

# Repentance and Restoration

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Psalm 51 and we're going to take some of the main aspects of teaching in this psalm from the whole psalm, although much of it will be on the first part of the psalm.

As we look at this great prayer of David, this prayer of repentance, a prayer by which he sought the Lord's pardon and forgiveness. When we turn to 2 Samuel, we just really have one verse there, in 2 Samuel 12 and verse 13, which just says, David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord.

Nathan said to David, the Lord also has put away your sin, you shall not die. And these words, I have sinned against the Lord, are very brief. Then you find in Psalm 51 that these are opened up for us, these words are opened up so that we can actually appreciate that a lot more was in David's confession than just to say, I have sinned against the Lord.

This is us being taken into the prayer of David in relation to that sin and the attached sins at the time that he had come to know depth of his sin and what he had done in organizing the death of Uriah the Hittite, the husband of Bathsheba, in order to take Bathsheba to be his own wife, which is what he did.

And the title of the psalm shows us, as we said, where the psalm is itself anchored for us in that event and in the events that led up to this great confession of David.

[ 1 : 3 6 ] And it's important for us, of course, to realize that here we have aspects of repentance and insight into what repentance is, as you find David's repentance set out in these verses.

And, of course, when we're looking at it, it's important for us to know more than just what repentance is about. When you come to read these words and sing these words as we sing them in the psalms, it's not just so that we'll know about repentance, but that we'll know what repentance is for ourselves.

That we'll be repenting of our sins, because it's not just that we repent once and for all, as we do when we come to the Lord in the first instance with our sin and our confession.

Repentance, as we've learned from a study of Peter's life, is something that happens all through our Christian life. When we know that we've done something that is not right, or not done something that the Lord was calling on us to do, we come to God with our confession of sin.

We come in repentance. We come with penitent hearts to seek His forgiveness and His restoration and His acceptance. And we're doing that in a world that is so largely dismissive of much of the teaching of the likes of the psalm, or indeed the Bible itself, on this kind of topic.

[ 2 : 5 6 ] Because as we live increasingly in a secularist age, an age that's becoming so dominated by secularist ideology, that secularist ideology wants to take God out of human life, and particularly out of public life.

That secularist ideology wants to do away with absolutes, the absolutes that you associate with God, God Himself being absolute authority, God Himself having absolute right over our lives, the absolute of God's word, of God's law, of the gospel absolutes.

And that, of course, itself then takes away the biblical concept and the biblical doctrine of sin. Because sin really is pretty meaningless unless you have an absolute to begin with.

What is sin if it is not going beyond the boundaries or failing to live up to the absolute that God Himself sets out for us in His revelation of Himself?

If sin is really just something that human beings have come to describe as their relationships one with another when they go wrong, then we're far short of what the Bible says about sin and what the psalm itself says about sin and how we come to appreciate what sin is.

[ 4 : 16 ] So we're living in a world where sin has become redefined because so much else that's associated with sin in the biblical teaching of it has also become redefined or even just jettisoned or set aside altogether.

So when you come to adjust things like that, when you come to make these redefinitions, it always has a knock-on effect. When you redefine sin and what the Bible says is true of sin, then you're redefining repentance and what the Bible says of repentance and our need of repentance.

And you're also redefining the very death of Jesus. Why did Jesus die the death that He died if sin is other than what the Bible says it is?

You can't just adjust our understanding of sin and what we are as sinners and leave our view of the atonement of Christ, the death of Christ, unaffected.

It all really dovetails together in the way that God and His Word has presented these things to us as His truth. And they are all to be kept in the way that God Himself has defined them and brought them into relation to each other, these great truths that you find.

[ 5 : 31 ] Well, there are three things that I want to just look with you this evening at from the psalm. Three things as you take the psalm in its entirety that are important concepts of repentance.

First of all, there's confession, a confession of sin to God. Secondly, there's supplication, a supplication to God for pardon.

Supplication being a crying out or an appeal to God. There's supplication for pardon from God along with confession of sin to God.

And thirdly, there is restoration or an appeal for restoration because David is not happy to leave things at his sin being forgiven, great though that is, but he wants actually to be restored to the service of God, something that his lapse has actually affected so drastically.

And he wants to be restored to that, and he wants to be able again, as we'll see, to teach sinners God's ways and to praise the Lord in a way that he's not able to with the sense of burden of his guilt as he came to pray this prayer.

[ 6 : 48 ] Confession then of sin to God. Notice how the psalm begins. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. Blot out my transgressions, wash me.

Then you come to verse 4. For against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. Now he's admitting to where the fault really lies in his life.

He has committed some sins in the sense of affecting other people. He has done things which have hurt other people.

He has actually organized the death of one person in particular, Uriah the Hittite. But he's not actually describing his sins primarily in terms of the relation that he has with other people.

He's describing his sin at its root in the ultimate sense. Against you, he says to God, you only have I sinned. And in relation to that, he's describing his sin in the opening verses of the psalm using three words.

[ 7 : 55 ] And the three words are important because they give us the Old Testament, the Old Testament completeness, if you like, of sin and the aspects of sin that the Bible teaches us about there.

First of all, he's using the word transgression. Blot out my transgressions in verse 1. He talks then in verse 2 about his iniquity.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity. And then he uses the word which is translated sin itself. Cleanse me from my sin. Now these three words really bring before us, if you like, the whole variety within the concept of sin and the doctrine of sin.

And transgression is something that relates to going beyond certain boundaries. When you transgress something, you're going beyond the boundary that's been set for you.

And when you find a sign up on the grass that says, Don't walk on the grass, and you walk on the grass, you've transgressed. You've broken the boundary that's been set for you there for whatever reason.

[ 9 : 05 ] And in terms of God's law and God's standard, God is saying to us, This is my standard. This is my boundary. You will not do this. Or on the positive side, this is something that you must do or should do.

And when we go beyond that boundary, we are transgressors. We've gone beyond the boundaries set by God. And we all know about that in our lives.

When we are conscious of having done what God specifically says in his word, we ought not to do. We've gone beyond the boundary. We've transgressed.

And there's the second word, iniquity. And in Hebrew, that word literally means something twisted, something gnarled, something that's gone out of shape.

David here is talking about his inner being as well as his outer life. He's talking about what he's finding in his soul now, what he's confessing to God about his inward being, his soul, his spirit, his mind.

[ 10 : 05 ] And he's saying, I am iniquitous. Wash me from my iniquity.

Because our human life has become twisted and gone out of shape due to our sinfulness, due to our sin and our sinful condition.

The moment Adam fell and the moment we fell in him as a human race, we became twisted. We deviated from the straightness that God created.

We've become gnarled inwardly. Our inmost being is very often in turmoil. Things aren't working in the way they should inwardly.

My conscience is not properly related to my understanding. My understanding is darkened through the effect of sin. My emotions are not what they should be or were once in the perfect human being that God created.

[ 11 : 09 ] My aspirations are wrong. My motives are wrong. And I look into myself. That's what I find. Iniquity, a twistedness that I have to bring to God in repentance and ask him to deal with.

Because it's too big for myself. More than just a little tidying up is required. We bring out iniquity. And thirdly, he talks about sin.

Sin. And sin literally means missing a target or missing the mark that God has set. We talk about our shortcomings. And that's a word that relates to this meaning of sin as something in which you fall short of a standard in which you miss the mark.

It's not just that you transgress beyond bounds. That we actually have a twistedness about us in our sinfulness. We also miss the target. We have the target of righteousness, of holiness, of full acceptance with God.

And however hard we try to meet it in our own terms and by our own strength and by our own ingenuity and by our own efforts. We always come short. We always miss the mark.

[ 12 : 18 ] In the utility room at the manse which has tiles around the walls. I'm not sure I should be saying this really. But as you see the marks that are obvious in one part of it.

As you go in there you can see there's a circle there on the wall that's free of any indentations. And round the circle there are all these little spots. These little holes in the tiles.

Somebody was playing darts there not recently but in times since the tiles were put up. I won't actually speculate as to whose children were involved in that.

But they were my predecessors. All I can say is that. It was there when we arrived. What I'm saying is that's obviously a place where you can see all of these little indentations in the tiles.

And what you say to yourself when you see them is. Well they didn't even hit the dartboard. They missed the mark. That's what sin is spiritually.

[ 13 : 23 ] And although that may have as it does have a certain amusing ring to it. And there's nothing wrong with that. What it's doing is making the point that there's nothing amusing with missing the mark. When you're seeking to be accepted with God.

Because the mark that God sets for us. We fail now to reach it. We cannot actually perform. As we once were when God created us.

So as to have his approval. So here is what David is confessing to God. As he's making his confession of sin to God. He's using these three words. These words transgression, iniquity and sin.

All aspects of his sin. But it's more than that. There's more than that to it. Because he comes in verses 6 and verse 10. To describe his inmost being. Behold you delight in truth and the inward being.

And then especially verse 10. Create in me a clean heart oh God. And renew a right spirit within me. He's saying.

[ 14 : 25 ] It's not just enough for me Lord. To stop my active sinning. It's not enough for me Lord. To actually no longer commit adultery. Or to cause that somebody would be put to death.

So that I can claim his wife for myself. That would be such a good thing Lord. I know. I don't want to do that anymore. Is what he's saying. But in order to ensure that. I need this at the root of my being.

To be dealt with. I need my lust to be dealt with. I need what grows out of my soul. To be dealt with. I need that very root of sin.

To be cut by you Lord. And the only way that it can be done. Is for you to create in me. A clean heart. Create. A word which the Bible uses. Exclusively.

Of God creating. God bringing something about. That only he can do. In the beginning. God created. The heavens and the earth.

[ 15 : 21 ] And here is David using the same word. That's never used of anyone else. But God in the Old Testament. Create in me Lord. A clean heart. You see that makes us realize something.

Very very important. That we cannot have. Our sinfulness. Actually properly dealt with. Without the very root of our inner being.

Coming to be renewed. That's what being born again involves. And to be born again means that. God is going to the very root of your being.

And dealing with the very source. Of our outward actions in sin. And dealing with it at its source. In our heart. Create.

In me. That's what we tend to call. And what theologians have long called. Original sin. The condition. That we are born with.

- [ 16 : 20 ] You see what he's saying. Really. Also about his being born. In iniquity. In verse 5. In sin. Did my mother. Conceive me. He doesn't mean by that.
- That he's blaming his mother. For the way he is. You find that very often. In our world. You blame somebody else. Or you blame. Just the way that you were born with this.
- And therefore there's nothing really. Not only that you can do about it. That you should be expected to do about it. It's just the way you are. And David is not happy with that. He knows that God is not happy with that.
- And he's saying. Create in me a clean heart. Lord. I need the root of my being. To actually be renewed. I need sin cut off at its root. I need my sinful condition.
- Overcome and changed. With a new heart. Because. I was born in sin. I was brought forth in iniquity.
- [ 17 : 19 ] And this is what I need. Lord. For you to create. A clean heart. And of course he comes to. To. To say. That it's against God himself.
- That he has sinned. And that in many ways. Is. The most serious aspect of sin. It's got a serious aspect. In the way it affects other people. Obviously.
- David cannot bring Uriah. Back from the dead. He's now dead. And he arranged that death. And he did it deliberately. But what David is concerned with.
- Above all. Is that he has sinned against God. Against you. You only. I have sinned. And done what is evil in your sight.
- And if you move. We lose sight of the fact that. Our sin is primarily in its thrust. Against God himself. Then we're in trouble. If you start trying to redefine sin.
- [ 18 : 16 ] In some other ways. Then this is really. Such a serious thing in anybody's life. David. Is coming really to. The crux of the issue. Against you. You only.
- I have sinned. And you know. When you go to Nathan's message. In. Second Samuel. As you have it recorded there. Nathan the prophet. You remember how he brought.
- David to. To the point. Where he needed to confess his sin. With the story that he had there. The parable that he gave him there. Of the poor man who had the lamb.
- And the rich man who took. The poor man's lamb. In order to provide. For his guest. And so on. You can read that through for yourselves. You know it anyway. I'm sure. But. What David. Was actually told by Uriah.
- Was that. Not only had God. Blessed him. In. So many ways. But. David. Nathan said to him. You are the man.
- [ 19 : 13 ] Who has done this. Thus says the Lord. The God of Israel. I anointed you. King over Israel. And I delivered you. Out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you. Your master's house.
- And your master's wives. Into your arms. And I gave you. The house of Israel. And of Judah. And if this were too little. I would add to you. As much more.
- Why have you despised. The word of the Lord. What was Nathan saying to that. It was saying that. David had sinned. Not just against God. But against the abundant. Goodness of God.
- You examine your own life. And as I examine mine. That's what really comes. To our minds. Through the scriptures. So. Powerfully. It's not just telling us.
- When we sin against God. We're sinning against God. We're sinning against. A very good God. A merciful God. A kind God. We're sinning against.
- [ 20 : 09 ] Divine goodness. We're despising. What he has crammed into our lives. Of his goodness thus far. And that's really what led to David's broken heart.

Because nothing. Breaks your heart so much. As to realize that you have. Wronged goodness. Even on human. On a human level. When somebody has been really good to you.

And you realize you've let them down. It breaks your heart doesn't it. It comes really to the fore. When you realize just what it is you've done. And that you've done that. Against such goodness.

And against such kindness. But when you bring it to God. And you think about God's goodness. And the number of ways. The innumerable ways. In which God is so good to us.

Even as the psalmist in Psalm 40 puts it. That the gifts of God. The way he has blessed us from day to day. They are too numerous to mention. You can't count them.

[ 21 : 11 ] There are too many to count. Well David is saying. This is what I have done. I have sinned against you Lord. Against you only I have done this.

Against your goodness. And that's why he actually speaks. Of a broken heart. The sacrifices of God.

Verse 17. Are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart. Oh God. You will not despise. You see. He's saying. All the sacrifices in the world.

That I could give you Lord. They are nothing. If I don't have this broken heart. If I don't have within me. This heart that's broken over my sin. And what I've done against you.

And that's the broken heart. That you and I surely. Need to know something of. And as part of our repentance. And as a feature of our repentance.

[ 22 : 17 ] Nothing breaks the heart. As a confession. Against you Lord. You only. I have done this. I alone have done it.

I can't blame anybody else. Out the door goes pride. Anger. Defensiveness. Excuses. I have done it.

Lord. I have done it. Against you only. My sin. Has stabbed you Lord. That's all there is to it.

It's all in that. It's confession. Of sin to God. Secondly. His supplication. For pardon. You see how he begins the psalm.

Have mercy on me oh God. According to your steadfast love. According to your abundant mercy. Wash me thoroughly. And so on. He's available. He's conscious of available mercy in God.

[ 23 : 17 ] And you know your catechism. The one that. Specifies what repentance is. Number 87 of the catechism. The shorter catechism. And it says the repentance unto life.

Is a saving grace. By which a sinner. Comes an apprehension. Of the mercy of God in Christ. To turn. From sin to God. That's the phrase.

Apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. Just think of it. Here you are with a stricken conscience. Here you are like David. As you come to realize your sinfulness. Your need of cleansing.

Your need of forgiveness. And you come. If you were to come to God. And not actually. Have an apprehension of his mercy. And come to a God. Who had not revealed anything.

Of mercy. Or of loving kindness to us. Where would you be? Where would I be? For David. And for his stricken conscience.

[ 24 : 13 ] Nothing is more precious. Than that there is forgiveness with God. What can be more precious to yourself. And to your conscience as a sinner.

To your consciousness of sin. To your confession of sin. To your approach to God. But that the fact of God's forgiveness. Psalm 130 that we sang.

And we mentioned it. In giving out the psalm. Lord if you were to mark iniquity. Who could stand? There would be no standing place. In God's presence. But for his mercy.

But there is forgiveness with you. So that you may be feared. And then he comes to pray for pardon. And as he prays. There are three chief concerns.

And I need to just cover these very quickly. Three chief concerns of David. In regard to appealing to God. Or supplication for pardon from God.

[ 25 : 12 ] First of all. The clearing of his guilt. Wash me. Make me clean. And as he speaks there later on. Of blood guiltiness. In verse 14.

Deliver me from blood guiltiness. Blot out. He says elsewhere. My transgressions. In verse 2. Blot them out. He is talking about. Picturing it as.

His account before God. It is all written up by God. And it is marked by his guilt. And he has an answer to that. Or a corresponding element. In his conscience. To that book if you like.

That God has. Of his sin. And of his guilt. That is written large there. And he is appealing to the Lord. Lord please blot it out. According to your mercy. Because there is mercy with you. Blot out my transgression.

Make me clean in your sight. Clean my record. Give me a new start. The record is.

[ 26 : 08 ] A record that every one of us has. And as your life goes on. That record does not get smaller. The list does not get shorter.

As we come to know our sinfulness. You know the great thing is. It doesn't matter how long it is. What types of sin are on it. There is forgiveness with God.

The blood of Christ cleanses us. As John said. From all sin. As you come with your confession of sin to God. And as you are conscious of transgression.

And iniquity. And sin. Of missing the mark. And sinning against God. And God only. As you come with a broken heart. How relieved you are to know that God. Is extending this forgiveness to you in the gospel.

And as you pray for pardon. That you can actually ask God to clean your record. And to give you a new one.

[ 27 : 13 ] To give you the righteousness of Christ. Instead of your own unrighteousness. That is the first thing. To be cleared of guilt. Secondly. To be washed from his filth.

Because sin pollutes. Sin is something that makes us dirty. That defiles us in the eye of God. And he is not just asking God to clean his record. And make it clean.

He is asking to clean up his life. And you see. As we said already. It is not enough for David himself. Just to clean up bits here and there. To go through a kind of reformation. To do his very best.

We have seen it needs to begin inwardly. It needs to begin in the heart. Create in me a clean heart. And that clean heart. Is something that then issues force in a clean life. A life that is committed to God's standard.

In behavior from day to day. Wash me. Purge me. He says there in verse 7. Purge me with Hizob. Wash me.

[ 28 : 09 ] And I shall be whiter. Than the snow. And the third thing. That he prays for in this supplication. For pardon. Along with clearing of guilt.

And washing of filth. Is to be freed from misery. David is miserable. He can't rejoice. He can't go to what he once had in his relationship to God.

Until this is dealt with. Of course we realize in this. That what we are really dealing with in Psalm 51. Is the confession of a believer. A believer who has lapsed. A believer who has come to realize.

The extent of his lapse. Has come to realize. That he needs his life again. Set right with God. And is appealing for God to do. But the principle extends to those. Who have never yet come to know the Lord.

Who have never perhaps even yet to. Come in repentance. In the first instance. To come. To confess their sin. And to seek his pardon. Principle is the same.

[ 29 : 09 ] And the principle is. Lord free me from my misery. Because you and I know very well. That what the world calls joy. Is not really joy. In the biblical sense at all.

I know the world tonight. In some extent will say. You know you people are actually. Because you are so committed to the Bible. And so committed to God. And to coming to church. And to prayer meetings.

And especially you free Kirkers. You don't know what joy really is. You are setting about actually. Killing joy. And you believe in a God. Who is a kill joy. I will tell you what kills joy.

Or rather God is telling you. What kills joy. And that is sin. And David is looking back. Over what he has done. And he realizes. This is my kill joy.

The sin that I have committed. Is destructive of my joy. And of my satisfaction. And so he is saying. Lord create. Restore to me.

[ 30 : 04 ] The joy. Of your salvation. And verse 8. Let me hear joy. And gladness. We really want to know.

Joy in your life. All of us want to know. Every human being wants to know. Joy in their lives. Where do you find it? Well you don't find it.

Outside of repentance. To God. You don't find it. By bypassing repentance. You don't find it. By tidying up your life. Here and there. You don't find it. In a world that rejects God.

And thinks that joy. Is something. Of a human creation. That joy. Is just. The kind of joy. You find. And going around the pubs. And all of that sort of stuff. Or David is saying.

This is joy. To have a right relationship. With God. To have your sin forgiven. To have your life.

[ 31 : 00 ] At the root of your being. Dealt with by God. So to create in you. A clean heart. To have a life. That wants to please God. To have a life.

That realizes. That without God. We're in desperate trouble. We face an eternity. Of woe. And all the joy. In this life.

And all the worldly joy. That's out there. Will come to an end. The moment. You or I. Would enter a lost eternity. There is not a shred.

Of joy. In the words of Jesus. Depart. From me. You wicked. It. There is no joy.

In hell. No prospect of joy. There is everything opposite to it. And there's no end to it.

[ 31 : 59 ] And David is saying. This is my joy. Lord. My joy is in you. My joy is in having. My life restored. In my relationship with you.

And so restore to me. The joy. Of your salvation. That's where our joy is. Is that your joy tonight? What is it. That brings you the greatest satisfaction.

And the greatest joy. I'm not suggesting that. Salvation is primarily one of bringing satisfaction. To human beings. Salvation is something that is to God's glory. And to God's praise. And that's why we're here.

But it doesn't leave out your satisfaction. And your joy of heart. And it doesn't leave out your inward emotions. To really be engaged. As God brings you to know his salvation.



Because there's joy in that. Real joy. Deep joy. Lasting joy. Joy that you cannot know.

[ 32 : 55 ] Outside of forgiveness. And repentance. So there's supplication for pardon. From God. Thirdly there's restoration. To serve God.

You see verses 13 to 18. Where the psalm finishes. I'm just going to touch on this very briefly. He wants to teach. Transgressors your ways. And sinners will return to you.

Because David realizes. That what he had done. Was actually. Setting before other people. A very false view of God. And what it meant to be.

A believer in God. And the victim. When Nathan came to him. He said to him. Where he said. Because by this deed.

You have utterly. Scorned the Lord. It is in the ESV. But I think a better translation. Is something like. It's in the. Older translations. You might have something in your. Margin there.

[ 33 : 52 ] That gives you an alternative. Translation. Something like this. You have caused the enemy. The voice of the Lord. To scorn him. Nothing.

Enhances. Atheism. And encourages. Atheism. Like sin. In the Lord's people. I have to say that.

To myself. Firstly. If I'm going to openly. Sin. Against the Lord. That's going to encourage people. To dismiss God. As irrelevant. And my conviction.

And my confession. Of God. As false. That's what David was doing. That was. That's what he was giving. The impression of. That really God. And his law. Didn't matter. If he could do this sort of thing.

Why was he confessing God. As his God at all. Now he's saying to God. I want to teach transgressors. Your ways. And sinners will return to you. I want to be able to say.

[ 34 : 51 ] Lord. Out of this clean heart. To people that are still. In the wrong path. To appeal to them. To come back to God. And he can't do it until.

His own life is restored. First of all. And then. He wants to praise the Lord. The way he's not able to praise him now. Because. His spirit has been dulled. As we said. Sin is a kill joy.

And sin is not just a kill joy. But. When you try and enter into the praise of God. You know what it's like yourself. Something is. In your life. That's not been dealt with. Between yourself and God.

Happens to us. And. As ministers. As well as yourselves. Something that you fail to deal with. Fully. Or honestly. And it's in your mind. And it's in your conscience. And you can't enter into.

The praise of God. The way you want to. And the way you should. And you realize. I've got to deal with this. I've got to take this back to God. And I've got to repent of it. And I've got to ask the Lord. To restore me.

[ 35 : 44 ] In my inmost soul. Even if nobody else knows about it. Because I cannot get that spirit of praise. With a sincere and honest heart. Until I do it. And so he's saying.

Open my lips. Oh Lord. And I will declare. Your praise. Let me do it from a restored life. From a life that knows again. Of your salvation.

And joy of your salvation. And then he comes. At the end of the psalm. To ask the Lord. For the growth of the church. Which again. Is interesting. Do good.

In your good pleasure to Zion. Build up the walls. Of Jerusalem. Because you see. Repentance. Is not something. That leaves us. Just focused on ourselves.

We come to God. In repentance. Individually and personally. Yes. As David is doing here. But then when we come to God. In repentance. We realize that. Especially if our lives. As they do.

[ 36 : 41 ] Have an impact on others. We realize that. It's not enough. Just to ask for ourselves. To be put right. We want God's cause. To flourish. We want God.

To actually. Bless his cause. And bless his church. And increase his church. And build up his church. Build up the walls. Of Jerusalem. That itself.

That concern. Is itself. A sign of repentance. When the burden. Of our hearts. Includes. Being burdened. For the Lord's cause.

And for the growth. Of the church. Not just our church. Our congregation. But the church. Of Christ. Everywhere. However different. In many respects. They may be.

To ourselves. When I was involved. More in committee work. Than I am now. It was very often. The case that. In going to committees.

[ 37 : 37 ] In Edinburgh. I would go and stay. With our older son Ian. And take the train. Into Edinburgh. While the committees. Were on. Very many times a year. And I always found myself.

When going. Onto the train. Particularly. At Waverley Station. To go back to Livingston. Making sure. Sometimes there would be. Two. If not three. Trains.

At that same platform. Going to different places. And of course. The notice board. As you come to the platform. Has the. The trains. And the order. In which they're on the platform. But there's always. In your mind. I hope I don't get this wrong.

Because if I go into the wrong one. If I go into the one at the end. And it leaves first. And it's. Not going to Livingston. I might end up. Halfway to London. Before I know where I am. So there's always that thought. In your mind. You hope you're on the right train.

And so. Nowadays. When the announcement. Comes on the train. This is the train. For Glasgow Central. Calling at Livingston. Then you sit back in your seat. And say. Well that's fine.

[ 38 : 32 ] At least I'm on the right train. And if I don't fall asleep. I'll get off at Livingston. So that relief. Is very palpable.

And so it is with life. And the gospel. Says to us. The gospel announcement. Begins with. This is the train.

To hell. That you are on. As you're born into this world. Repentance.

Is getting off that train. And going on to the one. That goes in the opposite direction. That terminates. In heaven. Let me leave you.

This question. As I put it. To myself. Seriously. As well. Are you on the right train. Tonight. Is your life.

[ 39 : 30 ] Going to terminate. In heaven. Or are you on the wrong train. Have you repented. If not. You've got to get off.

The wrong train. Before it's too late. And you've got to get on. The right one. The one that will take you safely. In Jesus Christ.

To eternal life. May God bless his word to us. We're going to conclude by singing. In Psalm 51. Psalm 51. On page 68.

We'll sing verses 7 to 14. These three stanzas. Cleanse with hyssop.

Purify me. I'll be whiter than the snow. Let the bones you crushed be joyful. May I joy and gladness know. From my failure. Hide your face. Blot out. All my wickedness.

[ 40 : 29 ] Psalm 51. To the tune. Ottawa. Verses 7 to 14. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.  
Cleanse with hyssop.

Purify me. Amen. I'll be whiter than the snow. Let the bones you crushed be joyful.

May I joy and gladness know. From my failure hide your face, Gought out all my wickedness.

Lord, create a pure heart in me, And a steadfast mind renew.

Do not take your spirit from me, Cast me not away from you.

[ 41 : 50 ] Give me back the joy I had, Keep my willing spirit glad.

Then I'll teach you ways to sinners, Rebels will turn back to you.

Free me from blood guilt, my Savior, God most merciful and true.

Then I'll praise your righteousness, Teach my lips your name to bless.

We'll say grace for the food we're to receive in the hall just now as well. Lord, our God, we thank you for your abundant goodness to us.

[ 42 : 59 ] Help us not to sin against your goodness. Help us to realize that every good gift we receive comes from you. Help us to use them to your glory.

Bless the food that has been prepared for us now and our time of fellowship. Bless those who have prepared it for us and those who will be involved, Lord, in the fellowship this evening, In the provisions that are set out for us.

And we pray that as we come to you and give thanks, That we may continue to depend upon you. And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit, Be with you now and always.

Amen. I'll go to the main door just now. Amen.