sin and the best of us. And it must be held back, As a horse has a bit in its mouth, To hold it back.

Now the question we need to ask is, Why are presumptuous sins so different? Note, Note, That David doesn't even bother to ask for forgiveness here.

But he's asking, That God would keep him from them, Lest they have rule over his life. You see, Presumptuous sins, When they are repeated, They become dominant sins.

And when they become dominant sins, They become enslaving sins. They are sins that drive our body. They drive our desires.

They drive our will. David knows that if God keeps him away from these sins, And he obeyed God, He states, Then I shall be blameless and innocent, And notice what he says, Of great transgression.

[ 17 : 40 ] He's actually qualifying the transgression before God. The question is, What is the sin that leads to great transgression?

Every sin is the sin that leads to great transgression. In each sin, We find the venom of rebellion.

It doesn't have to be murder, Adultery, Theft, Lying, Or sexual immorality. It's every sin that one continues in, In a purposeful manner, Is called a deadly sin.

How many of you have heard of Jerry Bridges? Anybody hear of Jerry Bridges? Jerry Bridges is a well-known Christian author, And he's written many landmark books, And I would encourage you, Any book that has been written by Jerry Bridges, Grab it, Read it, Meditate on it.

He will open your eyes up to the Lord. But there's one book in particular that he's written, That has hit me hard, And many of his books have hit me hard, But this one is called Respectful Sins.

[ 18 : 52 ] And it's entitled, Tolerating the Sins, Or it says, Confronting the Sins We Tolerate. In it, he says, We actually rank our sins.

And some sins are less serious, And there's more serious. He says, We rank what is really bad, Bad, And not so bad. And he says, In fact, Some of them we just call respectable sins.

Sins such as anxiety and frustration. Discontentment. Unthankfulness. Pride. Selfishness. Lack of self-control.

Impatience and irritability. Anger. Judgmentalism. Envy. Jealousy. Sins of the tongue. Worldliness.

He writes that every single one of these sins can lead to great transgressions. Like a cancer that forms in the body, continues to grow, grow, and grow.

[ 19 : 52 ] And there truly is unlimited growth potential in the life of a human being. It says, If left alone, it will grow until it goes through the whole body causing death.

Sins in the same way, and then it affects others. It affects our attitudes. It affects others. Our words. Our actions. Even our private unspoken thoughts tend to have effect on others around us.

There's kind of this running gag with one of my buddies. We always know when he's mad at us when his wife unfriends us on Facebook. Right? Because he doesn't have the ability to deal with the anger towards us.

So he goes home, talks wrongly about us, and the first person who can't handle it is his wife. So what he's done, whatever sin that I or one of my buddies may have committed against him, he now pushes that on his wife.

Right? And then she starts to stew, get angry and frustrated. So that sin has infected her. In fact, one of the most tragic stories I've ever heard is that one of my friend's churches, one gossipy family, that's all it was, they felt that it's okay to gossip under the roof.

[ 21 : 06 ] Then what happens is the children get married and bring their spouses in. So all of a sudden there's more gossip going out under the roof. And then they invite their friends because those people have brothers and sisters.

Gossipy, gossipy, gossipy. Then it turns out it spreads throughout the whole church and everybody is inheriting the attitude of this one person who got bent out of shape for whatever reason.

How many years ago, in literally church of what was once a flourishing church of three to five hundred people, under 50 people left. And guess what?

It's all the people of the same family. They've completely poisoned the community against anybody who would ever enter the door. See, the problem is we sometimes think that if we sin under our own roofs and no one is there, we're getting a free pass from God on it.

But what happens when we sin, it changes us. Our attitudes towards others change. We become cold and we don't care for them.

[ 22 : 17 ] It shows up in our actions, our attitudes, and how we think about others. To the point that we do not even have to say a wrong word about them.

The reality is sin has already hatched in our hearts. And since we do not seek forgiveness, it becomes a cancer on ourselves in the community we live in.

How many of you have ever heard of the name Bo Jackson? If you have heard your name. All right, there's quite a few of you. All right, for you who don't know, Bo Jackson was one of my greatest sporting heroes when I grew up as a kid.

What was really amazing, in 1985, he won the Heisman Trophy, which is the best college football player. He was a running back. All right, so he got drafted in the NFL, but he knew that people who play in the NFL tend to get injured, so he just switched to baseball.

Now, not too many athletes can make that kind of switch, but Bo did. So he went on to become an all-star, but after he decided to take up this hobby called football again, as he called it, and he was so great, the owners of the LA Rangers or Raiders, or I don't know if they were in Oakland at the time.

[ 23 : 31 ] Anyway, they drafted him and he played for them. So outside of the baseball season, he'd play football. Now, what made Bo so incredible is that he just wasn't, he could play sports, he could play each of these sports very well.

Bo went on to have probably historians and football experts would say is probably the greatest game of all time by a running back. I'm sure Ray Crumier might or may not agree with me, but on November 30th, 1987, on Monday Night Football, he ran for 220 yards and three touchdowns.

Now, for you who don't understand, as a running back, to run for 100 yards is considered a really good game. To run for 220 yards is phenomenal, okay?

Barely anybody in the history of sports has been able to accomplish this feat. Now, what made Bo so incredible, and if you don't understand football, I'll explain it because this will help the illustration very well.

It's like a war, okay? Football is a war. You're trying to take the ball as deep as you can into enemy territory, all right? And there's a line. And there's a line that designates your territory and the opponent's territory.

[ 24 : 50 ] So the whole goal is to push that line right into their end zone or their home base. In the beginning, the first people on this line are huge men.

These are men, 350, 400 pounds, strong, big guys, right? And their whole job is to push back the enemy from getting in.

Behind them is what's called a secondary. If these guys can't protect them, you have another group of guys. Now, these guys usually in the middle weigh around somewhere from 240 to 265 pounds.

They're a little bit more athletic because you can imagine three, 400 pound men don't move too fast. They probably move faster than us, but on that field, they're big, strong.

So these guys are a little bit faster, pretty strong. Now, behind them are called safeties and cornerbacks. These are the guys to protect from the receiving. They weigh about 180 pounds, all right?

[ 25 : 49 ] 290 pounds. These guys are fast. A lot of them are Olympic athletes or could be, all right? They're that good. Bo Jackson was 230 pounds and he was as fast as an Olympic athlete.

So what would happen is if you didn't stop Bo at the line with those big 340 pound guys, he was going to run over everyone else on the other side. You get what I'm saying?

So and that's what happened. And you guys can just Google Bo Jackson today on YouTube. There's plenty, and this game is featured. He would just get around and just blow by everybody. In fact, it would be kind of comical because it'd be 180 pound guy trying to tackle him and he'd just go right over him.

Why am I telling you this? Because Bo Jackson is sin. If you don't catch sin at the very beginning of the time it starts to begin to birth and it gets into that open field, you can't stop it.

It will run around you. It will overpower you. In fact, what made this game so incredible is there was a guy named Brian Bosworth and he played for the Seattle Super Hawks.

[ 27 : 04 ] What are they called? Seahawks. I was thinking of the Supersonics, the basketball team that no longer exists. But anyhow, for the Seahawks. And Brian Bosworth was telling everybody, I'm the greatest middle linebacker in the world.

I will stop Bo. And there actually came a pivotal point in the game where this man, 255 pounds of pure muscle, comes out to stop Bo. Here comes Bo.

Did Bo deke to the right or to the left? No. Bo actually took him, lifted him up, and pushed him into the end zone to score the touchdown. All right? That's sin.

You can't stop it. When sin starts to get a hold of your life and it has given forth to habitual signs and aspects in your life, you cannot stop it all alone.

The whole idea is that we need to stop sin at the very beginning or it will keep running you over, over, and over, and you will get discouraged.

[ 28 : 06 ] And a lot of people simply give up. Fact is, we cannot contain sin.

Sin. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that we have the power to stop sin. And when we think that we can contain sin, we've already lost.

Like Brian Bosworth, who thought he could stop Bo Jackson several yards from the end zone, we will be a laughingstock and a joke, and commercials will be made about us, about how we try to stop sin like Brian Bosworth tried to stop Bo Jackson.

And there's commercials that joke about this. The only way to stop Bo was to stop him at the line. Same way it is with our sin.

We need to stay away from it. We need to pray to our God, our Father, and ask him to keep it away from us. Notice when it talks, dealing with sexual temptation.

[ 29 : 20 ] It says when you're in that situation, don't pray for more strength. Don't pray to God, we'll save you. Paul simply says, flee immorality. Flee is to turn around and run.

Don't go near it. Don't think you can withstand it. You can't. See, what's interesting is the term sin used to describe here, it means to spread out.

It goes beyond the bounds. It has the power to break through. This sin actually breaks through our relationship with God.

And this sin will continue to break through the relationship that we have with God and will leave us in constant defeat.

I know because I've been there. I've been in those situations where I thought I was strong enough that I could overpower sin.

[ 30 : 25 ] I couldn't. What's interesting, did you know that in Numbers 1530, when it's describing the Old Testament sacrificial systems, there was actually no sacrifice that you could give for a sin that you did on purpose?

Think about how that left you feeling before the altar. There was nothing there. This leads us to our fourth point.

To experience God's mercy, we need to go to God in prayer with a pure heart. We need to go to God with prayer with a pure heart.

Let's look at David's words in verse 14. He says, Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Our reality, our words are a mockery to God if they aren't true, right? If our ideas or our thoughts aren't true in our hearts, we mock God.

[ 31 : 43 ] Our prayers and prayers don't have to be formal, but they have to arise from the meditation of our heart, from us fixing ourselves on God.

See, our hearts and mouth need to be of one accord. Now notice what he says. To experience God's mercy, David uses the word, Our rock and our redeemer.

What's interesting is that we know who our redeemer is, right? It's Jesus Christ. But David doesn't know who Jesus Christ is, but he's relying on God's promises that one day God will provide a redeemer.

And that's who will save him. That's the one who will take the penalty of his sins away. That's the one who will take the shame of his sins away. That's the one who will take the curse of his sins away.

David is waiting on this. You see, David knew that salvation depended on something outside of himself, and that could only come from God.

[ 32 : 53 ] God chose to send his son, Jesus Christ. In this man, Jesus Christ, God demonstrated his mercy to us.

God provided that sacrifice for the presumptuous sins that you could not get in the Old Testament. Philippians 2, 7 and 8, Paul writes, But he be, but made himself nothing, this is Jesus, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This redeemer, this son of God made himself nothing. He did not come as a king to be served, but he took the form of a servant, born of the flesh.

For the forgiveness, according to Hebrews 9, 22, required the shedding of blood, the shedding of an innocent lamb. Which is why we call Jesus the Lamb of God.

Why? 1 Peter 1, 3 tells us, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

[ 34 : 29 ] See, God's mercy is demonstrated in our salvation. Amen? That is where we see God's ultimate characteristic of love and mercy.

He covers our sin, so that God doesn't see us as sinners, but he sees us as saints, as his children, never, ever to be rejected, never to be thought wrongly of, not ever put aside, but also, every time, welcomed welcomed to the banquet table of life.

So, why do I preach sin against what the experts tell me not to? Well, I have a goal, and that goal is to preach God's word, the Bible.

And that is the theme of this book. It is a book about the love and mercy of God. The fact is, you will never know or understand God's love or mercy if you do not understand sin.

This is how God communicates with us. This is how he loves us. God desires to share his great mercy.

[ 35 : 43 ] And he begins that road by pointing out our sin to us. Why? Because that's what separates us from him.

That's why we can't have good fellowship with him. Fact is, we cannot bridge this distance between us and God by good living. We can't bridge it by giving money.

We can't get there by being moral. It only begins by seeing ourselves in light of God. And seeing ourselves as a sinner.

Whether you are an unbeliever who has no relationship with God, perhaps you are a believer who's in sin, who has broken your relationship with God.

The root of your disobedience, your foolishness, and your inability to make things right with God is your sin. So I do not preach sin because I want you to go around saying, woe is me, I am an awful sinner.

[ 36 : 55 ] But I want you to be as ex-slave trader, John Newton, who claimed that he was the greatest sinner, but he even had a greater savior. Because by accepting the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, he experienced God's great love and God's great mercy.

That love and mercy begins with the confession and obedience after Jesus Christ. The reason I preach sin, so you may know the mercy of God and to love him with a reckless and unending love.

Let me pray for you. Let me pray for you.