

## Glimpses of Godliness: Contrition Psalm 51

--CEFC 9/9/18

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"You are the man!"  
In street talk, those are words of high praise.

But when the prophet Nathan said those words to King David  
they were like a dagger to his heart.  
They stopped the king in his tracks,  
affecting him as profoundly as any he had heard in his whole life.

"You are the man!"  
For David, these weren't words of chummy affirmation;  
these were words of stinging accusation,  
words which led to a deep conviction of sin.  
And from that conviction flowed the psalm of confession and contrition  
which is before us today.

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Let me refresh your memory of the context  
of those biting words of Nathan the prophet.

We read in 2 Sam. 11 that it was in the spring of the year, when kings go off to war,  
that David sent his military commander Joab and his whole army  
out to fight.

But this time David stayed behind in Jerusalem.

I supposed he wanted a royal sabbatical, a time of rest from the rigors of war—  
it doesn't say,  
but surely, he deserved it.

By this time King David, in his mid-forties, had reached the pinnacle of his powers.  
He had struggled to solidify his kingdom  
and had built Israel into a middle-sized Middle-Eastern power,  
safe and secure, and on the verge of an economic boom.

Surely, he could justify a little R & R.

Late one evening, David couldn't sleep,  
so he took a stroll along the parapets of his palace,  
and looking down, he saw a woman bathing.

She was a beautiful woman, we're told,  
and David liked what he saw.

Quietly he made some inquiries, and discovered that this was Bathsheba,  
the wife of Uriah,  
an officer of David's army currently deployed in the war against the Ammonites.

David was the king, after all.

So why not enjoy the privileges of power--maybe just for one night?  
He had Bathsheba sent to his room, and he slept with her.

That would have been it—not a big deal, no harm done in David's mind--  
a one-night stand.

No one need ever know.

But life is never as simple as you think.

Bathsheba sent word to David that she was pregnant.

There was only one thing to do.

Immediately David sent for Uriah.

Uriah would return to Jerusalem

to give a royal briefing on the progress of the war.

Then David sent Uriah home to sleep with his wife.

Without DNA testing, no one could ever prove paternity.

It was the perfect cover-up.

But, referring back to the previous principle that life is never as simple as you think,

Uriah refused to play his part in the plan.

He was a soldier, a dutiful officer in the royal army,

and he refused to enjoy the luxuries of home

while his men were in harm's way on the field.

Uriah chose instead to sleep in the servants' quarters.

So David tried again--this time with food and drink,

in an effort to lubricate Uriah's moral resolve.

But again, David's scheming proved no match for Uriah's integrity—

as one commentator put it,

"Uriah drunk is more pious than David sober."<sup>1</sup>

The cover-up then took a violent turn.

David would have Uriah killed by secretly ordering him to be put on the front line  
where the fighting was the fiercest.

The king would then marry the grieving widow and adopt her expected child as his own--  
and David, the adulterer and murderer,

would be praised as a compassionate benefactor.

The plan worked to perfection.

Uriah was killed in battle,

Bathsheba mourned and then married David,

and a son was born.

All seemed well in the kingdom,

except for one minor problem.

"**But,**" the biblical writer tells us,

**"the thing David had done displeased the Lord."**

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<sup>1</sup> Ackroyd, cited in Gordon.

Looking back,

David can describe that period as a miserable time in his life.

He wrote in Ps. 32--

**"When I kept silent [that is, about his sin],  
my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer."**

The joy of his salvation was gone,  
his soul was lifeless.

That's what guilt can do in a person's life, if left to fester.

Skeletons hidden in the closet tend to rot and give off a terrible smell.

Guilt can lead to depression, or anger, or anxiety.

It can cause high blood pressure or ulcers.

Guilt can cause people to become irritable or overly critical.

Guilt is a nasty thing to have festering in your soul.

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We don't know exactly how long David was left to himself and his sin,  
but one day, God, in his mercy, commissioned a messenger of grace to rescue him.

In 2 Sam. 12 we read that the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to speak truth to power.

Now this, as you can imagine, was a most delicate matter--

this affair with Bathsheba.

David had already demonstrated his willingness to murder  
in his efforts to make things look respectable.

You can imagine Nathan's reluctance to confront the king face-to-face with his sin.

So the Lord gave Nathan a less direct approach.

He spoke to David in the form of a story,

a story which David may have taken to refer to a real incident in Israel.

It went like this:

**"There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor.**

**The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle,**

**but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought.**

**He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children.**

**It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms.**

**It was like a daughter to him.**

**"Now a traveler came to the rich man,**

**but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle  
to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him.**

**Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man**

**and prepared it for the one who had come to him."**

The King was engrossed in the story—

We read that **"David burned with anger against the man**

and said to Nathan,  
"As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!  
He must pay for that lamb four times over,  
because he did such a thing and had no pity."

The trap has been set perfectly.  
Then Nathan said to David,  
in some of the most powerful words in all of Scripture--  
simply *atah ha'ish* in the original Hebrew--  
"You are the man!"

It was as if a sword was thrust into David's heart,  
piercing the depths of his soul.  
He was discovered--  
his sin was uncovered--  
he was caught like a deer in the headlights of an oncoming car.  
He was stunned.

David--You are the man!  
You took what you had no right to—  
You have done what is unjust.  
That man in the story you so quickly condemned—  
You are that man.

In that passage from 2 Sam. 12 we read simply,  
"Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord" (v. 13).

That was David's initial reaction to that confrontation,  
but his more reflective response is found in our psalm this morning.  
Psalm 51 is the cry for mercy of a repentant heart.

Here we see that King David perhaps best displays his godliness,  
not in the heights of his praise,  
but in the depths of his repentance.  
Our Psalm this morning portrays the beauty of a contrite heart  
and points to the power of grace and truth.

I want to focus on three marks of godly repentance this morning,  
then I want to tell you why this topic is so important.

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I. First, look at the way that **Repentance faces up to the truth.**

There is no longer any cover-up.  
David comes clean--  
he doesn't say, "Mistakes were made"  
or "Perhaps there was a momentary lapse in judgment."  
Nor does he offer excuses--"I've been under a lot of stress lately."  
"She was so attractive, I just couldn't help myself."

No, David can declare,  
"I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me."

David confesses his *sin*--his sin against God.  
He says to the Lord, "Against you, you only, have I sinned".

Certainly, David destroyed Uriah.  
Certainly, he abused Bathsheba.  
Certainly, by his behavior he wronged the nation of Israel, as its king.

We can harm other people,  
but we can only sin against God.

Until we have seen our wrongdoing as an offense against God himself,  
we haven't truly confessed our sin

True contrition is God-directed,  
for that reflects the truth about all unrighteous acts—  
they are ultimately acts of arrogant rebellion  
against the authority of God in our lives.

Lots of people feel sorrow for things they have done.  
You can get any three-year-old to say "I'm sorry."  
But often all they are sorry about  
is that they got caught.  
People are often sorry for all the unpleasant consequences that they have to bear  
for their wrong choices.

That's what the apostle Paul calls "**worldly sorrow**"--  
and such "**worldly sorrow**" only leads to death, Paul says.  
It masks a false contrition,  
a self-directed confession.

But the contrition, the sorrow and remorse, that David displays is of another kind—  
it is a godly sorrow that issues in real repentance,  
for this sorrow recognizes sin as a moral offense against God.

This is what grips David--  
"Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,"

His is a God-ward sorrow that fears a loss of relationship with God himself—  
v. 11--"**Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.**"

But this contrition recognizes that God has every right to do just that—  
Lord, I have "**done what is evil in your sight**," David says,  
"**so that you are proved right when you speak  
and justified when you judge.**"

What a far cry that is from what we often do--

instead of justifying God, we justify ourselves.  
We are masters at self-deception,  
we are extraordinarily adept at rationalizing our behavior—  
"It's wasn't my fault," David might have said--  
"She was asking for it, bathing where she could be seen like that.  
And Uriah—his own stubbornness is what got him into trouble.  
If he had just gone home when I told him to,  
everything would have worked out OK."

Do you ever engage in that kind of denial?  
Of course, you do--we all do it.  
We do it all the time.

Sometimes it takes Nathan's "You are the man!" to help us see the truth.

David says, v. 6 **"Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;"**  
And there is a recognition that truth about ourselves must come from the outside--  
**"you teach me wisdom in the inmost place."**

Truth is not what I decide it is;  
truth is not what I want to be true—  
which is the way truth is often perceived in our culture.  
No, truth is what God sees and what God knows—  
and that's why to know the truth about ourselves  
we must direct our attention away from ourselves  
to what God thinks of us.

**"you teach me wisdom in the inmost place,"** David says.

And as a result of that wisdom,  
which has come through that convicting word of the prophet Nathan,

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So how does God speak those words to us?  
How can we be jolted out of our moral fantasy world  
so that we can see the truth?

•Our eyes can be opened **through the reading of God's word**,  
as we allow it to examine our hearts.

Heb. 4:12 –"**the word of God is living and active.**  
**Sharper than any double-edged sword,**  
**it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow;**  
**it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."**

God' word comes to us from the outside—  
and it has power to burst the bubble of our own self-deception.  
It speaks truth into our hearts.

•We can be awakened **through the words of God's people--**  
as we care about one another enough to speak the truth in love

when we see someone going astray.  
We are urged to love one another enough  
to correct and rebuke<sup>2</sup>—which can be very hard to do.  
But we must, if we care for one another.  
We must speak truth into each other's live.

- Most of all, we can see the truth **through the work of the Holy Spirit**,  
who somehow shines a light into the darkness of our own corrupt hearts,  
and opens our eyes to see what is really there.

I think of the prayer of Ps. 139—

Psa. 139:23--**"Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.**

**24 See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting."**

That's just what happened to David through Nathan's words--

David sees his actions as God sees them;

and in the process,

he understands his sin with regard to Bathsheba and Uriah

as a symptom of a much deeper problem--

v. 5--**"Surely I was sinful at birth,**

**sinful from the time my mother conceived me."**

Didn't Jesus say that a good tree brings forth good fruit,  
and a rotten tree bears rotten fruit.

David recognized that these sins didn't make him a sinner--

he sinned because he was already a sinner.

In other words, the corrupt acts of sin

flow out of a deeper corruption of his own nature.

Sin runs in our veins, and flows into every part of our being--

nothing about us is neutral and unaffected.

Even my best acts are affected by my mixed motives.

Even when I preach,

I can never completely forget about myself

and quit thinking about whether you will like me when I'm done.

Oh yes, I've learned how to appear to be pious—

I can pretend to be a spiritual person as well as anybody.

But I'm sure I don't pray as much as you think I do.

You may not be able to tell when I'm impatient or envious or greedy—

but it's all there in my heart—and I know it's all there in your heart, too.

Let's just face up to it—

we are sinners—sinful at birth,

corrupt at our inner core.

We don't need a tune up; we need a moral overhaul—

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<sup>2</sup> cf. Lk 17:3; 2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 2:15; also Rev. 3:19.

It's not heart medicine that will fix us;  
we need a heart transplant.

That's the truth--  
and only through the knowledge of God and his holiness,  
can we have such a knowledge of ourselves—  
a knowledge of what is deep inside.  
v. 6--"Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;  
you teach me wisdom in the inmost place."

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It seems that we've been talking about truth a lot lately.

Last week I said that humility is the mother of salvation  
because humility is simply a recognition of the truth--  
the truth about God and the truth about ourselves.

We ought to be humble, first, because God is great and we are small--  
our proper response to that greatness is one of awe--  
Remember Psalm 29--the psalm of the thunderstorm?  
We are only creatures; God is the Creator—  
let us never forget that truth.

But we ought also to be humble, not only because God is great and we are small,  
but also because God is holy and we are sinful--  
and our proper response to his holiness is one of contrition--  
a heartfelt sorrow for our sin.

We are responsible moral agents;  
and God is our righteous Judge--  
let us never forget that truth.

Humility flows from a recognition of the truth--  
and so does contrition and repentance.

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**True repentance faces up to the truth.**

But those who are truly repentant  
don't just see their sin and wallow in a state of self-pity—  
"Oh, poor me! I'm just a miserable sinner—  
I guess that's just what I'll always be."

**No, for the second mark of true repentance  
is that it longs for change.**

First, there is a longing to be set free,  
cleansed from the sin that so oppresses our souls--  
"blot out my transgressions," David prays—  
erase my debts from your divine ledger.  
"Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin."

v. 7--"Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; "

Here David refers to the ritual signifying the cleansing  
of the person healed from a skin disease like leprosy.  
That person was sprinkled seven times with the sacrificial blood  
using the hyssop plant (Nb.14:6ff).  
After this ritual, the healed leper could re-enter society.  
David wants to experience that same experience of cleansing.

"wash me, and I will be whiter than snow."

Sin leaves you feeling dirty,  
a repentant heart longs to be washed clean.

In true repentance, sin also becomes a burden—  
psychologically, emotionally--sometimes unconsciously.

Not many people glory in their sin.

I think of the man who was arrested while admiring his own picture  
on a "wanted" poster outside a police station!  
Guilt is generally associated with shame,  
so our guilt is covered up;  
our guilt is often repressed, but it is still there.

As we said, evidently, David had felt it--  
As in v. 8 he longs to hear joy and gladness once again--  
he feels as if the Lord has crushed his bones,  
and he longs for relief.

But there is more than just a change to a more pleasant state of body and mind—  
repentance desires more than just forgiveness--  
true repentance also longs for a moral change.

You see it in v. 10--

**"Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me."**

Change my heart, O Lord.

This kind of heart-change can be hard--

I think of the famous prayer of Augustine before his conversion--  
before he had come to true repentance--  
"O Lord, give me chastity, but not yet."

Isn't that what our pseudo-repentance sometimes says.

But true repentance which is grounded in the truth,  
it sees the ugliness of evil and the beauty of what is good--  
the repentant heart is drawn to the good;  
it longs for what it does not have.

**"Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me."**

Notice, this is a prayer.

Those who acknowledge the depth of their sin  
realize that mere self-help won't do.

David has somehow set his heart to seek purity,  
but he knows that without God's power  
his own willpower will be quickly overpowered.

As the hymn writer put it--

*Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;  
prone to leave the God I love.  
Take my heart, O, take and seal it--  
seal it for Thy courts above.*

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True repentance longs for change--

that, you see, is why repentance is necessary to become a Christian.

"Necessary? Why would you just say?" you might ask.

"I thought that we are saved by faith, and by faith alone?"

Isn't it heretical to say that we are also saved by repentance?"

I don't think so,

because repentance is included in what saving faith means.

Saving faith necessarily involves repentance--

In the gospels, the message of John the Baptist and Jesus are the same--

**"Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand"**

On the day of Pentecost, Peter declares to all the people,

**"Repent and be baptized every one of you,**

**in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven"**

The Apostle Paul told the Athenians that

God "**commands all people everywhere to repent.**" (Acts 17:30)

And he told King Agrippa, "**I preached that [everyone] should repent**

**and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.**" (Act. 21:20)

The very notion of beings "saved" demands that you are being saved from something--  
what is it, if not the state of sin and its deadly consequences?

How can you be saved if you do not recognize that you are a sinner  
and desire to be delivered from that sorry state?

How can you be saved if you don't want what salvation is meant to bring--  
spiritual change in the depths of your heart?

We are saved so that we can bring glory to God

as we are renewed in the image of Christ.

Repentance means that you want to be saved from sin and for God's glory.

That's part of what it means to put your faith in Jesus and his saving work.

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Repentance is not something that is done in addition to faith,

as if it were some human work that merits God's favor.

It is an inherent part of what it means to believe the gospel,

for it reflects the moral reality which the gospel declares.

Turning toward God in faith,  
necessarily means turning away from sin.  
How could it be any other way? /

Repentance is a necessary part of true faith.  
But I would also say that faith is a necessary dimension of true repentance.  
For I don't think anyone is ever going to repent before God,  
acknowledging the truth about themselves,  
if they thought that God would just slap them in the face and turn them away.

Godly repentance--a repentance directed toward God--  
the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,  
the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ--  
repentance directed toward this God puts its hope in God's grace.

It must.  
That's why when David is exposed as the sinner that he was  
he didn't drift into a state of despair.  
That's why he wrote a psalm and not a suicide note.

For he knew his God--  
and on the basis of the character of his God he could seek mercy and forgiveness.

In fact, this is where he begins in the very first verse--  
**"Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions."**

David has no claim upon God.  
He can offer no reason why God should be merciful to him.  
He certainly can't demand it.  
Forgiveness is not an entitlement.  
We can't have the attitude of Catherine the Great, who once said,  
"I am an autocrat; that is my job.  
God will forgive me; that is his job."

If David thought that sacrifices would do the trick, he would bring them.  
But he knows that the Lord can't be bribed.

v. 17--the only sacrifices that God is truly concerned about,  
the only sacrifices that bring him pleasure  
are the sacrifices of a broken and contrite heart.

Only that spirit makes any sacrifice acceptable to God.

All David can do is confess his sin  
and cast himself upon God's unfailing love and great compassion.  
That love and compassion is the ground of his hope.

v. 14--"**Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me,  
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness."**

The Lord is his Savior--  
that is his hope--his only hope.

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And if David could have such hope in the grace of God,  
how much more can we ---  
He had the sacrificial worship in the temple  
as a picture of God's means by which sin could be taken away.

We now have the reality of which the temple sacrifice was a mere shadow, a pointer.

David had the blood of bulls and goats as a means of coming before God,  
we have the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the lamb of God.

We can have hope in God's grace,  
because God's gracious heart has been laid bare--  
he sent his Son into this world to save sinners,  
sinners like you and me.

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That's why this Psalm of David is so important to us.  
It shows us the way, the only way, to come before God—  
not as the self-righteous Pharisee,  
piously sanctimonious, sure of his own privileged position in heaven.  
We must come like David,  
with humble contrition, godly sorrow, for our sin—  
casting ourselves on the mercy of God—  
yet hopeful that because of Lord's lovingkindness,  
we will be received and accepted.

Have you ever done that?  
Have you ever cast yourself on the mercy of God?  
Have you ever cried out for his mercy?  
Have you ever realized that "**You are the man**"?  
This word of God is addressed to you!

I urge you this morning to repent and believe.  
Turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be cleansed of your sin,  
washed clean and given new life. //

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But is this to say that repentance is only for unbelievers?  
only for those first coming into the community of faith?  
Many people think like that, but they are wrong.

Martin Luther, the Father of the Protestant Reformation  
that rediscovered of the gospel message of grace,  
Luther began that great movement by posting 95 theses, 95 declarations,

on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg,  
which was the customary way of inviting theological debate.

The first of the those 95 was this--

"When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said 'repent,'  
he meant that the entire life of believers should be one of repentance."

Repentance is not only necessary for you to **become** a Christian,  
it is also necessary for you to **be** a Christian.

Didn't Jesus include the prayer he gave to his disciples the words:

**"Forgive us of our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us"?**

You see, just because you have been saved by Christ's atoning sacrifice  
and have been adopted into God's family,  
and have been given his Holy Spirit to dwell within your heart--  
that does not mean that you are done with sin once and for all.

No, that old nature still hangs around--  
it still drags us down.

We have been justified before God;  
in Christ we are clothed with his righteousness, we are saved;  
but at the same time, we still remain sinners---  
sinners, saved by grace.

That's why "the entire life of believers should be one of repentance."

One day we will need to repent no more--  
but that day has not yet come.

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Why talk about sin and our need of repentance?

Isn't this a bit negative?

I mean, why not talk about the joy of our salvation,  
and the prosperity of godly living?

Why talk about contrition?

Because it is by appreciating the depth of our sin  
that we can grow in our love for God.

Jesus once told a story about two men who owed money to a certain moneylender.

One owed him 500 denarii, the other 50.

Neither of them had the money to pay him back,  
so he canceled the debts of both.

Now which of them will love him more? (Lk. 7:41,42)

He who has been forgiven much, loves much.

How much have you been forgiven?

A while back, while browsing a Christian website on the internet,  
 I came across a letter written by the great 18<sup>th</sup> century pastor Jonathan Edwards.  
 Edwards was asked to give some advice to a young woman  
 who was recently converted during the First Great Awakening—  
 a time of great religious revival in the American colonies during the 1740s.  
 He listed 19 admonitions.  
 I want you to listen to three of them--

**#Four: Though God has forgiven and forgotten your past sins,  
 yet don't forget them yourself.**

Often remember what a wretched bond slave you were in the land of Egypt.  
 Often bring to mind your particular acts of sin before conversion,  
 as the blessed Apostle Paul is often mentioning  
 his old blaspheming, persecuting, and injuriousness,  
 to the renewed humbling of his heart and acknowledging  
 that he was the least of the apostles, and not worthy to be called an apostle,  
 and the least of saints, and the chief of sinners.

And be often in confessing your old sins to God.

Also, let this following passage be often in your mind:

“Then, when I make atonement for all you have done,  
 you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth  
 because of your humiliation, declares the sovereign LORD” (Ezek. 16:63).

**#Five: Remember that you have more cause,  
 on some accounts a thousand times more,  
 to lament and humble yourself for sins that have been since conversion  
 than those that were before conversion,  
 because of the infinitely greater obligations that are upon you to live to God.**

Look upon the faithfulness of Christ in unchangeably continuing his loving favor,  
 and the unspeakable and saving fruits of his everlasting love.  
 Despite all your great unworthiness since your conversion,  
 his grace remains as great or as wonderful as it was in converting you.

**#Six: Be always greatly humbled by your remaining sin,  
 and never think that you lie low enough for it,  
 but yet don't be at all discouraged or disheartened by it.**

Although we are exceeding sinful,  
 we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,  
 the preciousness of whose blood,  
 the merit of whose righteousness,  
 and the greatness of whose love and faithfulness  
 infinitely overtop the highest mountains of our sins.

Be always greatly humbled by your remaining sin,  
 and never think that you lie low enough for it,  
 but yet don't be at all discouraged or disheartened by it. . . .”  
 God’s grace in Jesus Christ is greater still.

That’s just not the kind of advice that most of us would give to a young believer,

or to any believer.

Have we lost something in our day?  
I think we have—  
It was a truth that Christians of the past knew well--  
"When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said 'repent,'  
he meant that the entire life of believers should be one of repentance."

The more we appreciate the depths of our sin,  
the greater will be our experience of God's love and grace.

To be a community of grace and truth  
we must be characterized by heartfelt contrition.  
For the truth will drive us to our knees,  
and only there can we glory in the grace of our God.

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Prayer--

**A Time of Confession:**

End with corporate prayer of confession

A Prayer of Confession:

*Most merciful God,  
we confess that we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in your will,  
and walk in your ways,  
top the glory of your Name. Amen.*

**Words of Forgiveness:**

- 1John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you:  
God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.
- 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness,  
we lie and do not live by the truth.
- 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light,  
we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son,  
purifies us from all sin.
- 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
- 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins  
and purify us from all unrighteousness.

*"Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered." --Ps. 32:1*

Closing Song: #175 Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Benediction:

Rev. 1:5,6 To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,  
and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father --  
to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

Sept. 9, 2018

**Glimpses of Godliness in the Psalms:  
Contrition  
Ps. 51**

King David perhaps best displays his godliness, not in the heights of his praise, but in the depths of his repentance. Our Psalm this morning portrays the beauty of a contrite heart and points to the power of grace and truth.

**I. Repentance faces up to the truth.**

*"Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;" (v.6)*

**II. Repentance longs for change.**

*"Create in me a pure heart, O God," (v. 10)*

**III. Repentance puts its hope in God's grace.**

*"Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;" (v. 1)*

*"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."  
—Psalm 51:17*

Sermon Discussion:

**Glimpses of Godliness in the Psalms:  
Contrition  
Ps. 51**

- Have you ever had a “You are the man!” moment—when you felt convicted of some sinful act? How did you come to see that what you had done was wrong?
- What are ways that you have been convicted of sin—through the Bible? other Christians? the Holy Spirit? other?
- How is repentance related to truth?
- What is the difference between “worldly sorrow” and “godly sorrow” (cf. 2 Cor. 7:8-10)?
- Why is repentance necessary for salvation? How do repentance and saving faith relate?
- Why is grace and mercy essential to the willingness to repent?
- How can we encourage repentance in our lives?