

A Cry For A Clean Heart

Psalm 51

Pastor John Miller

I want to start us off with one verse in this psalm—verse 10. The psalmist says, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” This is David's cry for a clean heart.

Years ago, a London psychologist told Billy Graham, “Seventy percent of the people in mental hospitals in England could be sent home if they could be assured of forgiveness.” I believe that's true. So many problems that we have in our lives today are basically because we're not right with God, and we live with the guilt and the weight and the sense of our sinfulness. But when God cleans our heart and gives us a new heart and forgives our sins—when we are right with God—then we can be right with others, and we're prepared to enjoy life.

So if you need a clean heart, Psalm 51 is the psalm for you. Psalm 51 is a psalm of repentance. It's called a “penitential psalm.” It's one of seven penitential psalms.

We know that David wrote this psalm, we know when he wrote it and we know why he wrote it. The inscription before the psalm says, “A psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.” Let me remind you when this psalm was written and why it was written by David.

David was king of Israel, and his kingdom was one of the most glorious and powerful kingdoms at that time. David was very wealthy, he had several wives and he had everything he could ever want. He was probably about 55 years of age. He no longer was willing to fight the battles and wars, so he sent his troops out to battle without him.

It has been said that idleness is the devil's workshop. So David got himself in trouble when he should have been out with the sword fighting the battles. Instead, he was strolling one spring day upon his rooftop and looked over into the courtyard of the next house and saw Bathsheba taking a bath. David should have turned away and said, “Time to go back into the house.” But instead, David lusted after her and inquired after her. When his servants returned, they told David her name was Bathsheba. I don't doubt they must have emphasized to David that she was the wife of Uriah, the Hittite.

So it should have been the end of the story for David; she belonged to another man. But David told his servants to bring her to him. Then David committed adultery with Bathsheba. This was the sin which David was going to repent of in this psalm.

But one sin is never isolated; it always leads to other sins. So a few months later, Bathsheba sent a message to David saying that she was pregnant. The Bible says, “Be sure your sin will find you out.” So David wondered what to do.

Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, was one of David's soldiers and was out fighting the battle. David then called Uriah back from the battle. David had an idea that Uriah would spend the night with his wife, his sin would be covered and everything would be fine.

But the Bible tells us that if you try to cover your sins—maybe that's what you're trying to do right now—you won't prosper. But if you confess your sin and forsake your sin, God will have mercy and forgive you, and you can prosper again, although the sword—as we'll see with David—will not depart from his family; it will affect his life and family.

So David called Uriah, asked him how the battle was going and told him to spend the night at home, go to his wife and he would talk to him later. But when Uriah went home, knowing that his men were out fighting a battle in the dirt, he felt he couldn't go in to enjoy his wife, so he slept on the front porch. David said, "Rats! This isn't going to work!"

Then David called Uriah back to him and told him to have a drink of wine. David encouraged Uriah to have many drinks until Uriah was drunk. David then told Uriah to go home, enjoy his wife and then he could go back to the battle. When Uriah stumbled back to his house, he was more righteous in his drunken state than David was sober; Uriah again spent the night on his front porch.

David knew this wasn't going to work, so he wrote a letter to the general of his army, telling him that when they were going to attack a city, put Uriah on the front line. Then he told the general to pull back the other men from the battle but leave Uriah out at the front by himself, knowing that Uriah would be killed. This is nothing short of murder. So David first committed adultery, and then he committed murder to cover up his sin of adultery.

Now Uriah was killed in battle, the message came back to David about Uriah's death and David said, "Oh, well. Fortify the troops, go take the city and everything will be alright." Then after a time of grieving, David took Bathsheba as his wife.

Then there was a lapse of about one year, during which David had been living with his guilt and understanding that he had sinned before God. In Psalm 32, he said, "My bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was turned into the drought of summer." David described the conviction he was under during this one-year period, until God, in His mercy, sent a preacher to David.

It could be that God, in His mercy, sent a preacher to you. Maybe you are living with guilt and shame and unconfessed sin. Maybe you are reading this message so you can repent and get right with God.

Nathan the prophet came to King David and told him a story about an injustice in his kingdom. It was a story about a poor man who had only one, little, ewe lamb that was his pet. It ate at his table. There was also a rich man who had many flocks and herds. The rich man had a visitor who came one night, so instead of the rich man slaying a lamb from one of his own flocks to feed his visitor, he went down to the poor man's house, took the little, ewe lamb, and killed it to

feed it to his visitor. Then the moment David heard that story, he got angry. David said to Nathan, "The man who has done this thing will surely die!"

Wow! Don't our sins look horrible on other people.

I would have loved to have been there when Nathan pointed his finger at David and said, "You are that man." The moment David heard that, he knew his sin had been seen by the Lord. The floodgates were opened, and he began to cry out saying, "Nathan, I have sinned against God!" Just from that initial pouring out of David's heart, Nathan said, "The Lord has forgiven your sin. But know this, a sword shall not depart from your family." David and his family suffered for many years, because of his sin. The Bible says, "He who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption."

It was out of this repentance and forgiveness that David penned Psalm 51, especially after Nathan's visit.

In this psalm there are three sections, and I want to look at the three characteristics of David's cry for a clean heart in these sections. Number one, it was a cry of confession; number two, it was a cry for cleansing; and number three, it was a cry of reconsecration to the Lord.

The first section is in verses 1-6, David's cry of confession. This section gives us a lot of information on how we should confess our sins. David said, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies..."—David cried, with tears running down his face—"...blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from 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 this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom."

Notice first how David approaches God in his confession. He cries out based on three aspects of God's nature and character. When we come to God with our sin, we come to God in truth, who God is, as He is revealed in His Word. We can't make up a god of our own choosing; we must come to the God who has revealed Himself in Scripture.

So who is God? He is a God of mercy, verse 1. "Have mercy upon me, O God." David didn't cry for justice, and he didn't cry for God to be righteous with him; he cried for God to be merciful to him. Why did he do that? Because mercy is not getting what you deserve. You never want to say, "God, give me what I deserve." Why? Because we deserve hell. There is not one person who deserves to go to heaven in their own right. If you go to heaven, you go to heaven on the merits of Jesus Christ; you're standing in His righteousness. It is imputed to you by faith. You've been washed in His blood. He died on the Cross to pay the penalty for your sin. "There is no one righteous; no, not one." So we can't come to God and demand, "Give me what I deserve, God!"

I sometimes hear men say, "I deserve a better wife!" You deserve hell, buckaroo! Anything you have is more than you deserve. "Yeah, but she doesn't know how to cook." Or a wife will say, "I deserve a better husband!" No; what we need is mercy. So when you come to God with a sinful heart, you come asking God to be merciful.

Secondly, He is a God of lovingkindness. Verse 1 says, "...according to Your lovingkindness." The word "lovingkindness" is actually the idea of "unfailing love." God is loving and kind.

The third concept of God is displayed in the phrase "tender mercies." Verse 1 says, "...according to the multitude of Your tender mercies." This is the idea of compassion.

So who is God? God is merciful, unfailing in His love and kindness and compassionate. And how do we know that He is merciful, loving and compassionate? Because the Bible tells us so. As a little boy growing up in Sunday school, I used to sing:

"Jesus loves me, this I know.

For the Bible tells me so."

That's so good. How do I know that Jesus loves me? The Bible tells me so. How do I know that God is merciful and kind and compassionate? The Bible tells me so.

In Exodus 33, when Moses was interceding for the sinful nation of Israel, asking God to be kind and merciful, God responded to him by saying, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."

Then Jeremiah the prophet cried out in Lamentations 3:22-23 that the Lord is steadfast in His love; it never ceases. His mercies never come to an end, and "They are new every morning." And he said, "Great is Your faithfulness."

God is merciful, loving, kind, compassionate and faithful. So when you come to God, you must cry out on these bases.

Now notice, secondly, how David confesses the sin he committed. He uses three words to describe his sin. The first word is "transgressions," verse 1. He said, "Blot out my transgressions." The word "transgressions" means "to cross over a forbidden boundary." To transgress means that there is a law, a Commandment, a line, but I knowingly and intentionally step over that line; I break the law. If I'm driving down the highway and I clearly know the speed limit is 65 and I do 85, I've transgressed, stepped over the line. When God says, "Thou shalt not..." and we do it, we have transgressed.

In the Ten Commandments, known as the Decalogue—and these are commands and not suggestions—Commandment 10 is "Thou shalt not covet..." David coveted another man's wife. In this tenth commandment, the first thing we are not to covet is "thy neighbor's wife." Why would God put that in? Because he knows our sinful hearts. Then he went on to mention

coveting other things. But “thy neighbor’s wife” is top of the list. Coveting is something you shouldn’t have—forbidden fruit.

The eighth Commandment in the Decalogue is, “Thou shalt not steal.” David stole another man’s wife.

The seventh Commandment is, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Did you know that was in the Bible? Yet we have totally disregarded that Commandment today. It’s tragic. David committed adultery; he had an intimate relationship with a woman who was not his wife. She was another man’s wife.

The ninth Commandment is, “Thou shalt not lie.” Yet David lied to cover his sin.

The sixth Commandment is, “Thou shalt not murder.” David committed murder; he killed Bathsheba’s husband to cover his sin. He transgressed. So we live in a world today where people are breaking God’s laws.

The second word David used to describe his sin is “iniquity.” That word means “perversity of morals.” It has the idea of “bent,” “twisted” or “depraved.” When I was younger in high school, we used to say the guy was “tweeked.” It meant he was “bent” or “messed up.” So the idea is that he was perverted or depraved.

This supports the doctrine of original sin. Verse 5 says, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” David’s not talking about the act of conception being sinful; he’s saying that he was born a sinner. We inherit from Adam a sinful nature, and that’s why we need to be born again and get a new nature.

The third word David used is “sin.” It means “to miss the mark.” He said, “Cleanse me from my sin.” That means that you can try to do what’s right, you can be working hard to live a good life, but we’re all going “to miss the mark.” The Bible teaches, “No one is righteous; no, not one. All have fallen short of the glory of God.” So God has perfection, He has the target with the bullseye, and we all try but come up short. Since we’ve all sinned, we all need a Savior.

So he used the words “transgressions,” “iniquity” and “sin.”

Thirdly, David asked God to do three things. David gave us the three aspects of God’s character, the three descriptions of his sin and now he gives us the three things he wanted God to do for him in his confession. First, David wanted God to “Blot out my transgressions,” verse 1. It means that sin is a debt written in a book, and David needed his debt to be paid or blotted out.

Jesus died on the Cross and cried out, “It is finished!” My debt is blotted out by the work of the Cross.

The second word David uses is “Wash me,” verse 2. “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity.”

Here the idea is that my sin is a stain that needs washing. In Isaiah 1:18, the prophet said, “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the Lord, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’”

I remember when I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus, when I really surrendered to Him, I felt clean inside. I felt a weight lift off, felt clean inside and I had “the peace of God which passes all understanding.”

But any time sin comes into the life of a believer, a child of God—and that can happen; we can step over the line and transgress—it clouds His face. We don’t hear His voice. We lose the sense of His peace. We’re not in fellowship with God anymore. Later on David will say, “Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation.” When you sin, you lose your joy and your peace. So, thirdly, David said that God needed to “cleanse me from my sin.”

Notice, fourthly, that David acknowledges his sin, in verses 3-6. He doesn’t excuse his sin, verse 3: “For I acknowledge my transgressions. And my sin is always before me.” This entire psalm is loaded with personal pronouns; it starts right away in verse 1: “Have mercy on me.” I counted 16 “me’s” in verses 1-12. So it is all about me; he’s not blaming anyone else. I’m not blaming my wife, my husband, my boss; I’m taking responsibility for my actions.

One of the common things we do with our sins is that we try to shift the blame for them elsewhere. Remember when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden? God said to Adam, “Did you eat the fruit I told you not to eat?” How did Adam answer God? He said, “The woman You gave me...,” and men have been blaming their wives ever since. What a guy! Adam was actually blaming God. “It was the woman! You gave her to me! I was fine with the animals, but then You made the wife! Everything was cool, but then You brought Eve, and everything just blew up!” When Adam turned to Eve and asked, “Did you eat the fruit?” she said, “The devil made me do it!” I don’t think so. We always want to shift the blame.

If you are going to get a clean heart, if you are going to be forgiven of God, you have to come to God with full responsibility; “I sinned. I transgressed. I stepped over the line. I am full of iniquity and sin. God, have mercy upon me.” You need to take responsibility for your sin. So ask God to wash your heart and cleanse it from all wickedness.

David also saw that his sin was against God, verse 4. He said, “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.” So David doesn’t excuse his sin; he takes responsibility for it.

This is another thing you need to do when you come to God and confess your sin and have a clean heart: You need to admit that your sin was against God. Sometimes we justify our sin against someone else, because “They did this” or “They did that” or “They said that.” But you can never justify sin against God. Sin is first and foremost against God. Unless you see yourself as a sinner in the eyes of God, and your repentance comes from God, you’ll never really experience the joy of forgiveness. If you’re trying to excuse your sin or explain it away

onto someone else, you need to see your sin is against God.

Remember when the prodigal son came back home to his father? He said to his father, "I've sinned against heaven and in your sight." He first mentioned that he sinned against heaven. You need to have this consciousness that you don't sin just against your husband or wife, against your children, friends or church, but you sin against God, against a holy and righteous God.

Thirdly, David knew that his heart was sinful, verses 5-6. "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." I believe this is the doctrine of original sin. Every human being is born with a sin nature. Cute little children that we dedicate to the Lord need to be born again, because they are born sinners, estranged from God. So David said that he was shaped in iniquity and conceived in sin.

David said, "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom." David saw that the problem with his heart was a problem of the inner man. The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. This is why in the Beatitudes, in Matthew 5:3-4, Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." So actually I must see myself as a sinner before a holy, righteous God, knowing that God is merciful, and He will forgive me.

This is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and this is why preaching from this psalm is so difficult. When you come under genuine, Holy Spirit conviction, that is a gift from God. When God's Spirit comes to you and shows you that you are lost, you are a sinner before God and are going to hell, that is the best thing that could ever happen to you. When you reject that and deny that, it is the worst thing that could ever happen to you. Why? Because you're on your way to hell, and you don't even know it.

I thank God for coming to me as a young man and saying, "John, you're going to hell. John, you're a sinner. John, you're lost. John, unless you repent and believe, you will perish." The conviction of the Holy Spirit is so great that sometimes we refer to Him as the Hound of Heaven. Everywhere I went, He followed me and convicted me until finally, by God's grace, I surrendered to Him. Then the floodgates opened; I sat on a beach and was praying and crying. Ever since that day, Psalm 51 has been dear to my heart, because I've wept with David so many times. "God, be merciful to me. Blot out my transgressions. Wash me from my iniquity." Every time, God is "faithful and just to forgive me of all my sins and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness."

Now we move from David's cry of confession to the second section, David's cry for cleansing, verses 7-12. He said, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Look at the beautiful terms he uses for his cleansing. "Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken..."—that's the conviction of the Holy Spirit—"... may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities." Then verse 10 is one of my favorites in this psalm: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit

within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence. And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit."

David here is actually crying out to God to be cleansed. David asks God to do six things for him. Number one, "Purify me," verse 7. "Purge me with hyssop." Hyssop was a long branch that came from a shrub or bush that the priest would dip into the blood of the sacrificial lamb and sprinkle it on the holy things in the temple and then sprinkle it on the people. So this is a reference to the Cross. David is using Old Testament terminology that says, "Wash me in Your blood." That's what we want: We want God to wash us in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, David said, "Let me hear your voice." Verse 8 says, "Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice." There is no joy when you're not walking in fellowship with God, whether in pre-conversion or post-conversion. If you are living in sin, you are a miserable, wretched individual. "'There is no peace,' says the Lord, 'for the wicked.'" So you need to come to God for cleansing, and you'll hear His voice once again. Sin muffles the voice of God.

Thirdly, in verse 9, David said, "Hide Your face from my sins." In other words, "Put them behind me." I would paraphrase that as, "Free me from my past." Forgive my past. "And blot out all my iniquities."

When God forgives us, He takes our sins and drops them in the sea of forgetfulness, never to be remembered. God is omniscient and knows our sins, but He treats us as though we had never sinned. He treats us as though it never happened. We are free from our past sins. All the black darkness of your life is forgiven and made clean. The Bible says that He separated us from our sins "as far as the east is from the west." What a glorious truth that is!

Fourthly, what David asked God to do is, "Give me a new heart," verse 10. "Create in me a clean heart, O God." The word "create" in the Hebrew is the word "bara." It has the idea of creating something out of nothing. All people can do is to assemble matter in a different way to come up with a new creation. A sculptor will take clay and make a new sculpture or vessel. It wasn't created out of nothing. But God just speaks out a creation. God has something no one else has: He has divine fiat; He speaks things into existence. "God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light." God can create something out of nothing. So David is asking God not to renovate his heart, not to renew it, but to give him a brand-new one. God said, "I will...take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh," and that's what David wanted.

And David said, in verse 10, "And renew a steadfast spirit within me." David was asking that he would be devoted to God. So David asked that he be restored with a new heart.

Then fifthly, David asked God, "Do not cast me away," verse 11. He said, "Do not cast me away from Your presence. And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."

Remember that when you study the Bible, always take it in context. Context involves, where is it in the Bible? Who is speaking it? When is it spoken? In what book of the Bible is it in? Old

Testament or New Testament? Is it prophecy or poetry or history? So we need to know the genre.

The reason I remind you of this is because many Christians today believe that if they sin, God can take the Spirit away from them and they lose their salvation. This is a controversial subject of whether or not a Christian can lose their salvation. In the Old Testament, in this psalm, when David uttered these words: "Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me," he was living under the old dispensation in which the Spirit of God came on kings, priests and prophets. The Spirit would come on people to enable them to do a particular work of God. But the Spirit didn't come into them to regenerate them and to live in them as an abiding possession—as we have now—until after the death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ at the day of Pentecost.

What I'm saying is that doctrinally, when a Christian—one who is born again—sins today, God will not take His Holy Spirit away from that person. However, you can grieve, quench, resist and lie to the Holy Spirit. But He won't depart from you, because you are a child of God. But you don't want to grieve, resist or wound the Holy Spirit; He's the third Person of the Godhead. So when a Christian falls or stumbles, they may lose fellowship, but they will not lose sonship; you positionally are still a child of God.

However, this is not a way to condone sinful behavior. I don't want anything to come between my soul and my Savior, so that I can still see His blessed face. I want His joy and peace. I want the sunshine and the warmth of His love in my life. I want His blessings, so why would I deliberately and intentionally step over the line and sin?

But when we do sin, 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Isn't that good news? This is God's bar of soap. But I think we should never purposely or intentionally violate God's commands.

I point this out because in reality in the church today, the New Testament believer does not have to pray, "Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." But the application for today would be, "I still want Him to guide me, lead me and direct me. I want to yield to Him and be in communion with the Spirit and have the warmth of His love in my heart."

The last and sixth request of David was, "Restore to me the joy," verse 12. This is another consequence of sin in the life of a believer. "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit." In other words, "Give me a heart to obey." David didn't say, "Give me my salvation back"; he said, "Give me the joy of my salvation."

We today need to understand that joy comes from walking in fellowship with God. Joy leaves when I walk in disobedience to God. Joy is the flag flown high from the castle of my heart when the Holy Spirit in is residence there. He is leading, guiding, directing and empowering me.

David had lost his joy for a whole year until finally God granted him repentance. How important that is. So David wanted a clean heart, divine fellowship and he wanted the joy of his salvation to be restored.

These are all the things David wanted God to do for him in his repentance.

Maybe you have drifted far from God. This psalm is a powerful message for believers who have fallen into sin and want to come back to God. He can restore you.

In closing, let's look at verses 13-19. This third section is David's cry of consecration. So we have David's cry of confession, his cry for cleaning and now his cry of consecration. He wants to consecrate his life to God.

It starts out, "Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise." He speaks of his tongue, his lips and his mouth. "For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it." King David had a lot of animals he could have given to God and a lot of wealth he could have sacrificed. But David said, "You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise." Then David closes with, "Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then they shall offer bulls on Your altar."

There are three things in consecrating his life back to God that David wanted to do. He said, "I will proclaim You," verses 13-14; "I will praise You," verses 15 and 17; and "I will please you," verses 18-19.

Verse 13 starts with the word "then." "Then I will teach transgressors Your ways." When David was living in unconfessed sin, separated from fellowship with God, he was a bad witness. He couldn't share the Gospel or talk to other people. When you are out of fellowship with God, you are an ineffective, bad witness for God, to proclaim the goodness and mercy of God. But when you repent and your heart has been made clean, then, and only then, your lips and mouth are loosed, and you can proclaim the goodness of God.

Also, in verses 15-17, you praise the Lord. "Open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise." You start to praise the Lord; there is a new song, once again, in your heart.

Then, thirdly, in verses 18-19, you will begin to live a life that is pleasing to God, when you have been given a clean heart. He says, "Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then they shall offer bulls on Your altar."

So David proclaims, he praises and he lives a life that is pleasing unto God.

Let me drive home some points: Sin is very, very costly. If you are being tempted, God brought you to this message to realize that to commit sin is too costly. Maybe you are being tempted to commit adultery, being tempted to commit infidelity in your marriage. The man or woman who is being tempted to abandon their covenant promises to their spouse—God had you read this, to warn you to turn around and to repent.

If you start with a thought, it will end up in an action. If you sow an action, it will end up in a habit. If you sow a habit, it becomes your character. If you sow your character, it becomes a destiny. Sin is very costly.

David had a son who actually raped one of his daughters. David had another son who rebelled against his father. He had all kinds of strife and problems in his family, because David's own sin brought it on. "He who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption."

Yes, God is a God of mercy, of lovingkindness and of compassion. But when you sin, you start in motion something that cannot be reversed. God forgives our sins, but the scars remain. If you don't face that reality, you're a fool. If you think you can play and not pay, you're deceived.

All those warm, hot tears that poured down the face of David were so unnecessary. David's broken heart could have been avoided if he had just obeyed God.

What pain we bring into our own lives and into the lives of people who we love.

The second point I would like to make is that there is hope and forgiveness. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

If you're not a Christian, God had you read this message so you can be forgiven. All of your anxiety, your fears and your guilt and shame God can forgive in a second, if you will turn to Him. If you will humbly and honestly admit, "I have sinned," and you believe that Jesus died for you, as He did, that He was buried and rose again, you can be forgiven of all your sins. You can have a clean heart.

God wants to forgive you; He wants to give you a brand-new heart. But you must turn to Him today and say, "Jesus, I'm sorry for my sin. I know You died on the Cross, You rose from the dead. Now please come into my heart and forgive my sins and be my Savior." If you haven't done that, you need to do that right now.

Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer.