

My Sin is Ever Before Me

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back to the second passage we read, the book of Psalms, Psalm 51, reading again at verse 3. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.

We'll look at four things. Firstly, sin's terrible power and consequences.

Secondly, God's judgment against sin. Thirdly, the greater power of God's grace in repentance and confession and forgiveness.

And fourth and lastly, how do you deal with your sin? Let's look first of all then at sin's terrible power and consequences.

The two passages we read shed a lot of light on the deep, dark nature of sin, its terrible power, and its consequences in the lives of individuals and in the lives of believers.

[1 : 20] The title of the psalm, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone into Bathsheba. The title describes what the psalm is about.

And the passage we read in 2 Samuel, of course, describes to us the detail of that narrative. King David's sin.

Much more. Psalm 51 is one of the great penitential psalms. One of the great penitential psalms. What does that mean?

It means psalms that express a very personal and intense grief for their own sinnership and for their own sin.

Psalms 6 and 32 and 38 and 51 and 102, 130 and 143.

[2 : 44] A pattern of grief and crying out to God in that grief for mercy and for forgiveness for sin.

But this is a prayer of faith, as are all of these penitential psalms. A prayer of faith. Faith and repentance towards God.

The exercise of faith in confession of sin and the blessed forgiveness that follows. It seems that the psalm in the early church was prayed at the conclusion of morning services.

And what a great practice that is. To read this psalm at the conclusion of morning services.

This psalm, as the other psalms are, I'm sure, precious to every true Christian.

[3 : 49] You will have read and you will have prayed this psalm. If you're a born again Christian, how many times have you prayed, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me?

How many times have you gone and fallen on your knees and said what David said here, Have mercy, O God, according to your steadfast love?

How often have you pleaded to the cross? How often have you pleaded to the blood of Christ? You must. It must be part of your Christian experience.

Psalm 38, interestingly. The title of it is a memorial. A memorial. And in a sense, all of these penitential psalms are a memorial.

They are a reminder to us about our sinnership and about our sin. And remember that simple rule.

[4 : 55] But perhaps it's not so simple. Because we forget. We're not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners.

It's a matter of the heart. It's what we are by nature. It's what we are by nature. And God has declared it so.

God has declared it so. Listen to what God says. Romans 5 and verse 12. Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.

For all sinned. And these remarkable verses. In Romans 3 at verse 23. We read these words. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. What is sin?

[6 : 05] Many of you, most of you, would have learned the catechism. What is sin? The larger catechism expands on the shorter catechism's explanation.

Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of any law of God given as a rule to the reasonable creature.

One commentator wrote this. God is light. Sin is darkness. God is life. Sin is death.

God is heaven. Sin is hell. God is beauty. Sin is deformity. It cast angels out of heaven.

Adam out of paradise. It laid the first cornerstone in hell. And brought in all the curses and crosses and miseries.

[7 : 07] It makes men and women godless. Christless, hopeless, and heavenless. That's what sin is. And it's a reality for every single person in here tonight.

Whether you're a Christian or a non-Christian. salvation in the Bible demanded, demanded the incarnation of the Son of God as an atoning sacrifice for sins.

Nothing else would do. It demanded the incarnation of the Son of God. And that remarkable declaration. You shall call his name Jesus.

For he shall save his people from their sins. And without Jesus as your Savior. And if you die in your sin. The consequences are a lost eternity.

And the pains of hell forever. In this psalm, David reminds us of the doctrine of original sin.

[8 : 22] He reminds us at verse 5 of the doctrine of original sin. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity. And in sin did my mother conceive me.

All mankind born guilty and corrupted and polluted because of Adam's sin. As the covenant head and representative of the human race.

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones said that the problem of life is sin.

Sin and its guilt and its power and its pollution. Where is it first mentioned in the Bible? It is first mentioned in Genesis 4 and verse 7.

And it's mentioned there in a very specific way. Sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you.

[9 : 22] But you must master it. Like a wild animal. Waiting to pounce on its victim. And to go in for the kill.

Its desire is for us. Against us. Against God. So its very nature is rebellion. Rebellion.

Adam and Eve discovered that. They discovered that. Abel discovered that.

At the hand of his brother Cain. And so down through. These opening passages of the history of the world. You see the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

And you see the judgment of God in Genesis 6. That every imagination of the thoughts of the heart. Were only evil continually.

[10 : 22] What a judgment. What a judgment. And he came in judgment. He came in judgment.

The consequences of sin. There were consequences for Adam and Eve.

They were driven out of the garden. Separated from the communion. And personal relationship with God. Mankind.

The crowning glory of God's creation. He formed the earth in the first three days. In the next three days he filled the earth. And he gave mankind.

That remarkable place. But sin separates mankind from God. And it still separates mankind from God.

And if you're not a Christian. Sin separates from God. And that's not a very good place to be.

[11 : 25] In this psalm we have King David. A man of whom the Lord said. The Lord has sought out a man. After his own heart. One of the greatest men in the Old Testament.

Surely. A humble shepherd boy. But zealous for the glory of God. Zealous for the glory of God.

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine? As this shepherd boy stood against Goliath. While the whole of Israel quaked in their boots.

Almost literally. And here is this. David. The shepherd boy. Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?

Who would dare. Who would dare.

To blaspheme against God the way he did. But here he is. Here he is. In a sense at the height of his power.

[12 : 27] It's almost unbelievable. But it's a fact. It's a fact. But in David's experience. We see sin's terrible force and power.

Sin's terrible force and power. Firstly it sweeps aside all other considerations and interests. David was gripped with lust.

He should have been out at the head of the battle. With his army. Instead he was gripped with lust. It's almost as if nothing mattered.

And if you read 2 Samuel 11. Before that chapter we read. 2 Samuel 12. You will see his reaction to Uriah's death.

And to the defeat of the army. It's almost as if nothing mattered. The army didn't matter. Certainly the glory of God. Was swept aside. Swept aside.

[13:29] The honor and the glory of the Lord. Swept aside. So the power of sin sweeps aside. All other interests and considerations.

The power of sin consumes. David had everything. He was the king. But there was something he didn't have. That somebody else had.

And he wanted it. And he was so consumed. That he arranged for the death of Uriah. Murder. For which he was himself. Guilty. Under the penalty of death. Jealousy. And envy. And bitterness. Consumed him. And that's what sin does. The power of sin can consume us. It can consume us when we're in a rage.

[14:29] When our tempers flare. And we're in a rage. We say and do things we should never. Which we would not normally ever do. And it's almost at times as if we.

Block out. That voice of conscience. That speak to us. That restraining voice. Any opportunity to retaliate. And to pay back.

Sin consumes. Thirdly. Sin risks everything. David risked everything here. His power. His reputation. His honor before God.

And before men. The whole honor of Israel. And Judah. Of the United Kingdom. Him. He was a slave.

To sin. He was a slave. To sin. That's what sin does. Jesus himself. Tells us. In John 8. Verse 34. Truly.

[15:32] Truly. I say to you. Everyone who practices sin. Is a slave. To sin. To sin. And being a slave.

To sin. To sin. Sin. Is the natural state. Of mankind. Add to that. The power. The terrible power. Of sin.

In addiction. For example. Addiction to alcohol. And drugs. And pornography. And many other vices. And add to that.

The danger of habitual sin. Christian brother and sister. The danger of habitual sin. When sin becomes a habit.

I came across. As I was preparing. Something I had. Looked at many. Many years ago. The Reverend Moody Stewart.

[16:30] In his book on Jeremiah. When habit becomes strong. Through persistent indulgence. It exercises an appalling.

Tyranny. Over the hearts. And lives. Of men. Of men and women. Of course. Fourthly.

Sin paralyzes. Out better judgment. It blinds. It paralyzes. And blinds.

It overpowers. It overpowered David. It mastered David. It robbed him of his power. It robbed him of his discernment.

And judgment. And there was a battle. In David's conscience. And I'll come back to that. A little later. A battle in his conscience. More explained to us.

[17:30] In Psalm 32. Than particularly here. But there was a battle. Going on. And in Psalm 32.

The danger of unconfessed sin. Of an unrepentant state. When we don't confess our sins. David tells us in Psalm 32.

That the impact of unrepentant sin. Was silence. And groaning. Groaning with living with the guilt. Of a stifled conscience. And the aging bones. That he refers to in Psalm 32. Portraying the growing weakness. Of his spiritual life.

And sin robs you of your power. It robs you of your power. Your power to pray. Your power to discern. Your power to resist. Temptations not to read your Bible.

[18:29] Not to go on your knees to pray. And he was aware. Of the heavy hand of God.

And the need for repentance. But he stubbornly refused to yield. For a while. And of course there is the devil. Always there in the background.

Always there. Ready to accuse you. Ready to twist. And pervert. The truth. Sin's terrible. Power and consequences. Secondly. God's judgment against sin. God's judgment against sin. It's very interesting in the narrative.

where Nathan comes to David. And explains that story to him. About the rich man. And the poor man. And the story of the traveler.

[19 : 30] And of the lamb. And it's very interesting that David himself delivers the verdict.

Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. And he said to Nathan. As the Lord lives. The man who has done this. Deserves to die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold.

Because he did this thing. And because he had no pity. David anticipates and delivers the verdict himself.

He utterly condemns the sin. And that sin deserves punishment. And of course David understood. That sin merits punishment. But David didn't recognize himself in this story.

That Nathan told him. And perhaps we would have been exactly the same. If someone had come to us. And surely we would have said.

[20 : 30] Well that's terrible. That's terrible. That man deserves. To be penalized in some way. For what he has done.

But what was God's verdict? What was God's verdict? God's verdict was delivered through Nathan. The verdict of the word of God. You are the man. You are the man. And in verses 7 down to 13.

Nathan delivers that damning verdict. God's verdict against David.

Because of David's sins. God's judgment. And the consequences of that judgment. Because Uriah had been killed by the sword. The sword would never depart from David's house.

[21 : 34] Because he had taken Uriah's wife. The judgment extended to David's own household.

Taking his wives from him. David deserved to die.

But God forgave him. Yet the son conceived from the adulterous relationship would die. Would die. Devastating consequences of sin.

And the Bible teaches us in Numbers 32.23. Be sure your sin will find you out.

Thirdly. The greater power of God's grace. In repentance. Confession and forgiveness.

David's confession in 2 Samuel 12. I have sinned against the Lord.

[22 : 33] David's confession here in this psalm at verse 3. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. My sin is ever before me.

Here is David's repentance. I have sinned against God.

Against God. And he says in verse 4. Against you, you only have I sinned. And done what is evil in your sight.

David's eyes have been opened. The floodgates of confession of sin. The floodgates have been opened.

And outpours this confession of sin. And he realizes. That sin is contrary to and strikes at the very heart.

[23 : 37] At the very nature and being of God. His honor and his glory. He realizes that sin is a violation of the holiness of God.

And a violation of his law. And that's what sin is. It strikes at the very heart of the Savior. It strikes at the very heart of Christ.

And it takes away from the believer the joy of the spirit and the peace of conscience.

It strikes at the heart of the church. The church. And it strikes at the heart of a witness to the world.

He acknowledges that it is his sin.

Have mercy on me, O God. Wash me. I know my transgressions. My sin.

[24 : 46] My iniquity. He accepts all responsibility as part of that process of repentance. And that confession that flows out.

No one else to blame. Not circumstances. Not other people. Not the devil. No one else. Just me. I'm guilty. I deserve the judgment of God.

I did it. And I need grace. I'm broken, Lord. He says. You've broken my heart. And he says to God, I know that you want.

This is the pleasing sacrifice. A broken and a contrite heart. David's confession, as I said at the beginning, is a prayer of faith.

A prayer of faith. And a prayer of faith. Must proceed all through confession of sin. And he pleads and he appeals to God.

[25 : 46] Have mercy on me, O God. According to your steadfast love. According to your abundant mercy. He pleads. God's steadfast love.

God's covenant love. God's love. What is steadfast love? Or loving kindness, if you use the AV. What is it?

It is love. Demonstrated. In reconciliation. It's love. It's love demonstrated in an atonement for sin. It's love personified in the Savior. Who is the propitiation for our sins.

He turns to God in prayer. Cries out in faith. For the greater power of God's grace. For the removal of guilt.

[26 : 53] And the renewal. Of his standing before God. Notice the verbs. Have mercy.

According to your loving kindness. Blot out. Wash me. Cleanse me. Purge me. Hide your face. Purge me.

And look what he says in verse 7. Purge me with hyssop. Purge me with hyssop. He's appealing to the blood. He's appealing.

Looking back. To the Passover. To the blood of the Passover. David understands. That without the shedding of blood. There is no remission of sins.

Martin Luther made a remarkable comment about this psalm. David asks to be sprinkled. With the word of faith in the coming Christ.

[27 : 52] Who will sprinkle his church with his blood. He prays for removal. Of all the sin.

And the guilt of sin. And every shred and presence of sin. And he prays again then for renewal. Create. Renew. Cast me not away. Take not the Holy Spirit away.

What a remarkable prayer. Have you prayed that one? Christian brother and sister. Have you prayed that prayer? What a prayer.

Restore and uphold and deliver. It's a complete and radical. Removal and renewal. Removal of his guilt.

And the renewal and restoration. And reconciliation. With God. His God. As if he's saying to God. You want to clean me.

[28 : 54] Clean me then God. Clean me completely. Clean my insides. So that wisdom and righteousness would reign in my heart. That holiness would reign in my heart.

That you would reign in my heart. That you would take your rightful place in my heart. Not myself. Not my lusts and desires and sins. But you Lord.

Open my eyes. The psalmist said. That I might see wonderful things out of your law. Why does the psalmist say that? Because he knew. That sin blinds.

And paralyzes. As we said before. Sin blinds. And it robs us. It robs us of prayer.

And we can only beat our own breast in that regard. God's verdict.

[30 : 04] And declaration continues. It didn't stop with the judgment. This is where you see the grace of God.

The remarkable grace of God. What did Nathan say to David? He said this. And Nathan said to David.

The Lord also has put away your sin. You shall not die. The Lord has put away your sin.

You shall not die. The remarkable truth of true repentance. True repentance.

Evangelical repentance. As opposed to any legal repentance. But true repentance. Confession of sin.

[31 : 14] Followed by forgiveness of sin. If we confess our sins. John says. If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just. To forgive us our sins.

And to cleanse us. From all unrighteousness. Confession. Followed immediately by forgiveness. That's what David experienced.

Particularly too. In Psalm 32. When he speaks of it in that psalm. The dam bursting as it were. And outflowed this remarkable confession.

Followed by almost. Oh well not just almost. But immediate. Immediate forgiveness. Immediate forgiveness.

These remarkable verses. In Psalm 32. Psalm 32. At verse 5. I acknowledged my sin to you. And I did not cover my iniquity.

[32 : 17] I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. And you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Oh the greater power of God's grace in repentance.

The confession and forgiveness of sin. It's sweet. It's sweet when we go to Christ and we say. Lords forgive me for my sins. Pouring out our heart. Pouring it out. And knowing the sweet sound of forgiveness.

And if you're a non-Christian. If you haven't yet closed in with Christ. Oh how sweet that is. There is a sense in which. When we talk about sin.

Here. In this psalm. And in other places of course. I have to say that I was taken back myself. To when Christ came into my own life. And I'm sure in the life of every Christian.

[33 : 21] It takes you back to that time. When Christ came into your life. And he saved you. And what a salvation.

But what a price. Our sins demanded of him. What a price. But a price that he was willing. To pay. Finally.

What do you do with your sin? My sin. David said. Is ever before me. And there is a sense as Christians. We wish that this were more true than it is.

That I was more aware of my sin. Than I am. David promises in this psalm. In verse 13. Then I will teach transgressors your ways.

And sinners will return to you. It's as if David is saying. I'm now going to teach others. So that they follow the pattern of. Of confession of sin.

[34 : 26] And forgiveness. This psalm and other psalms. Teach us how to deal without sin. When you struggle with sin.

As we do from time to time. When there are seasons. In our heart. In our Christian experience. Here is the way to deal with sin. This is the God given pattern.

Repentance. Repentance. Repentance. Repentance unto life. The catechism says. Is a saving grace.

It's all of grace. Whereby a sinner. Out of a true sense of his sin. And apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. Does. With grief and hatred of his sin.

Turn from it unto God. With full purpose of and endeavor. After new obedience. This is the pattern. And this pattern encourages us.

[35 : 27] Not to sink in despair. Don't despair. Christian. Brother and sister. Don't despair. If you're not yet a Christian.

Because the Savior's ears are open. His heart is open. To your cry. To your pleading. Plead with him. What shall I do to be saved.

The Philippian jailer said. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The reply came. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And you will be saved.

Here is the pattern to keep us from total despair. Fear. It also sets before us the matter of the heart. The heart before God. A broken and contrite heart. First before God. And notice what verse 19 says. He says. First to them.

[36 : 25] He says. You will not accept. Sacrifices. Until you see this broken and contrite heart. And then in verse 19. Then.

Then will you delight. In right. Sacrifices. When there is a broken and contrite heart. When the church. Of Christ.

When the church of God. Is being built up. Do good to Zion. In your good pleasure. Build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then. Then.

Then. You will delight. In right sacrifices. These narratives are here to warn us. To warn us of the danger.

The terrible power of sin. Christ has dealt. With the penalty of sin. He has broken the power and dominion of sin.

[37 : 24] So that sin no longer has dominion over the Christian. But the presence of sin remains. James. Reminds us that.

Let no one say when he is tempted. I am being tempted by God. For God cannot be tempted with evil. And he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted.

When he is lured and enticed. By his own desire. Then desire. When it has conceived. Gives birth to sin. And sin.

When it is fully grown. Brings forth death. And James adds this. Do not be deceived. My beloved brothers.

I came across a quote from Bunyan. Which made me stop. Sin is worse than the devil. Sin is worse than the devil.

[38 : 22] If you are more afraid of the devil than sin. You know little of its badness. And thus little of Christ's love.

Man does not know the nature of his wound. How can he know the nature? And excellence of the cure. If man does not know the nature of his wound.

How can he know the nature and excellence of the cure? And finally. There is this. We must look to Jesus.

David's plea. Was to the blood. And David's plea to the blood.

Finds its true virtue. And greater power. Through the blood of Christ. Which cleanses us. From all sin.

[39 : 23] There is. Power in the blood. That hymn. It surprised me. When I was preparing.

And I came across it. I was surprised. That hymn. Which I thought was relatively modern. And I suppose it is in a sense. But it was written in 1899.

By Lewis E. Jones. And I'll finish with this. I'm not quoting it all. Just an element of it. Would you be free.

From the burden of sin. Would you over evil. A victory win. Would you be free. From your passion. And pride.

Come for a cleansing. To Calvary's tide. Would you be whiter. Much whiter than snow. Sin stains are lost.

[40 : 19] In its life giving flow. Would you do service. Would you do service for Jesus. Your king. Would you live daily.

His praises to sing. There's wonderful. Power. In the blood. Amen.

May the Lord bless these thoughts. On his word. Our final singing then. Is. From. Sing psalms. The sing psalms version of.

Psalms 130. And. And. 30. One of the great. Penitential psalms. The psalmist.

Crying out. From the depths. What depths. What depths. Was the psalmist. Crying out from. He was crying out. From the depths.

[41 : 15] Of his sin. Crying out. From the depths. Of his sin. It doesn't tell us. What sin. But he was crying out. From that sin. Lord.

From the depths. And let us all. Cry out. To God. Lord. From the depths. I call to you. Lord. Hear me from on high. And give attention.

To my voice. When I. For mercy. Cry. And so on. Standing. To sing to God's praise. Lord.

From. From. The. The depths. I call. I call. To you. Lord. Hear.

Hear me from on high, and give attention to my voice when I for mercy cry.

[42 : 23] Lord, in your presence who can stand, with you our sins record.

But yet forgiveness is with you, that we may fear you, Lord.

I wait, my soul waits for the Lord. My hope is in his word.

For that the watchman waits for dawn.

My soul waits for the Lord. O Israel, put your hope in God.

[43 : 45] For mercy is with them, and full redemption from their sins, his people he redeemed.

We'll conclude with a word of prayer. We give thanks that with thee there is forgiveness.

That with thee there is plenteous redemption. O that we would avail ourselves of the blood of Christ, which still speaks better things than the blood of Abel.

O that we would avail. We give thanks for that voice that still speaks to sinners. O speak, gracious God, tonight to all our hearts.

Bless us on this your day. May we make every day a Lord's day. In the week ahead. Part us with your blessing.

[45 : 11] Forgiving us for all our sins in Christ's precious name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.