

Confession

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Preacher: John Lowrie

[0 : 0 0] I'm 51, Sam 51. Thank you very much for Gerald for leading our worship for the choice of those songs. I thought the songs were great. I really enjoyed that last song. We've just been singing.

Thanks to Kimmy as well for the kids talk and for Karen for our prayers. It's great to have Ian and Celia back with us again. And John has done a sterling job when you've been away.

So thank you as well, John, for all your ministry as well over the past number of weeks. I'm trying to think if there's anything. Oh yeah, there is. Gerald has asked me to remind the folk. We have munchkins tomorrow at 10 o'clock.

I think it's 10, isn't it? 9.15. 9.15. Great. 9.15. So let's remember that in our prayers this tomorrow morning, 9.15.

Psalms 51. The topic of our sermon this morning is confession of sin. We are looking at aspects of prayer and we'll be dealing with that in a moment or two.

[1 : 0 0] But here is a time in the life of David, the mighty King David, who we are told had a heart for God. That's how he's described. And yet he had feet of clay.

He fell and he committed adultery with Bathsheba. So let's read this psalm and then we'll pray and then we'll come to God's Word together. For the director of music, a psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

Here is David's prayer. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love. According to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me, sorry, wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb. You taught me wisdom in that secret place.

[2 : 1 8] Cleanse me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness.

Let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways so that sinners will turn back to you. Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God. You who are God, my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice or I would bring it. You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

[3 : 28] My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

May it please you to prosper Zion, to build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous and burnt offerings offered whole.

Then bulls will be offered on your altar. Father, we'll end our reading at the end of this terrific psalm in the canon of Scripture. And we're going to look at this together.

Let's just pray. Let's ask for the Lord's help. Our loving Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, for all that's gone before in this service. We thank you, Father, for the prayers that have been offered and the way in which we were able to engage with them and add our amen to those prayers.

But, Father, we thank you as well for the songs that we've been able to sing, reminding us of your love and your grace and your mercy, reminding us of your holiness. And, Father, we come with your holy word open before us.

[4 : 32] And we pray, Lord, that you would speak to us. Our desire is that we would do business with the living God. And we would approach you in that name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow.

So, Father, we ask for your presence through your Holy Spirit. We pray that he will take the things of Christ and apply them to each one of our hearts. So, Father, encourage us in our walk with you.

May this be a real time. May it be a personal time, Lord, with each one of us, Lord, as we come as individuals as well as a congregation into your presence. Speak to us now, we pray.

Give us ears to hear. And we ask these things in Jesus' name and for his glory. Amen. Amen. This morning we're continuing our series, a short series that we're looking at prayer.

And you remember why we're looking at this aspect of prayer. So that our prayer life will be better at the start of 2024, should the Lord hurry.

[5 : 29] And the 1st of January we're primed and we're ready to go in our own devotions. That's the main reason why I've chosen to do this. And here are the ingredients we've been looking at.

But this is the pattern we will follow. Acts of prayer, well-known WE acronym, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication.

These are very important elements of prayer. And they are biblical and they are balanced in their prayer. Sometimes, as you know, we often just concentrate on supplication.

We have our devotions in the morning. We just say, God, I've got a difficult day. Help me. Boom. That's our quiet time done. When really, there are so many other elements of prayer.

Key, basic elements of prayer. And that's what we're looking at. There is a flow to this. Apart from, they're placed in a very suitable order.

[6 : 25] As we adore God. As we become aware of His holiness. Gerald reminds us of Isaiah 6. If burning ones. If cherubim and seraphim should fly through here, even this morning, we would become aware of a God who's bigger and holier than us.

It would have an effect on us. And therefore, when we adore God and we remind ourselves who He is, that He is God and we are not. We become aware of our sin. We become aware of our sin. So, the next natural response in prayer should be confession.

And then, when we remember our sin, we always remember His Son. We remember that He has reconciled us despite our sinfulness. We remember the grace and mercy of God.

This causes us to thank Him. And then we come to Him in supplication. We are a needed people. Lord, we thank you for all that you've done. But help us this week. Help us with all of these areas of our life.

Help us with the world today. And so forth. So, there's a... The ingredients are good. The ingredients are biblical. But they are also a natural flow to them. We saw similar ingredients when we opened up this series by reading Matthew 6.

[7 : 36] This, then, is how you should pray. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Adoration. Your kingdom come. Your will be done. Basic adoration.

Supplication. Asking God for His kingdom to come. Give us today our daily bread. Supplication. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Confession.

The one we're looking at this morning. This is our daily prayer. We are aware that we are sinners. And we need to pray this. Lead us not into temptation. Supplication again.

So, this is the things that we're looking at. Last week, we looked at worshiping God and adoration. It really should be the first thing that's on our mind.

Before we come with our shopping list, we should come in adoration for Him. He is worthy of praise and glory. It should be natural. It's not natural for the natural man. He's not interested in God.

[8 : 31] He's dead in trespasses and sins. But when you become a Christian, you're given the Holy Spirit. You're a heart of stones taken away. You have a heart of flesh. You know God.

You understand God. To know God is to love God. You're not indifferent when God reveals Himself to you. You adore Him. So, it should be natural.

And then last week, we looked at what that meant. What we mean by God. We mean by adoring the Father. He's the prime mover in the gospel. In everything.

He draws up. There's a great plan of salvation. He sends His Son into the world. He comes in obedience to the Father. And He predestines us.

He calls us. He chooses us out of the world. He makes known to us the mystery of His will. He forgives us. Father, forgive them.

[9 : 26] For they know not what they do. And the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit. Our inheritance is from the Father. And every good and perfect gift comes from the Father.

So, we're clear in our mind the roles within the Trinity. We adore the Father. But we adore the Son. He is given the name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow.

That's why Revelation 5. When every living creature in heaven hears these things and sees, they sing. To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

The Father is not diminished when we worship His Son. We are to worship the Father and the Son all through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. That Jesus says, when He, the Holy Spirit, comes, He will testify of me.

Do you remember this from last week? This is how we adore. And it's good in our mind that we're clear. That we understand these things. If you read Paul's letters, he differentiates between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

[10 : 28] For us, it can be a bit of a fog. God. But it's good in our mind to know what we're doing as we look at these things together. And you remember, it was interesting in Cairns' prayer, talking about the Word of God.

The Word of God is how God speaks to us. You're not going to discover much about God watching EastEnders. But you will from His Word. As you read it, you become aware that the Holy Spirit takes these things, applies them to your heart.

You become aware that God is holy. And therefore, you worship Him in this way. So this morning, we're moving on from adoration. Hopefully that's a bit clear.

Maybe this week has been good for you. Don't wait to January the 1st to follow this pattern. But get ready. At the very least, do it then. But confession. We are following on naturally from this.

I don't know about your own quiet time. If you looked at these four ingredients, whether there's a particular area that's strong for you and maybe one that's weak. I would suggest that most of us, usually, if you listen to prayers, public prayers in churches, maybe even your own prayer, supplication is probably the strongest one.

[11 : 41] We find it natural to come in supplication. Indeed, even if we were trying to adore, it doesn't take long before we start bringing our requests. Lord, we thank you that you're great. Oh, by the way, Lord, I could do with your help.

And off we go. Supplication is usually the one that we're strongest. And then maybe thanksgiving. We're usually not bad. It's, Lord, I thank you for last week. I thank you for all that you've done.

And we're usually not too bad at that. And then maybe adoration. Lord, you are great. But confession of sin is probably the weakest, for me anyway, probably out of the four.

It's not one that I take seriously enough. And yet, in the Lord's Prayer, it's very high up. Forgive us our transgressions. Forgive us our sins.

We need to take this seriously. And I think this is because sometimes as Christians, we know if you have a good theology, your sins are forgiven you, past, present, and future.

[12 : 40] That once-for-all sacrifice. You rely on this. You don't need another sacrifice next week. There was that one sacrifice on Calvary's cross, a specific location, a specific time in history where your sins were dealt with.

And we rejoice in that. But it's very easy to think, well, it doesn't matter. It's well with my soul. And I'm going to heaven. The Lord saved me. One saved, always saved.

And off you go. And you don't really need to take this seriously. But daily sin affects our daily walk with God. And if nothing else, that we should confess our sin.

Jesus told us, confess your sin, your transgressions before God. So here is a natural order. I mentioned this book to you.

I've mentioned this book. This is a family devotion book. This is it here. It is a beast of a book. This is the book that I got at college. I was allowed to, when I discovered all the books under the stairs that wasn't in the library, me and my mate, we saw the librarian.

[13 : 47] Can we get these books? Yeah, help yourself. The new college principal got word of this just before he started and went, no chance. You can get one book. We were standing with a wheelbarrow ready to load it up.

And I thought, where do you begin? This is a book, obviously, you can't buy. And this was the one I chose. And it's great. It's got a wee bookmark in it. Isabella Wallace, 1880.

They are Church of Scotland ministers. And the prayers in it are very special. And I read them every day. The morning and evening, the plan was you read the scripture.

They give you a passage. There's comments on it. Then you read the prayer. You do the same thing at night, morning and evening. It just shows you how far we've fallen. And I was reading, I was looking at daily readings, which we'll do at some Wednesday, sharing how we read our Bible.

Daily plans. Carol sent me a plan that she uses, takes us through the Bible a year. We really need to do something like this before January, and we will do that. But I remember coming across a plan, which was the five-minute daily quiet time.

[14 : 58] And I thought, you are joking. Five minutes? Five minutes? Whoever designed that should be taken out and horse whipped. Five minutes? And that's progress.

The shorter quiet time is progress, really. This would take you a couple of hours every day. Family would meet around the Word of God. We've wandered away. We are taking our standards from each other, rather than from who God is.

But let me read to you. I was talking about adoration confession. And how these prayers, this is how folk prayed in those days. And I try and pray this way.

I'm not always good at it, but I try. Let me just give you an example of one of the mornings. This is a Tuesday morning. It says, and it will give you the feel for what this, remember I was saying to you, if you have a good, if you're reading God's Word and something comes up under confession, write it in your wee book.

It doesn't need to be green, a wee book, put adoration in it, halfway through it, put confession, thanksgiving, supplication, and put Bible verses, not the verse itself, but just what it says.

[16 : 02] You'll need to write the verse out. But this will give you a flavor. And these are the things that you can pick up and use in your prayer. Almighty, eternal, and most glorious God, we would bow down before thee in worship, for thou art God, and besides thee there is none else.

We would kneel before thee, for thou art our maker. Fearfully and wonderfully hast thou made us, and hitherto hast thou preserved us. Every day we would praise thee, and show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning.

For we laid us down and slept, we awakened, for the Lord sustained us. But wherewith shall we come before the Lord? How shall we appear in the presence of the High and Holy One?

Thou, O God, art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity. Thou searchest all hearts, and judgest all men. But we are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousness are as filthy rags.

We acknowledge our transgressions against thee. Thee only have we sinned. Our sins are more than we can number, but thou art a God of infinite mercy, a just God, and a Savior.

[17 : 11] Thy name and thy memorial to all generations is the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. Though thou wilt by no means clear the guilty, we would bless and praise thee, O God, that thou hast made us to know the way of salvation.

We bless thee that in the fullness of time thou dost send forth thy Son to be the propitiation for sin, that through faith in his blood we might obtain eternal redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of thy grace.

May he be made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. I'm only halfway through that prayer for that morning. That is, to my mind, that is how you pray.

Those are great biblical prayers. Lord, you are wow. We are not wow, but Jesus is wow. And you just flow.

There's a flow to it. Instead of, can you see it's a higher level of, Lord, I'm here this morning. God bless mommy, daddy, and so forth. It's taking, elevating our prayers to this godly level.

[18 : 26] That was Church of Scotland ministers now then. They're not so good now. I don't think some of them have sold the jerseys, really. But every single one of those prayers is like that.

They take you into a different place. So I read them. They prime the pump in my own devotions. So that is following that adoration and then straight into confession.

That is a natural flow. And you'll notice the scriptures there. There must have been about 15 different scriptures. And how, if you have that working knowledge of scripture, you're able to use God's language.

You communicate because you're taking his word. You're describing yourself. You're describing God. And you're claiming the promises. I cannot commend the use of scripture and prayer.

But that takes a long time. And if you've been a Christian for 20, 30, 40 years, hopefully you should be good at that. Use that. That's God's word. That's God's language.

[19 : 24] That's how we communicate with him. So let's look at then six things very quickly this morning as we look at confession of prayer. Holiness. We begin with God. Holiness.

It was great that Kimmy reminded us that God is love. But if there's one attribute that God wants to communicate and has communicated to us, he says in the Bible, God is love.

But he says he is holy, holy, holy. He is three times holy. In Isaiah, we see this. You see this in Revelation.

God, it's the one attribute that he has that he wants to communicate to sinful men and women, he's different from us. He is a holy God. And I commend R.C. Sproul's book.

If you want a good Christmas present, buy R.C. Sproul, The Holiness of God. If you read it and you don't like it, I'll buy it back off you. That's how confident I am that you'll like that book.

[20 : 19] Don't just go for socks and hankies at Christmas. Go for something spiritual. Think Black Friday's been, I need to get something spiritual. Ask for something spiritual.

One thing from somebody. R.C. Sproul, The Holiness of God. That will change your life. That's a great book. God is holy. Exodus 15. Who among the gods is like you, O Lord?

Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders. 1 Samuel 2.2. There is no one holy like the Lord.

Revelation 4. The four living creatures with six wings, covered with eyes all around, even under their wings, it says. Day and night. They never stop saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was, who is, who is to come.

Day and night. When you slept, these living creatures were saying this. Holy who was and is. He's always holy. Always has been. Always will be.

[21 : 26] Habakkuk 1.13. Your eyes are too pure to look on evil. And when we encounter this holy God, Gerald reminded us of Isaiah.

When you encounter this holy God, these seraphim, holy, holy, holy. The whole earth is filled with his glory. Doorposts shake. Thresholds shake.

And the temple was filled with smoke. Such is the holiness of God. And his response was in the area of his brilliance. He was the Shakespeare of his day.

His gift was in the use of words. He was a writer. The book of Isaiah is an amazing piece of literature. Even if you weren't a Christian.

If you'd studied how it's put together in these words, you would be blown away. Even if you're not a Christian. What does he say? Woe is me, I cried. I am ruined.

[22 : 22] For I am a man of unclean lips. And I live among a people of unclean lips. My eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty. Even in the area of your giftedness, you become stripped and bare before him.

John, on the island of Patmos, he has this vision. When I turned around and saw him, he spoke, I fell at his feet as though dead. He has no words.

He is speechless. And Jesus puts his right hand on him. Do not be afraid. This is the God we serve. He is powerful. And we are naked before him.

Hebrews 4.30. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered. And laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

You might be sitting here. But before the eyes of God, your heart is laid bare your whole life. Your good, your strength, your sin, your good deeds are all laid bare before him.

[23 : 28] And the scary thing is this. This holy God demands holiness from each one of his creatures. Be holy.

Leviticus 19. Because I, the Lord, your God, am holy. Matthew 5.48. Jesus says, Be perfect. Therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

That is the standard. We lower it too much. We compare ourselves with each other. Well, they do. I'm not bad comparing myself with them. But the standard.

That's why I was recommending R.C. Sproul's book. To read something that takes you into the very throne room of God. We need this fresh vision of God. I need it personally. I want that every day in 2024.

Walking with the Lord. Lifted out the mundane. But I know it will leave me stripped and bare in the presence. In his holy presence. Because the thing is, we are sinful.

[24 : 29] We are sinful. Job says, Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his makers? If God places no trust in his servants.

If he charges his angels with error. How much more those who live in houses of clay. If even the heavens are not pure in his sight. How much those who dwell on earth.

And God's verdict on every one of us is clear. Couldn't be clearer. There is no one righteous. Not even one. And that includes within Westerhailes Baptist Church.

Even our good deeds. Our righteous acts are like filthy rags in his sight. And we have no defense. Romans 3.19. We are all guilty.

Now we know that whatever the law says. It says to those who are under the law. So that every mouth may be silenced. And the whole world held accountable to God.

[25 : 25] That is God's verdict on this wee globe. There is no one righteous. The whole world is guilty before him. Now how have we sinned against God? How?

How? What does that look like? How have we actually sinned about? Sinned against God? David in this psalm mentions three words that help explain. And it's good for us to differentiate sin.

And know how we might have gone wrong. He uses the word sin. And this word basically means to miss the target. We have failed.

This has been the standard. God's holy standard. And we have sinned in that we have failed to reach that. We might have tried. We might have tried well. You see that in verse 2.

He mentions sin. But he also mentions iniquity. For us, these words just blend into one as if he's saying the same thing. They are not. They say something slightly different.

[26 : 23] So sin is failing to reach this target. This pass mark of 100%. To be perfect as he is perfect. And we might try. But we fail.

The second word in verse 2 is the word iniquity. And this means to basically bend or to twist. We bend and twist the law. We wander.

It's more a kind of wandering away. And sometimes we can do this. We can be careless. Sin can sneak upon us. And we can wander away. It can catch us unawares.

So that is iniquity. Transgression is the more serious of these three. Transgression is this willful disobedience. An act of rebellion against God.

That is what people do. We sin. We are involved in iniquity. We transgress God's word. And this willful obedience.

[27 : 22] Where we know the good we should do. But we choose not to do it. We may harbor something against somebody. We might become materialistic.

Whatever. Sin takes many forms. But sometimes we choose that. We deliberately choose to do it. I'm going to harbor anger. Resentment. Jealousy.

Pride. And we take that to our hearts more than we are willing to admit. That we don't just fail. That we actively sin. We don't just wonder.

I was a bit careless Lord. And I wandered from you. It can be as serious as this. So we fail to keep God's word. We distort God's word. And we willfully disobey God's word.

And why does this happen? Because it's inner nature to do this. We can't blame somebody else. A big boy didn't make us do it and run away. It's inner nature.

[28 : 18] David knew this. It's not a blip. It's something within us. Look at verse 5. Surely I was sinful at birth. Sinful from the time my mother conceived me. So David doesn't just look to the incident.

Well that was a blip with Bathsheba. He's basically looking whack to the time when he was born. When he was an infant. He says Lord I was sinful even then. Nothing has changed.

This is. This is. I've done this thing. He transgressed. He willfully disobeyed. That's why he mentions this in verse 1 and verse 3. Blot out my transgressions.

Verse 3. For I know my willful sin. Because it's in me from birth. It's not a blip. And when we encounter a holy God.

All these forms of sin come to us. And we realize Lord we really are a sinner. And we need to come before God.

[29 : 15] So secondly. Confession. Confession. When we become aware of a holy God. And we become aware of the sin within us. If we are Christians. And we want to please God.

And we become aware of our sin. We want to confess this. What does it mean to confess sin? Confess sin basically means to own up to this. The dictionary definition of confession is this.

A formal statement. Admitting that one is guilty of a crime. Now if it's a moral crime. You confess that to the police.

If it's a spiritual crime. You confess it to a priest. Not the police. So whatever. Whether it's a spiritual thing or whatever. That's the dictionary definition of this.

We're basically owning up. Lord I did it. I confess my sin. I'm a sinner. Before you. And that is what David did in another psalm. Psalm 32.

[30 : 13] Then I acknowledged my sin. He admitted it to you. And did not cover up my iniquity. I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.

It is this owning up. And this is what we don't take seriously. Lord I really am a sinner. My heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it? So David said I acknowledged it.

I didn't hide it. I didn't. I confessed it before you. And this is David coming to God in Psalm 32 in prayer. Recognizing that it affects his walk with God.

He's calling sin, sin. It's an honest confession. And this is a daily thing. Romans 7. The good we want to do we cannot do.

We end up doing the thing that we don't want to do. And that's why sin should affect us more than non-Christians. Because we feel we're sin more than the world does. So then I, myself, in my mind, am a slave to God's law.

[31 : 14] But in my sinful nature, a slave to the law of sin. And therefore as Christians, when we confess sin, it is good to pray that prayer of Psalm 139.

Search me, O God. Know my heart. Test me. Know my anxious thoughts. But see if there is any offensive way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting.

That is a brave prayer. If you're sitting here thinking, well, I don't get the whole confession of sin. I think I'm doing okay. Well, pray that prayer. Pray that prayer. If you don't see your sin, ask the Lord to show you.

I think the Lord is so gracious. He doesn't show us ourselves all at once. I think we'd be utterly devastated. But now again, he breaks into our life and says, at this particular time, you've been a Christian for 12 years.

You've always struggled with this. I'm going to put my finger on this specific sin at this specific time. As you read God's word, the Lord just might put his finger on that, and you become aware.

[32 : 14] Lord, I see myself. I see myself now. I've looked into the mirror of your word, and I don't like what I see. My heart is laid bare, and I see this.

And it's a good prayer to pray. Search me, O God. And so here is regular daily confession. Forgive us our debts, Jesus said, as we also have forgiven our debtors, linked to us forgiving others.

But here is this. Jesus says, this is how you should pray. Ask the Lord to forgive you. That didn't just happen in 1960 in the Kelvin Hall when you have Billy Graham. That happens every day.

Lord, forgive me my sins. Search me, Lord. I see it. But he didn't just stop at confession. David wanted cleansing. We must not stop at just confessing our sin. Because you can just confess and have a pity party and just say, Lord, I'm a big waster.

And you just, what good is that? That's not good for anybody. The Lord doesn't want us just to go on a guilt trip and to remain there. He wants us to take us all the way through to joy and to restoration.

[33 : 23] But here is a process. Holiness. Lord, I'm a sinner. I confess it. In your presence. I'm a sinner. But I want to be cleansed. David did this. Look at verse 2.

Wash away all my iniquity. Cleanse me from my sin. Verse 7. Cleanse me with hyssop. And I will be clean. Wash me.

And I will be whiter than snow. This is you getting bunged in the washing machine and the intense wash program. Deep stain. Deep stain. Intensive thing. Gets rid of everything.

Boil. Wash. It's the whole wash me. Wash me. Wash me. It's as serious as that. Lord, I don't want this. I look at my garments.

I thought I was spotless. But Lord, I'm a sinner before you. Daily. The wrong thoughts. The wrong actions. There may have been things I haven't done. That are wrong.

[34 : 18] But I've not done the good thing. I've not loved the Lord with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. I've looked in anger with somebody. And Jesus tells me that's murder.

I've maybe looked lustfully at somebody of the opposite sex. And Jesus says, you've committed adultery. He elevates the law. He doesn't come to do away with it. He takes it to its correct interpretation.

And when we understand that, we become aware that we are sinners. But we want to be cleansed. Cleanse. Lord, I don't want this. I need to be cleansed. Wash me.

My iniquity. Cleanse me. Cleanse me. Clean me. Wash me. And I'll be whiter than snow. And we'll see in a moment. That's through the blood of Christ. But also, this desire for joy under cleansing.

Look at verse 8. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Verse 9. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

[35 : 17] Verse 12. Restore to me the joy of your salvation. I think I've mentioned in this, during my time here in another church, I had said, one good thing about backsliding is when you return back to the Lord.

You come back and you suddenly realize afresh the forgiveness afresh, the grace, the mercy afresh. That is great. It's almost like being born again, all over again, with the day in which you were first saved.

You experience it again. Lord, I wandered away for three months. I deliberately turned my back on you. I was in misery. And now I've come back. I've confessed my sin.

And you've cleansed me afresh. And the joy is just bursting out. I'm restored again to the joy of my salvation. Christians, I think our greatest danger is we come on Sundays and we think we never need to be forgiven.

We were forgiven years ago and we're okay. If that's the case, don't be surprised if you're miserable every Sunday and the joy of your salvation isn't there because you're not rejoicing in this daily forgiveness.

[36 : 24] We should be the most joyous people because we are daily forgiven, daily cleansed, daily know the love of God. So, confession, cleansing.

But he doesn't just want to be cleansed. He wants to repent, to turn from this. It's not just that he wants to be cleansed. He doesn't want to do it again. And this is what we see here.

He wants to go and sin no more. Isaiah, sorry, Psalm 51. Creating me a pure heart, O God. Renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Verse 10, 11. Do not cast me from your presence. Don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.

Do you see those three verses? He's not just saying, Lord, cleanse me and that'll be enough. He doesn't want to follow that path again. He wants to have a pure heart, a steadfast spirit, a willing spirit.

[37 : 27] He wants to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He wants to be sustained. He wants to be kept in that condition. Does this make sense?

From holiness to confession, but not just staying at confession. Lord, cleanse me. Lord, I hate this. I hate the sin. Cleanse me. And help me to stay in this righteous position once I'm cleansed.

Now, these three things, confession, cleansing, and repentance, wanting to be sustained and kept, are a big ask. They are a big ask.

We have no right in many ways to ask for these as if we deserve something from God. But these are things that God wants to give us. How do we receive them?

We receive them according to the mercy and the grace of God alone. Do not think because you confess your sin you're worthy to be forgiven. As if I'm confessing my sin, I'm surely righteous.

[38 : 29] We deserve to be excluded from his presence. But in Christ we get grace. So, here is grace. We've all sinned against God. And David mentions this right at his first words.

What's his first words? After he's sinned against Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love, according to your great compassion.

Blot out my transgressions. Before he asks for anything else about joy and cleansing, he comes for mercy. It's been said, no other attribute of God would have saved you if God's mercy refused.

Mercy is the first thing you need from God before his love. He needs to be merciful to you. And we need to see sin in that way. We need to see the gospel is this.

And it is all ours in Jesus. He is our confidence to come. It's not feelings. We come based on the sacrifice of his son.

[39 : 35] And that is the confidence that we come every day. Look, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

I like that word, look, behold the Lamb of God, John says, who takes away. We need to behold the Lamb of God in the midst of our sin.

In him is grace and mercy. And he is the sacrifice for our sins. His blood cleanses us.

So he is the atoning sacrifice. He takes the punishment upon us. He obtains eternal redemption by his blood. I won't labor this.

You know this. You only can cling to the sacrifice of Jesus. Not just his love for you. Our faith is placed on a specific act of God. Specific place.

[40 : 30] Specific time in history where your sin was dealt with. The path to the cross should be worn out for you every day. You keep coming to the cross.

Not in the day in which you were saved. Every day. That is how when you came and the burden rolled down into the sepulcher. As Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan mentions.

That is a daily. That should be a well-worn path for you to the cross every day. You see the cross and you say, that is enough. That is how much my Savior.

That is the grace and the mercy of God. If you do not come to the cross, you will not have confidence to know that your sin has been dealt with. You believed it then.

You believe it daily. You need to trust in the death of Christ once for all to take away your sin. The blood of Jesus, 1 John 7 says, if we walk in the light, it's here in the light.

[41 : 25] Fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus purifies us from all our sin. And the blood of Christ brings us to God.

We are brought back into the presence of God. It did it then. It does it daily. And the promise of God is this to you every day. That if you can, verse 8, if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. That is the soap powder, going back to that illustration, that cleans every stain from you.

And this is daily. We need this daily. 1 John 2. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense.

Jesus Christ, the righteous one. Not only his blood, but his speech. He speaks on our defense. He's seated at the Father's right hand. Not just with power and authority, but as your advocate daily to represent you.

[42 : 44] Hebrews 4. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4. Hebrews 7. He's able to save completely those who come to God through him. Because he always lives to intercede for them. And we have the Holy Spirit to grow.

And boy, he has given us everything. We need on a daily basis to walk with him. And it's all by grace. David knew this right at the beginning of Psalm 51.

And so do you. You know that it's all by grace. And when you come and you confess and you come for cleansing, you want to be cleansed and you want to be steadfast, you come to the cross and you say, This is where I get it all.

This is where I get the cleansing. This is where I get the forgiveness. This is where I get the joy. This is where I walk with God. So lastly, restored.

[43 : 47] Lastly, restored. David in Psalm 32 said this. And with this I'm finished. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy on me. And my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. And you forgave the guilt of my sin. That's verses 3 to 5 of Psalm 132. You remember how Psalm 132 begins?

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Happy. Happy is the person who knows their sins forgiven. May you and I, in our daily prayers, not just adore God, but be in the habit of regularly examining our hearts, taking seriously, Lord, any barrier that might be between us and God on a daily basis.

[45 : 00] I'm not talking about salvation here. I'm just talking about fellowship. Search me, O God. Try me. Know my heart. See if there's anything there. Lord, don't let it hinder my fellowship.

Show me this, that I might confess it, that I might come for cleansing, that I might come to the cross again, that I might be restored to you once again.

We're going to stand and we're going to sing that song that the ladies sang so well to us. I don't think we've sung it during my time here. His mercy is more.

How many of you know this? You should know it now. There's a couple of us. There's a quartet at least. So, great words. Our sins, they are many.

His mercy is more. We'll stand and we'll sing this together. Just before we do that, I handed out this wee sheet for folk. Quite a few folk have been in touch saying they found that helpful.

[45 : 53] These are verses to maybe help you, to kickstart you. Hopefully you'll add to these verses on adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. If you want some of these, I can photocopy more.

I know a couple of folk have said I wouldn't mind another copy, so you can come for that as well. Let's stand and we'll sing this great song together. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. things in Jesus name. Amen.

[47 : 16] Amen. Thank you folks.