

Good Morning! Can you believe they let me back? I mean it's only been two years since the **Great Confetti Incident of 2022**.

I thought it was a good idea to shoot a confetti cannons as an illustration and to celebrate any baptisms

Little did I know rain would force our Hispanic church to do their baptisms in our service too. And they had like 6!!!

I mean I thought I had clogged the baptistry filter and caused tens of thousands of dollars in damage. Not to mention all the friends that stayed to help vacuum...and vacuum...and the glitter down the hallways.

I thought facilities was going to have my head for sure.

Ok so the reason for all that was that we were looking at Gods Grace. His good will and great affection for us. This is going to come into play later, with the message today, but I also feel like saying all that and not explaining a little would make someone who wasn't there think I'm just loose cannon up here. Loose confetti cannon?

We looked at Luke 15, suppose a shepherd who has 100 sheep, lost one. He would leave the 99 to find the one, and when he finds it he goes home and calls his friends and neighbors together and says rejoice with me, I have found my lost sheep.

The he says suppose a woman has 10 three hundred dollar coins and loses one. She sweeps the house looking everywhere for it and when she does calls her friends and neighbors and says rejoice with me, I have found my lost coin!

As we're doing this series Psummer in the Psalms it's easy to find Psalms like that.

PSUMMER IN THE PSALMS

Put that up, cause guys. I fixed your graphic for you.

It's easy to find Happy poems, happy songs, the happy psalms. Am I the only one who wishes we sang the whole Psalm? I feel like the first half is like o God you protect me and love me and lift me up...

Then the second half is like break the arms of my enemies and may they have hot coals heaped upon their heads!!!! Or last week, shatter the teeth of my enemies.

Why don't we sing that half of the song?

Well, I didn't go with one of those. I went with Psalm 51.

A lament, a Penitent

We're looking at a man who pretty much took advantage of a woman got her pregnant tried to cover it up and ultimately had her husband killed.

And after that, the man is STILL called a man after God's own heart.

I mean...I kinda can't believe I just said that.

"took advantage of" and sexually assaulted aren't that far apart...

Is there room for that in your mind?

How do you come back from that?

It's no confetti incident or foot in mouth at traditional service.

We're all too familiar with Church scandals. Wrongs in the world.

David is able to come back.

Is there room for that in your mind?

If you say no, that's okay.

I've had this planned for months because I've been travelling the last two weeks and knew I had to have a pretty final version of this message ready before I left and wouldn't you know it just two weeks ago two more prominent faith leaders stepped down because of sin.

To imagine them or the long list of others who have fallen be called Men after God's own heart....

And we all probably have personal examples. Those who have let us down.

Today I'm not going to talk about how we need to forgive those.
That's hard. I'm not here to tell you that you should or how to respond.
This isn't about him. Or them.
This is about me. About you. About us.

WE NEED FORGIVENESS

We need to be forgiven.
Hopefully you have room for that.

Before I get to Psalm 51 I need to give back story of WHY this Psalm was written.

Needs backstory

Well I guess I kinda did.

David was the most Famous King of Israel and is one of the most important and most well-known figures in Jewish history.

But while the armies were off at war David was home. Not a great choice.

And he was out on his roof one evening...which is normal.

And he saw a woman on her roof bathing...which is normal?

He sends someone to bring her to him. Not a great choice.

He lays with her. She becomes pregnant.

David invites her husband back from the front lines and tries to get him to sleep with her so it could be viewed as his kid. But he refuses to go while everyone else is out in the battlefields.

David even gets him drunk and tries to get him to go home and be with his wife, but he STILL refuses.

So David sends him back to battle and sends a letter to the commander to put him at the front and then have everyone fall back, retreat and leave him.

I could have left it at he pretty much took advantage of a woman got her pregnant tried to cover it up and ultimately had her husband killed.

But I think understanding more of the cover up that David attempted helps us understand his feelings later.

Cause then Nathan comes in. A prophet from God is sent to him. Or pa grape.

I can't talk about 2 Sam 12 without thinking of Veggie Tales.

They tell that story I just told you in a kids cartoon, but they use a rubber ducky instead of a woman... Because...it's for the kids...

And the prophet Nathan is played by Pa Grape who is a recurring character.

He comes in and tells a story about a rich man with a lot of sheep and a poor man who only has one sheep that he loves and treats like a part of the family, even letting it eat at the dinner table with the family.

But when the rich man has company he goes and takes the poor mans only sheep and kills it and serves it to his guests.

Here's the great thing. They don't have to change that part in Veggie Tales! That's the tale Nathan really tells David and that Pa Grape says to Larry the Cucumber!

And both David and Larry respond with WHO IS THAT MAN! He will be punished and thrown in the dungeon the rest of his life!

And I can't help but hear Pa Grape say YOU ARE THAT MAAAAAN....

So here we are. All set up for Psalm 51.

Dauids response.

What does a King do when confronted with his sin?

And I mean SIN. Adultery and Murder. That's 2 of the big 10 commandments right there.

The man after God's own heart has been outed.

What's your response when a leader, I mean even a spiritual leaders deepest darkest sin is revealed???

What if I was you? What would your response be? And your deepest sin regret was just revealed.

Have you ever let someone down. Been found out.

Ever lived in fear of it????

We all know the fear of it don't we?

I've done a couple week so CIY Christ in Youth conferences or camps this summer.

It's something I've done for years and I remember during my first stint in Student Ministry in the mid 2000's we went to a few other CIY programs and we saw the same speaker 3 times in 2 years some how. And he did the same message each time. It was a great message, don't get me wrong!

I think it was the 3rd time we saw him walk up on stage one of junior girls leaned back to me and said, "is this the porn guy again?"

His story was memorable right??

This guy talked about how back when he was young we didn't have internet and access to everything the way we do now and it was a magazine for him.

He had found it and had it stashed in his room.

And once he had it, it was like there was a barrier between him and his mom.

Every time she came in his room or every time she even said, can you come here for a second?

He lived in fear that he was going to be found out.

Do you know that feeling? Maybe not a magazine, but something that prevents you and another from having a totally open and authentic relationship.

An app, a past relationship, something you've said to get a promotion,

Maybe you found a way to change your apple ID password so you could buy V-bucks for Fortnite on your parents credit card and when asked about the charge told them, I don't know how that happened?!?!?! My account must have been hacked....

The names of that last story may have been changed but the resulting lesson shared may have been just that. How did it feel to lie? What was your stomach like?

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

1 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.

4 Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.

5 Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

6 Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

Matt chose a Lament. A Penitential Psalm.
A psalm of sorrow, of grief, of confession.
With hope of reconciliation.

I think there is so much to learn here.
David says I sinned. Against you.
Transgressions, Iniquity, Sin
There's great meaning to each of those 3 words.
He makes sure to cover it all. Leave's nothing to question.
Guys the fact that the most famous King has his biggest sin ever recorded for all the nation to see.
Thousands of years later we're still reading it!!!
He's not celebrating. He's not boasting.
This has got to be here for us to learn from.
Is it odd that I find this beautiful?
Something I myself come back to often.

Historically the Penitential Psalms, the psalms of confession and repentance were used often corporately in early church gatherings. Confession of sin was a part of the worship service often accompanied with kneeling before the Lord.
So how we have singing, sermon, the Lord's Supper and other elements all designed to help us have an encounter with a holy Lord. The early church included kneeling in prayer and corporate confession of sin!
We even have examples of where it was in the early church service order!
Before call to worship.
Before the Lord supper.
In a great prayer before the sermon.
I mean, bottom line In the second century in one of our earliest example of church order it's written:
"Confess your sins in church, and do not go to prayer with a guilty conscience. This is the Way of Life." Didache 150AD

These are great examples of the early church and nothing new right?
Let these be a reminder.
WE NEED CONFESSION
This is the way of life.
It's a natural response.
When we come close to God that shines the light on the sin in our lives.
It magnifies the fact that God is holy and we are not.

You know that feeling???

When come close to my sister I'm reminded that she is smart and I am not.
This is a terrible example because we could never compare ourselves to others.
I just saw her a week or so ago and I'm always reminded of that just by being in her prescence.
Growing up, if I got a 4.0 she got a 4.2.
I'm kidding I never got a 4.0, but she for sure got 4.2's or probably higher.
If I got a 26 on the ACT she got a 33! She'll probably correct me that she got a 35.
My response when in the presence of mt smarter sister?
I didn't try to compare. I like to think I chose to not get a 4.0.
This is a terrible example because we could never compare ourselves to others.
Hi Kelly!

When we come close to God that shines the light on the sin in our lives.

It magnifies the fact that God is holy and we are not.

What do we do when we come into the presence of a Holy God.

So many examples of how to respond.

Isaiah says "5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips,"

We are all unclean. We have all fallen short of the glory of God. We have all disobeyed God.

There's not a day I don't need the grace of God, the blood of Jesus to pay for my sins.

Is anyone able to remain perfect? To fulfill the law completely?

No.

And when confronted with that face we only have a couple choices.

One is to confess.

But let's think what else we could do. What were Davids other options.

We could deflect, say it was someone else.

That's happened. Adam and Eve, he says the woman made me do it!

Another option: we could deny it.

Right Shaggy? It wasn't me.

We see that with Adam and Eve's sons. Cain kills his brother Abel.

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said, "What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!

Guys like the first humans in history in the Bible try each of these! They aren't new!

And God shows he knows. He knows all.

Well. He could have had Nathan silenced. There's a few ways you could interpret that.

But David had actually experienced that with the previous king.

Saul was always throwing spears at David it says. And David developed quite the temperament to endure and not strike back.

So later we see something else...Confession.

OR we can confess.

This is the way of life it said in the Didache.

Natural Response in our bones

David writes in other Psalms how his bones cried out, they ached.

I like to imagine those were Psalms written during the time between taking Bathsheba and when Nathan came...living with that heavy heavy burden.

Are you living with a heavy burden???

Aren't we all in need of freedom from the bondage!

Satan would love us to say there. To feel trapped.

To see ourselves as hopeless.

According to Young Life's The RELATE Project data, more than 40% of adolescents worldwide do not feel they are "Worthy of being loved."

I wonder how different that stat is among adults....

Think it goes up or down? We have more sins built up...more guilt we've let grow. Bones ache...maybe it's not just cause we're old it's unconfessed sin...

Psalm 51 Pure Heart

7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
9 Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.
10 Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
11 Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Purify Me!

Create in me a pure heart.

Pure of heart means my behavior is doing right by God and right by others
And matched completely by my internal life motivations that are doing right by God

By your mercy Create, create in me a pure heart.

Genesis language

I need a new creation for my core

My thoughts desires feelings

Create in me, that pure heart is the entry card for returning to Eden

David is desiring to return to the Lord

We want to be with him and he wants to be with us!

God is on a mission to make us a pure of heart.

Is that even possible? I mean Wow, I'm not sure I can do that right?

Is that what you're thinking too?

But, the biblical authors and God really think humans are capable of this

They're capable through Gods new creation power and presence and mercy and power of Gods spirit

It's what we were made for!

We were made to be pure of heart.

David ASKS God in accordance with his character and who He is to create in him a clean/pure heart.
Then David asks for more...more???

What right does he have to ask ANYTHING right now right?!?!?

Ever done that? Wait...I have one more thing. One more request.

And you almost feel guilty because someone has been so gracious to you.

But this is important.

Psalm 51 according to your character

If you caught the beginning of the Psalm David acknowledges God is right to act justly.
But he has a request still.

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

and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
15 Open my lips, Lord,
 and my mouth will declare your praise.
16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
 you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
 a broken and contrite heart
 you, God, will not despise.
18 May it please you to prosper Zion,
 to build up the walls of Jerusalem.
19 Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
 in burnt offerings offered whole;
 then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Psalm 51 that I may tell others

But David talks of the righteous not offering sacrifices?

But then Psalm 51 ends with THEN you will delight ...

Why THEN?

Throughout the New Testament and through the example of the life of Jesus we see that

What god demands is not so much activity directed toward God, but loving kindness directed to other people

If you're going to surrender something to God it could be in the form of sacrifice and that is good and right God set that up in Leviticus

But if you're comparing offering a sacrifice vs the opportunity to surrender yourself in an act of generous love towards another God will say do that one every time and come offer the sacrifice later

David says he wants to be useful.

He says he wants to tell others of God

WE NEED PURPOSE

No one wants to be excluded. Do we?

He says, I had sinned, please cleanse me and not let me be excluded from your mission.

I still want to be on the team! Please let me still be on the team!

In student ministry we've been using research from the Fuller Youth Institute to kinda build our ministry around. They had a book come out a few years ago David Schunk turned me on to called

The 3 big questions that shape every teenagers life.

Who am I?

Where do I belong?

What can I do?

Identity, Belonging and Purpose. We want to have a purpose. We want to have meaning.

Purpose from 3 big questions.

God wants us to be useful

When I look at the most important characters in God's story, the Holy Bible, I see that some of those who have the most pages dedicated to their stories, or wrote the majority of the pages...

It's murderers.

Moses killed an Egyptian and hid the body. Maybe justified in protecting a Jewish slave...

David, responsible for Uriah's death.

Abraham took his wife's handmaiden to conceive a child with her...then sends her and the child off into the wilderness...so maybe not quite murder.

Paul who writes at least one quarter of the New Testament was tracking down and killing Jews that put their faith in Jesus!

I have to wonder if that extreme is to help us know that nothing can exclude us from being useful. From having a relationship with and serving the most Holy God!

The next time we feel like we've sinned and that's it. We're too far gone. This one is unforgivable. Or when we have asked for forgiveness again. And again and again for the same sin. And we feel like this is it. Jesus said forgive your neighbor as God forgives you and he said not to be forgiven just 7 times but 70x7 and that was 491. It's too much. I'm of no use.

When I look at God's story. His word to us, his beloved creation, I see the example over and over that nothing can exclude me from the Kingdom of God or making his name known.

I tell my daughters all kinds of my crazy stories from when I was a kid.

I tell the students often too.

What I want them to know is that there's hope for everyone

Do not exclude them from the message Jesus brought

That friend coworker cussing telling vulgar stories

That friend at school who doesn't call the card game Bologna Sandwich

They may be up here some day preaching.

But I said this message isn't about them. It's about you...and me

You are the message. Be useful to God.

I'm not a super hero. I'm a sinner. I'm not perfect.

I am that man. Thanks pa Grape.

I come back to Psalm 51 in my prayers often.

Cause that's the way I have seen in scripture to be a man after God's own heart.

I started by reviewing the confetti from last time I preached.

The last parable of Luke 15 that I didn't mention is The Prodigal son.

We looked at the Prodigal son. How he says dad, I want my inheritance now. While you're still alive. And he went and blew it on wild living. Then broke and embarrassed he came home to ask for a job just so he'd have something to eat. But his dad put a ring on his finger basically the family business credit card and threw a huge party ! Cause that's what God does! CONFETTI CANONS!

Who asks his dad for his inheritance while his dad is still alive cause he'd be happier if he was dead and he had his share of the money.

Goes and blows it on wild reckless living.

Then broke and embarrassed he came home to ask for a job just so he'd have something to eat.

The son has a whole speech prepared it says.

It's a lot like Psalm 51.

"I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."

But the father redeems him. Restores him. Throws a huge party to celebrate his son coming back.

Puts a ring on his finger, basically gives him the family business credit card!

Gives him PURPOSE

And confetti canons....

Nothing you have done can exclude you from serving in the kingdom of God

What great things are you afraid to step into because you're trapped?

How could you be serving the Lord if you didn't let that past sin hold you back?

WE NEED TO BELIEVE WE ARE FORGIVEN

It wouldn't be a Matt sermon if I didn't bring some random 16 year old song into the mix.
This got cut at one point, but after hearing a similar message to the high schoolers this summer I felt like this was needed.
House of Heroes has a song Voices and in an instrumental bridge part a sermon pops in.
That's random right?
But here's the thing...it's soooooo good that 16 years later it came to my mind for a sermon.

This voice, maybe John Piper, I've tried to track it down and can't, but this great power voice comes in...not like Morgan Freeman, but a passionate preacher.

"Your greatest sin is not the abortion that you've asked forgiveness for,
Or the adultery, or whatever it is that you did in your life,
In a past that you're ashamed of, that keeps hounding you.
Your greatest sin is not that.
Your greatest sin is not believing God's word when God says you're forgiven!
Your greatest sin is unbelief.
You want to repent of something, friend?
Stop repenting of sins that you've already repented of and repent of your unbelief."

I kinda wanna mic drop after that....
How do I follow that?

Back to another song, Psalm 51
One of the ways I remember this psalm the most is from an old hymn.
I asked for us to sing that song. It's a way to internalize this song.
To maybe memorize part of it. Make it catchy.
Make this psalm yours.
Remind yourself when Satan tries to remind you.
You are forgiven.

But before we sing we'll have this chance to respond.
To take the cup and bread. It's set up around the room for you to pick up and take back to your seats.
Jesus said this cup is for the forgiveness of sins. And it's a covenant. A promise.
The bread is his body sacrificed for us.
If you want to pray with someone.
If you want to confess.
If you just want to make that stand and finally lay it down
Come kneel pray. It's can be an altar. A place of significance for us to remember where we laid it down and confessed and were forgiven.
Now go have purpose.