

# “Broken” // 2 Samuel 12; Psalm 51 //

## *The Life of David #16*<sup>1</sup>

### Announcement

**As you just heard, we have a lot of exciting things planned this Easter.** So, mark your calendars and be praying in earnest anticipation that the Lord will move among us. We’re also excited for our Women’s Conference coming up next month, on April 28 & 29. This is a highlight not just of Women’s Discipleship but of our church. We’ll have Lauren Chandler and some of our own Summit Women speaking. (little known secret of the Summit: Some of our best Bible teachers are in our Women’s Discipleship ministry.) You won’t want to miss it. You can register and find more info on the front page of our website.

And, I just have to share this: I just got the report that our prison ministry has 4 inmates on death row currently leading Bible studies. And, our overseas church planting teams, most of whom are working in unreached people groups around the world, are reporting 139 professions of faith, 86 baptisms, and 31 new churches planted. Isn’t that awesome? And just a reminder that your generosity makes this possible!

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<sup>1</sup> Works Consulted: Tim Chester, *1 Samuel For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God’s Word for You)*, The Good Book Company, September 15, 2014; John Sailhammer. *NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994). And others as noted throughout.

### Introduction

**2 Samuel 12, if you have your Bibles...** Just about everyone I know has been watching the trial of Alex (pr: Alec) Murdaugh. If you happen to be one of the 10 people in here who hasn’t seen it, Alex Murdaugh is an attorney from a small town in South Carolina whose family goes back in that town for generations--they basically built the town. But, as this trial reveals, Alex Murdaugh has also been a vicious criminal, using his family’s connections to cover up his crimes for years. All kinds of evidence have come out involving massive theft from people he was supposedly helping, robbing and murdering friends and even family members. Perhaps what’s most intriguing to people, however, is the difference between how Mr. Murdaugh presents publicly and what you’re finding out about his private life. Last week, the Judge pleaded with him to admit, in the face of overwhelming evidence, to his crimes, and he just won’t do it. He wants to maintain the illusion of the polite, respectable, gentle father who just cares for his family and wants to do the right thing.

**It’s been like a case study of how difficult it is for some people to confess to sin.** And sure, very few of us will ever have to confess to a string of crimes like Murdaugh’s (hopefully none of us). But **all of us** have that moment when we’re confronted with our sin and we have to decide what to do. Do you minimize it, whitewash it, blame your actions on others...? I’m not exaggerating when I say that what you do in that moment makes the difference between life and death.

**As 2 Sam 12 opens, we’re a little less than a year after David’s sin with Bathsheba.** We know that because Bathsheba has just given birth to the baby, and back in those days, it took 9 months between conception and when a baby was born. This is why you pay me--to know obscure Bible facts like that one.

**The prophet Nathan** (whom, you might remember, is like the nation's pastor), requests an audience with David. He comes in and says, *"David... I heard about something that happened in your kingdom that really bothered me, and I wanted to share it with you and get your thoughts."* (Just as a reminder: David had seen Bathsheba bathing, lusted after her, sent messengers to bring her to him so he could sleep with her and then commenced a massive cover-up operation that involved murdering Bathsheba's husband and taking her as his wife, and then lying to the nation for a year).

<sup>1</sup>"There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. <sup>2</sup>The rich man had very many flocks and herds, <sup>3</sup>but the poor man had nothing but one little tiny lamb, which he had bought with his own money. And... (that little lamb) grew up with him and with his children. (It was like a pet to them). It used to eat from their table and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him.

**He goes on, vs. 4:** "Well, one night, this rich guy, who had more sheep than he knew what to do with, had some relatives stop in unexpectedly to visit and he wanted to serve them some dinner. But, instead of using one of his many sheep, he went into his poor neighbor's yard and stole that one little pet lamb, just because he could and nobody had the power to stop him.

[5] Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the rich man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, [6] and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no compassion."

Nathan then looks at David and says, in the shortest, most powerful sermon ever given, says: ~~[[7] Nathan said to David,]~~ "You are the man!"

David has condemned himself to death with his own mouth. Nathan then says (vs 7), "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul... and if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight?'"

<sup>13</sup> David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

And Nathan said to David, "The LORD has put away your sin; you shall not die.

<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die."

In this story we see David's path toward repentance. There is **confrontation** (something brings your sin before your face. In David's case, it happens through Nathan; for you, it might happen in a rebuke from a friend or a teacher or a boss, or through a message you hear at church, or perhaps even just the Holy Spirit working on your conscience. For some of you, that day is going to be today.)

From **confrontation**→**confession**. David's confession here includes several vital elements that all true confession must include, which we'll look at in a moment.

From **confrontation**→**confession**→**reassurance**. After seeing David repent, Nathan assures David that God has not taken his love from him; David will not die; he hasn't been canceled; God still has a plan for him. **This is an important step in the restoration process**, but a lot of times, we rush too quickly to it--and I'll show you what I mean by that in a minute.

Finally, from **confrontation**→**confession**→**reassurance**→**restoration**: **Nathan tells David**, "You will not die," and though there will be

consequences from your sin--in David's case the child will die, and your rule and your household will never quite be the same. But Nathan assured him that God still had a lot of good things left for him--plans to use him for good. His life is not over. As we like to say around here, "If you're not dead, God's not done."

This is the path God wants to take us on. But a lot of people want to get to the 'reassurance' and 'restoration' without really dealing with the confession part. **So for the majority of our time this weekend, I want us to press into Psalm 51, which** is the song, the poem, that David wrote during this experience. It's a look into the anatomy of that second stage, confession.

David, in his superscript of this Psalm, tells us exactly why he wrote it:

Psalm 51: "A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone into Bathsheba."

David in this Psalm is going to demonstrate several components that separate true confessions from false ones. **You see, according to Paul in 2 Corinthians**, there is a kind of confession of sin that does not lead to life, but only to more spiritual death. Sometimes these confessions look really sincere, even involving tears, but they don't lead to life.

David in this Psalm gives us 4 components of a true confession.

**Component 1, vs. 3:**

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

**Confession Component 1: "I am personally responsible for my sin"**

True confession doesn't seek to justify, minimize, or deflect what you did in any way. David doesn't mention how hard it is to be king, or how no one ever thought about his needs, or how no one

understands the pressures he's been under.<sup>2</sup> Nor does David point out his past accomplishments or how up until this he's been a great king, way better than Saul or any other kings Israel had ever had. No. David says, "I have sinned. Nothing excuses it, and I have no one to blame but me."

Our director of counseling here, **Dr. Brad Hambrick**, says that real apologies avoid the words, "If," "but" or "maybe."

- "If I did something that hurt you..." ('if' means you haven't really owned the wrong yet).
- "But": "Well, I did that, but...(and then insert reason it wasn't so bad or why the other person provoked it)."
- "Maybe": "Maybe I wasn't thinking of you like I should..." as if it is still uncertain whether what you did was wrong.
- These are all indications that the apology isn't real.
- (And I see some of you writing these things down so that you can use them against your spouse later. Don't do that. Think about how often YOU divert or lessen the blame for your bad actions.
- David does none of that. He says, "I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me."<sup>3</sup>

**Listen: There may be factors that influenced your sin.** Others may have indeed wronged you first. You might have been greatly affected by the home you grew up in through no fault of your own. You may have **felt extreme pressure from others** to do what you did. But at the end of the day, your sins--your choices--were your own.

**So many times I've seen someone confronted in their sin only to have them eventually blame someone else.** There have been a handful of times at this church that we've had to confront someone who was cheating on their spouse or had sexually manipulated someone, and we, as lovingly as we know how to do it, confronted

<sup>2</sup> Here is an article with 8 common phrases we use that fall short of David's example: <https://bradhambrick.com/forgiveness15/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://bradhambrick.com/7-marks-of-a-good-apology-vs-8-marks-of-a-bad-apology/>

them, only later to have them write me a letter focused on how we didn't do the confrontation just right. And I'm sure we could have done it better. None of us wanted to do it; our hearts were broken and we were trying to take care of the family. And a lot of times when they write these letters, it's clear they are still not at all focused on the people they've hurt or what they've done wrong, they are still trying to posture themselves as the victim and focus on where everybody else fell short. And, like I said, I'm sure we did. But the point is, if you truly repent, your focus will be on *your* own sin, not focused on what others did or didn't do.

Or I think of these pastors who have an affair and destroy their families and betray the trust of their congregations and then have the audacity to write a book and go on a lecture circuit later about how unkindly they were treated and how the church doesn't understand how to show grace. And I get it, maybe that's true--but I always want to say to them: ***You're not the one to deliver that message.*** Your focus should be on your sin. How you manipulated your flock and violated their trust. In many cases, *especially* for leaders in the church, true repentance means you won't seek to get back into public ministry--at least not for a long, long time. A lot of times, the best way to demonstrate your "changed heart" is to labor in obscurity. If you've really repented, you will be more concerned about what the healing process for those you sinned against requires than you will be having a vocational outlet for your "amazing spiritual gifts."<sup>4</sup>

Component 1: "I am personally responsible for my sin. Nobody else is to blame for this." **Component 2**, vs 4 **Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,**"

**Confession Component 2: "My sin was first and foremost against God"**

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<sup>4</sup> I agree with David French who says, "For many, true repentance doesn't look like "restoration," it looks like resignation. The best thing that a minister or a leader with a "changed heart" can do is to go away."

**"Against you, and you only, have I sinned."** Now, who doesn't read this and say, "Against God only? Sexual abuse; murder--those are pretty big sins against Bathsheba and Uriah. Not to mention the trust of the nation he violated. Is David trivializing those horrendous things? Not at all. This is Hebrew poetry, and in Hebrew poetry sometimes they'll use a superlative to make a point, and the point he's making is that as bad as his sin was toward others, it was even worse against God.

**And, in so doing**, David demonstrates an important component in confession that we often overlook--the Godward dimensions of our sin. My sin was first and foremost **against you.**

**I want you to let this sink in:** David's sin, on a human level, was bad. It was more than that, it was horrendous. And yet, David says that even those things pale in comparison to the wickedness he's committed against God. **Think about that:** sexual abuse and betrayal and murder and lying in office are sins of the highest order, and yet David says that the worst of it is what he did to God. ***How evil must our sin be in God's eyes?***

**A lot of people struggle with the concept of hell because they think it is too severe a punishment** for the sins we commit against each other. Do some bad stuff here, suffer eternity in hell later... But the severity of hell comes not not because of the severity of our sins against each other; it comes because of the wickedness of our sins against God. So, I ask again: ***How evil must our sin be in God's eyes?***

The prophet Jeremiah says it this way: **"My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water." (Jer 2:13) (Explain).**

- **Sin is two-fold. *We reject God, which leaves a vacuum, and then we replace God with something else.***

- David asked himself, “Why was God not enough for me? Why did I not trust him? Why did I need the feeling of power of manipulating Bathsheba? Why did I crave her beauty?”
- “My soul was empty because I was disconnected from you: that was my first sin. I took matters into my own hands because I didn’t trust you. I took what didn’t belong to me because I didn’t trust you. My sins, before they broke out horizontally, were **vertical**.”

David is overwhelmed with this truth at this point. **“Against you, you only...”** The *repetition of ‘you, you’* in Hebrew indicates the intensity of emotion. You, God, You... after all that you had given me--after you took me from the pasture and made me King and delivered me from Saul and conquered all my enemies and made me so many promises, I forsook you!

- **We often get emotional over what our sin did** to someone else, regret for how we hurt them; or over what our sin says about us--feelings of frustration or guilt or self-loathing--**but when was the last time you got emotional** about what your sin did to God? After all the goodness and kindness he’s put into my life; after all his faithfulness; after dying on a cross to save me from my sins, I walk away from you without even a thought.
- **Until you are most upset at what your sin has done to God, you’ll never really change--at least not toward God.** Until in your sin you see the hammer used to crucify Jesus—until you see it as a statement toward God (“You’re not enough! I don’t trust you!”)—, you’ll never really change.<sup>5</sup>

**Component 3, vs 5: Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me:**

**Confession Component 3: “My sin goes down to the core of who I am.”**

<sup>5</sup> 6 Marks of Repentance (drawn from our G4 curriculum, Step 4: Repentance): <https://bradhambbrick.com/follow-up-resources-for-a-sermon-from-amos-robust-repentance/>

As I said a minute ago, a lot of people want to reduce the seriousness of their sin by blaming them on factors outside their control. “I got caught in a weak moment.” Or, “I was with the wrong crowd,” Or, “I made some poor choices.” David said, “No. My sin came from the depth of who I am. What I did in that moment was consistent with things I have buried in the depths of my heart. What I did wasn’t something that came out of nowhere—no, it was *down there* in the core of who I am. Sin is not just what I did; it’s who I am.”

Have you ever had one of those moments where something slipped out of your mouth that totally embarrassed you--an outburst of anger, something snippy or unfair about someone, a demeaning joke, or the verbalization of a lust. And then later, you feel bad or embarrassed about what you said, and so you go back to the person to apologize. What do you usually say? Something like, “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean that. That’s not really me.” Yeah, but here’s the thing: in the moment, it was you. At the moment you said it, you meant it; you’d never felt an emotion more sincerely in your life. And if what happened is not really you, then where exactly did it come from?

Maybe a better explanation is that as we grow up we get better at filtering what’s down there so it doesn’t embarrass us. But just because we don’t verbalize something doesn’t mean it isn’t inside us.

Or think of it this way: Imagine if someone developed an app so that whatever came into your mind displayed on their screen. How awful would that be? If everybody could just look and see what you were thinking at any moment. Would anybody want that?

A while back I was on a trip with a few of our pastors and I rented a car that had a new GPS feature on it (that I hope doesn't catch on) where every time you went over the speed limit, a pleasant (but slightly alarmed) little voice would announce the correct speed limit—"The speed limit is 55"—to everyone in the car. I felt judged and embarrassed. But it made me think about how uncomfortable it would be if a little voice announced to bystanders every time something came up in my heart that shouldn't be there. I'd be sitting in a restaurant, looking at the dessert menu, and the little voice would announce, "Listen, glutton: you are already a few lbs. overweight." Or, men, you're walking through the mall as a woman walks by, and a little voice announces, "Your wife's name is Rebecca, and that's not her."

True repentance recognizes that your sin comes from the core of who you are. Sin is not just what I did; it's who I am.

David says, "**I abused power because at my core** I have an abusive spirit. I've learned to control it in some contexts, but that's what's down there. I pursued lust because in my heart I'm idolatrous. I had a man murdered because in my heart I care more about myself than anyone else. This corrupted, depraved heart was not something alien that overtook me in a weak moment; these things have been present with me since my birth."

**Parents, one thing we ought not have any trouble believing is the doctrine of total depravity.** It's like the British philosopher **G.K. Chesterton** always said, "Total depravity is the one Christian doctrine that is empirically verifiable."

- My kids were crazy cute when they were young, but they were sinners through and through.
- And sure, Veronica and I haven't been perfect examples, by a long shot, but our kids didn't "learn sin" by watching us. Parents: **Ever**

**get that call from the preschool because your kid bit somebody?**

Veronica and I did a few times. Here's the thing. They didn't learn that from us. We've gotten into our share of arguments but not one time have I ever gone up to Veronica and said, "Oh yeah?..." No. That came from inside them.

- No one taught my kids to sin. I have never had to send a single one of them to 'sin camp.' It came naturally.
- Parents: you put your 1.5 year old down for a nap and his body bows up in anger and resistance. He's saying, "I don't want to go down for a nap, and I know better than you. Not your will, mom, but mine be done."
- One of the first words our kids learn is "no." Why is it not "Yes"? "Yes, Daddy. As you wish, daddy. You know best, daddy, because you love me and know more than I do." How awesome would it be if I got up at 5 am and my 5 year old had tidied up the living room, and she's sitting there reading her Bible, journaling, and said, "Dad, can we pray together? I need to figure out how to surrender more of my life to the Lord today." But that's not normally what happened when I left them alone. I'd leave my kid alone for 10 minutes and I come back and say, "Who set the backyard on fire?"

Now, I'm being lighthearted here, but David says, "I did what I did because it is at the core of who I am... In sin did my mother conceive me."

And some of you feel like if you admitted that--it would lead you to despair. Because when someone confronts you about something, not only are you admitting to it, you are saying, "Yeah, and you don't know the half of what's going on down there. What's down in my heart is far worse than the little bit you saw. I didn't sin because I hung around with the wrong crowd; if anything, I chose the wrong crowd because I AM the wrong crowd and the wrong crowd is who I wanted to be around."

And that would lead to despair, were it not for the gospel. Because, you see, what God offers is a new heart. **10 Create** (that word, *bara*, in Hebrew, is the word used when God created the worlds out of nothing--*create*) **in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

A new heart, a clean heart, a right spirit. I don't need reform or re-education or a few behavioral tweaks, I need resurrection. I don't need to turn over a new leaf; I need new life.

We're not students struggling in the school of religion that Jesus offers to tutor. We're not even swimmers in danger of drowning that Jesus offers to assist. Sometimes we present coming to Christ like we're drowning in life and Jesus comes by in a lifeboat and says, "Here, take this," and gives us a lifesaver and pulls us to safety. According to Ephesians, we are already dead in my trespasses and sins, which means that when Jesus came up beside me in the water, I was already face down when Jesus picked my lifeless corpse up out of the water and brought it back to life.

**What God offers you is not reform—it's resurrection, it's new life.** Confession gets you there.

True confession begins when you admit that your sin goes down to the depths of who you are; and you have no hope of acceptance by God except for his grace and no hope for change except by the power of his Spirit.

Component 4, vs. **16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.**

**Confession Component 4: "I offer nothing to excuse or offset this sin"**

- David said, "I'm not trying to make up for this by buying you off with religious stuff."
- That's what Saul had done; it's what a lot of religious people do. "I may not be obeying you over here; so I'll use this religious sacrifice over here to make up for it." I prefer to follow you, God, on my own terms—so I'll make up my own path for obedience.
  - I'm dating a guy I shouldn't be dating: I'll bring him to church
  - I may not tithe my income; but I'll tithe my time
  - I've known people who were having an affair so they started to give more to the church
  - He wants me to share Christ with someone, but I'm terrified to do it, so I'll fast and pray for them instead.
  - God's called me to go overseas but instead 'll get involved in a ministry over here.
- Those all sound like good things. But if you're doing them to avoid obedience, they aren't good at all.
- I use the word "offset" because many people want to treat their sin like a large company wants to treat their carbon emissions. They're like, "We're releasing a lot of toxins into the environment but it's ok because we've offset--we've made up for it--by planting a bunch of trees or having office furniture made out of recycled paper straws or giving all our management new electric Teslas to drive..." or whatever.
- That's what people want to do with their sin. Sometimes when they come in to confess they start to make promises to God. You ever done that? OK, God, I know I've really messed up here, but I promise I'm going to be faithful to church now and will try to pray every day and I'm going to give lots of money" as if they are trying to ask for God's forgiveness on credit. Give me your blessing now and I'll earn it back later.

But God doesn't want any of that. Look at vs. **17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**



All God wants is brokenness. Repentance toward him. Surrender. The gospel is that God has done everything necessary to save you. You can't earn it; you can't make up for it; you **can't borrow it on credit** or lay hold on it through promises to do better. You can only receive it as a gift, but to receive it you have to be in the right posture to receive it—and that is *total surrender*.

And now we're ready for the incredible gospel promises of this Psalm. Back to vs 1:

**1 *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;***

- Mercy: Mercy means not getting what you deserve. If you are the kind of person who feels like, "I just want what I deserve," then you don't understand the gospel. What I deserve is judgment; and hell. What I'm asking for is mercy.
- And David says, "Give me **mercy**, according to your **steadfast love** (that's that Hebrew word *hesed*--that incredible, one-way promised love of God that God offered to David in 2 Samuel 7 when he said that his future blessing would not be dependent on his righteousness. God was making David a one-way promise. David says, "If there was a contract, I've already violated all of my terms. Give me the blessing based solely on your willingness to keep your own promises."

**...according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.**

- Blot out: that's the same word used for flood in Genesis 6. Remember when God flooded the earth? God said the whole world was so wicked the only thing to do was to drown everyone and everything and start a new creation. David says his heart is like the earth before the flood. And he needs it flooded. He needs his sins drowned. He needs a new birth of righteousness.

**2 *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,***

- This was a very common Hebrew word they'd use to talk about washing clothes. Not a religious one, just an everyday one. Imagine a woman with a washboard: scrubbing; agitating; rubbing hard on something rough to get the dirt off. David is saying, "This is what you need to do with me."

**(2)...and cleanse me from my sin!**

- That *is* a religious word. This was a Hebrew word used for ritualistic cleaning when they would clean vessels for religious service. Make me where I can be used for your service again.

**[7] Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

- Anybody have some hyssop at home in their cabinets? Do you even know what it is? It's a bush with a small spindly flower on it, and if you read your Bible, you see it appear twice before. Once was during the Exodus; it was what they used to spread the blood of the Lamb on the doorposts on the night God delivered. God said, "When I see the blood on the doorposts of your heart, I will pass over you."
- The other is in Leviticus 14--when they wanted to cleanse a leper, the priest would take a hyssop flower, dip it in the blood of a slaughtered lamb, and then sprinkle it seven times on the diseased skin of the leper.
- David says, "I've got a leprosy of the heart, and I need the blood of the Lamb to cleanse me." Of course, at this point in Jewish history, they didn't know how that would happen, because all the Jewish sacrifices were external.
- But one day, David recognizes, God would send another Lamb who would be able to sprinkle his blood on the doorposts of our heart and cleanse us in the deepest place.



- By the way, we see an **interesting allusion** to this coming Lamb in this story. When Nathan tells David that he won't die, he says, "But your son will." And sure enough, that little innocent newborn died because of the sin of David. BTW, this is not meant to imply that a miscarriage is some kind of punishment for the sin of the parents. No, this was a special circumstance whereby God was giving us a picture of another innocent son who one day, many years later, would be born to the lineage of David who would die for David's sin in an ultimate sense. When that son was born the angel announced to the family of David, "*Unto you this born this day, in the city of David (in David's hometown!), a Savior, who is Christ, the promised one, the Lord... and you will call his name, 'Jesus,'* because he will save his people from their sins."

Your sin is great, friend, but God's grace is greater. Tyler Staton, a pastor out in Portland, pointed something out from this passage I had never seen before: "In Psalm 51, [David] uses four different words to name his sin but nineteen different words to illustrate God's forgiveness." IOW, God's forgiveness is more than 4 times more powerful than our ability to sin.<sup>6</sup>

It doesn't matter that you cheated, or abused your power. Understand what I mean by this, but God says, "I *don't care about your abortion, I or your sexual promiscuity, or your porn addiction, I don't care that you murdered someone. None of that removes you from this offer of forgiveness.*"

Are you broken? He NEVER turns away from broken people. "A broken and contrite spirit he will never despise." Still filthy with the stain of your sin, he runs toward you and embraces you and kisses you and throws a party for you. He has not canceled you as his son or daughter, and he's got a plan now to use you for good.

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<sup>6</sup> Tyler Staton, *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*, 87.

Which is where David turns next in this Psalm, vs [13] (This is where David starts to talk about restoration: **confrontation**→**confession**→**reassurance**→**restoration**): **13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.**

You're going to use me to warn others about the dangers of sin. Maybe that's my friends; my kids; other people in my situation. God is going to take this tragic story of your sin and use it as a blessing for others. We have several stories of that right here in our church. People who have destroyed their marriages and their homes through sin but God has redeemed them and now they are people to whom I often send people who are struggling. Because they have been broken, they can help others who are breaking. It's like the ancient Japanese practice of Kintsugi...

**Christians believe not just in the cross, but in the resurrection too.**

The cross assures us of forgiveness of sin, but the resurrection assures us that God can take the dead remains of our sin and bring them back to life.

[14] When you... **Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.**

- The greatest thing you'll do in your restoration is just worship. That's why God forgave you! To become a trophy of God's grace that points people toward him and tells them there is hope in him.
- The way that we respond to the gospel is by worship! God saved you so that you could worship his grace before others and put it on display!
- I've told you before that the word "gospel" was not originally a religious word... respond with joy and live at peace. Now, if the message came back the other way, you would be told to fight.

Jesus, our King, has won the battle for our sin, and he calls us to respond with joy, live at peace, and shout with praise for our mighty, victorious King.

Let me end with one warning and one admonition.

### The warning: Beware confession without repentance

There's a pattern in Christian circles--it may be well-meaning, but it's deadly. And that is we give people assurance of forgiveness before there is evidence of repentance.

Nathan did not do that with David. It was only after repentance he gave assurance.

Here's how it happens. Someone in your small group confesses to a sin: they've looked at porn again this week; they slacked off in their job again and lied to their boss about where they'd been; they've slept with their boyfriend again, or with this new guy they are dating. And it's pretty apparent that they are doing this habitually with no real effort or intention of actually changing. Their confession is really more about getting something off their chest--this cathartic moment or whatever. It feels good to talk about how messed up you are, and have people sympathize.

And it's well meaning, but everybody comes around them praising them for being vulnerable and honest, and tells them what brave and good Christians they are and how proud God is of them. But they are not repenting because they're not changing. And if you give reassurance before there is repentance, you're actually not being a good friend to them. You're actually just enabling them to sin.

Confession without repentance is worthless to God and we should tell people that.

God will receive any confession, but it should be accompanied by brokenness and repentance. And when you have those things, you'll have change. Not perfectly ... but you *will* change.

Part of David's confession was, "create in me, a new heart, and renew a right spirit within me!" he wasn't just getting something off of his chest, he was crying out to change.

Sometimes people think Christianity is just a confession of sin and believing in Jesus--as in, just acknowledging it and then securing a deal with Jesus. But confession requires repentance, and repentance requires a change of life. It's like Tertullian, the North African church father, used to say, "If you attempt to have Jesus without repentance, you'll end up with religion without heaven."

That change doesn't always happen at once. And a lot of times you struggle and struggle with the same sins. But the point is, you are crying out for change, and it's more than words. You are crying out for change and striving towards it and we can see in your behavior that this is more than just empty words and crocodile tears; we see an earnest desire to turn from your sin.

**Here's something else I see:** I hear a lot of people who want to use David's sin to justify their own. "Well—look at what David did, and he was still a man after God's own heart. I haven't done anything that bad!" Well, ok—sure, you can sin like David did. The question is can you repent like he did? What made David a man after God's own heart was his broken and contrite spirit, which led to **change**. If that's not happening to you, don't comfort yourself with David's example. It's not the size or smallness of your sin that saves you; it's whether or not you repent of it and cry out for God's forgiveness.

God will forgive ANY sin, no matter how horrendous—David's example shows us that— but you have to be broken and repentant to receive it.

***That was the warning. Here's the admonition:***

***[8] Let the bones that you have broken rejoice.***

Breaking a bone is painful--how many of you have done that? But David recognized God was up to something good in it.

Remember that story I told you in our series on Psalm 23? The story of how shepherds, in those days, if they had a lamb prone to answer off and get into danger, would break the front legs of the lamb? Incredibly painful... But the shepherd would then put that lamb around his neck and carry it wherever they went for the next 2-3 months while the legs healed, and when he finally put the lamb down, the lamb would never again wander away because during those 3 months of recuperation, the lamb learned that all that it really needed to thrive in life was to be close to the shepherd.

Your broken heart is God's way of waking you up. Yes, it's painful, but God's intentions for you are your good. So, that's the admonition:

***The admonition: Are you breaking? Don't resist him***

I feel like there are some here this morning on the verge of going one way or the other. Your sin may not be as bad as David's; it may be worse. Either way, you know things are not right with you and God, and today will either confess your sins and live, or you're going to go forward hiding them, and die.

These broken bones--this broken spirit, this dry and joyless and barren life--that's what David was experiencing during that awful year—it's God's way of waking you up! Don't resist him!

I feel like we have some different kinds of people in here this morning... some of you are walking in sin and need to confess it.

- Some of you have everybody else fooled, but not God.
- Some of you act like you are walking with God--everybody else thinks you do; you act like you do; but you've not really ever committed yourself to Christ--you're not really saved--and today you know you need to do that
- Others of you know that you are saved, but you have sin in your life that has broken your fellowship with God and you need to get that right, today

**Altar is open, if helpful:** come, or pray for someone else