

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 20- Luke 20:13-18**

303- Falling on the Stone and Being Broken to Pieces

February 21, 2016

Luke 20:13-18

13 "The owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.'

14 "But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.'

15 "So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

16 "He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others." When they heard it, they said, "May it never be!"

17 But Jesus looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: '*THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone*'?"

18 "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

To the Glory of God

I do not believe that human happiness is the result of being wealthy and safe and secure. In other words- I do not believe that happiness comes forth out from all those efforts and objects that magnify us and our well-being. I believe that anything that "makes much of us"- actually *robs* us of the Joy and the Satisfaction and the Happiness that God desires that we experience.

I believe that *real* happiness, *true* happiness, *ultimate* and *lasting* happiness lies in just the opposite. True Joy flows out from those who *abandon* themselves and who *lose* themselves and who *deny* themselves in fulfilling their God-given Calling- to know the Love of God that was

manifested in, by, and through the Lord Jesus Christ- and then to give themselves to that Love. It is to comprehend that an infinitely magnificent and wise and powerful and glorious God truly and fully and eternally loves you, and then, based on that Love, you *give* yourself to that love, you *surrender* to that Love, you become *consumed* by that Love, by risking *everything* in radical acts of love toward God and other people.

So being truly happy involves holding nothing back, of keeping no reserves, it involves *giving* all and *saying* all and *loving* all and *doing* all, of *exhausting* yourself in God and in His Will and in His Plans. And *that* should be our boast, our brag; that is what we should rejoice over and exult in. Listen to what God told the Prophet Jeremiah almost 600 years before Jesus was born:

Jeremiah 9:23&24

23 Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches;
24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord.

Oh, how we boast in our wisdom! Oh, how we boast in our might and riches! Oh, how these things are on our lips and in our hearts, and Oh, how we magnify these things and take comfort in them and we exult in them and revel in them! And, oh, how fruitless they all are!

But Jeremiah teaches us to boast in that we understand and know God. That we boast that we *understand* and *know*, that we *comprehend* and *realize*, that we *acknowledge* and *believe* that God is the Lord Who exercises three things:

1. Lovingkindness
2. Justice
3. Righteousness

And that we boast in this because God Himself delights in these three things.

Now it has been my conviction over these years that the Words of sacred Scripture are not to simply be read and studied and believed, but

they are to be *lived out* and *experienced* and *embraced*. And that is because they are true- they are real. So Christianity isn't philosophy or psychology or myth or fables. It's different from those things. Christianity is real life lived by real people- as God sovereignly moved upon them and in them and around them to make Himself known to them.

And I have been on a journey over these years to find out what that looks like. To find out what it means to know God, what it means to love God, and what it means to enjoy God forever.

So, what exactly has to happen to somebody for them to love God like this? I hear people tell me all the time that they love God, and then I see how *little* they are willing to give and how *shallow* their walk is and how *lukewarm* their commitment is and how *laid back* their energy is and how *scarce* their suffering is, and then I read things like what Brother Andy just read to us and I see a great disconnect, a gap, in what this Passage says and what we are actually doing.

So what has to occur within a person that enables them to give themselves to God like this, with absolutely no hesitation and to *abandon* themselves to God and to eagerly suffer with Christ, and then at the end of their lives they can look you in the eye and tell you that they have absolutely no regrets? It is found in verse 18 of the Passage that Brother Andy just read to you that says:

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.

The reason that so many of the members of the modern Church bear so little fruit, the reason why there are so many habitual sins in the lives of Church people today, the reason why there has been an almost total collapse of Biblical Holiness in the Church over the last 150 years or so, the reason that worldliness among the people of God is at an all-time high, the reason why a love for money and materialism and covetousness abounds in our day among those who say they are redeemed, the reason why Marriage in the Church among God's people is being threatened today like never before, is because we are allowing people to join the church who have never fallen on that Stone and been broken. And we are telling people who have never known this

brokenness that they are saved. And this has gone on for so long that we really don't even know what being broken by the Stone looks like.

I was speaking the other day to another Pastor in Laurel and he asked me what I do to elevate commitment in my Church. He asked, "*What do you do to get your people to honor their commitments?*" And I told him that commitment wasn't a problem with people who are already willing to die for Jesus. If a person has fallen on the Stone and has been broken to pieces, then he is willing to die for Jesus Christ and for His Cause. And they are already willing to volunteer to suffer for the Sake of Christ, and they are already busy- risking everything they have and willing to lose it all- in this grand Calling of knowing and loving and enjoying God. And if that is already true in their lives, then commitment is academic. It's just fluff.

You see, I don't believe you can separate between Salvation and Hungering and Thirsting after Righteousness. They are the same thing. The same sovereign Act of God that washes away sin and that transforms your nature- enable and empowers you to seek after God. The same Power that forgave you gives you both the will and the power to love and serve God.

So I don't believe that there is a difference in somebody being Born Again and them hating Sin. I don't believe that there is any measurable gap between knowing God and pursuing Biblical Holiness.

And by that same logic- I don't believe that God sanctifies His people no matter what we do. I believe that God sanctifies His people as we continually give ourselves to Him on a moment by moment basis. So Biblical Salvation is *not* that we believe and repent and confess, and then stop. But that we *continue* to believe, that we *continue* to repent, and that we *continue* to confess. And those things are contingent in us *continuing* to fall on that rejected Stone and of *continuing* to be broken.

And, so, I see "Progressive Sanctification" as being measured by "Progressive Mortification"- a progressive brokenness. So we are changed from one realm of glory to the other as by the Lord- Who is the Spirit- *only* as we *continue* to fall on the Stone and *only* as we *continue* to be broken. So, we serve God, *only* to the degree that we "die" to self and to sin, and as we "yield" to God and His Truth, and as we "surrender" to Jesus and His Words.

So the progress we make in being molded and shaped into Jesus' Image and Likeness is measured by our ongoing and continual and

relentless struggle against the lusts of our flesh, by the Power of the Spirit to be found humbly and joyfully submitted to the Authority of Scripture in our daily lives, all to the Glory of God.

And so Sanctification is really nothing more than the crowning glory of the ongoing sovereign Work of God the Holy Spirit in *continuing* to break the staff of our pride and to kill the remaining traces of sin in our bodies. So let me tell you how this works.

As wicked, unworthy sinners, *before* we repent, *before* we pray, *before* we even want it or ask for it, we are glorious transformed by a sovereign Act of God the Holy Spirit. We are given new eyes that "see" Jesus in His Glory, we are given new ears that "hear" the Gospel, and we are given a new heart that "believes" and that "trusts" in what the Bible says.

This is the forceful, overt, powerful, decisive, eternal *transformation* of the human nature from being "fallen" to being "divine". It is the *insertion* of the "seed of Christ". It is the "re-creation" of your being where you are not merely an "improved version" of the same old self, you're not a "better" you, but it is where God has literally and wondrously *re-created* you into an entirely new being to the extent that old things have passed away and all things become new.

And this forceful, decisive, powerful Act of God is called "Grace". And it is what is called "Being Born Again", or being "Regenerate". It is the sovereign "giving of spiritual Life" to unworthy souls that were stone cold dead in trespasses and sins.

And the frail, weak, human *response* to that magnificent, miraculous New Birth is that as we see and comprehend the great distinction between Jesus, in His risen Glory, and our own sinful condition. And so we *loath* ourselves and we *grieve* over our wickedness and we are deeply and profoundly and overwhelming "convicted" or "convinced" by God the Holy Spirit that we are indeed dreadfully evil and are in great need of a merciful Savior.

And that conviction brings forth what the Bible calls "godly sorrow" which is the very *beginnings* of a sovereignly initiated "hatred" of sin. And that godly sorrow produces one the greatest and most gracious gifts that God could ever grant to sinful humans, "The Gift of Repentance."

And that Gift of Repentance allows us to not only see our sin, but to "turn away from" our sin and renounce it- in all its forms. And so

being sovereignly Born Again produces a new nature in us that loves God and the things of God. And that new nature empowers and enables us to read and study and learn God's Word- that God the Holy Spirit uses to illuminate our minds so that we can know Divine Truth.

And by God the Holy Spirit illumining Absolute, Eternal, Divine Truth into our minds, we are enabled to use our cognitive and reasoning capabilities to inform and govern our wicked black hearts. And *that* is what empowers us to trust in and believe what the Bible says. And *that* is what transforms our behavior.

But what we have to realize two things:

A. The Gift of Repentance doesn't operate one time and then quit. No, the Gift of being able to repent that God grants to us works in us and through us for the rest of our lives. It *never* leaves us and it *never* rests and it *never* sleeps. The Gift of Repentance is *relentless* in *constantly* drawing us *into* Christ's Holiness and *away* from earthly and worldly carnality and sin.

And so everyone that God has chosen, from before the foundation of the world, will be sovereignly drawn to Jesus. And those who are drawn will be given the ability to hear and see and believe. And those who hear and believe and see will be convicted and they will repent. And those who are convicted and who repent will *keep on* seeing, and they will *keep on* hearing, and they will *keep on* believing, and they will *keep on* being convicted, and they will *keep on* repenting, they will *keep on* following, they will *keep on* loving, and they will *keep on* striving to obey. And they will do this because these chosen people will *keep on* falling on the Stone and they will *keep on* being broken. And this is what Jesus meant when He said,

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces...

Because, you see, it is only the saved people who "fall on the Stone" and who are "broken to pieces". And we are never the same after we fall on that *rejected* Stone. Our lives are radically altered and we are inescapably changed. In the words of the wisest man in the world,

Song of Solomon 3:1a, 2a, 3&4

1 "On my bed night after night I sought him Whom my soul loves...

2 'I must arise now and go about the city; In the streets and in the squares I must seek him whom my soul loves....

3 "The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, *And I said,* 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?'

4 "Scarcely had I left them When I found him whom my soul loves; I held on to him and would not let him go...

These are the attributes of those God has graced to “fall on that Stone”. We no longer belong to ourselves, we have been “broken”. And so hungering and thirsting after Righteousness, dying to sin and self, yielding to God, decreasing in our own importance to the degree that Christ increases in value in our minds and heart, all these are fruit; all of this is merely the normal and natural responses to being among “the broken”.

B. Correctly understanding what it means to be chosen by God always, always, always produces great Humility- a contrite spirit- or a deep seated brokenness. The only people who become arrogant about their walk with God, or the fruit they are bearing, or the works they are doing for Jesus are those who don't understand that the only reason they love God at all is because God caused them to do so.

So a correct and full knowledge of two things:

- ✓ God in His Absolute Sovereignty
- ✓ Man in his Radical Ruination

... serves to humble us and to silence our boast and to bring about this brokenness. And this is what displays the majesty of God's Grace. And this is what the Prophet Isaiah was talking about when he said in:

Isaiah 66:2b

... But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

God “looks toward” or He “listens” and “considers” the person who has these three qualities:

- ✓ **Humility**
- ✓ **Contrite of Spirit**
- ✓ **Trembles at God's Word**

... which is just a different way of understanding the brokenness that Jesus was talking about.

So what does it mean, exactly, for us to fall on the Stone and be broken to pieces? What does that brokenness look like? Last week we began to allow the Bible to interpret the Bible so we could understand this Passage here in **Luke 20** better. And we looked at what the Apostle Peter said over in **The Acts 4**. And today I want to do the same and allow the Bible itself to interpret for us what being broken really is. So let's turn to **Psalms 51** and read what David wrote about this brokenness as he was moved along by God the Holy Spirit:

Psalms 51

- 1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.**
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin.**
- 3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.**
- 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.**
- 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.**
- 6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.**
- 7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**
- 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.**
- 9 Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities.**
- 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.**
- 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.**
- 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit.**
- 13 *Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You.**

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; *Then* my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise.

16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

18 By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.

Now those of you who have been in this Church for any length of time know that part of what we believe and teach is that, as God's children, we are not to waste our lives. But we are to learn, by God's Grace, how to live "well" and we are to learn to suffer "well", and we are to learn to die "well", to God's Glory.

And by not wasting our lives – I mean that we should not waste our time or our energy or our intelligence or our capabilities or our blessings or our trials or our diseases or our persecutions or our cancers or our car wrecks or our tragedies. Because we realize that, ultimately, God is the Source of all these things. And the only reason God brought any of these things into our lives is so that we will be transformed by them.

But, today, we are going to learn how to not only be forgiven "well", but how we can be broken "well", and how we can be crushed with guilt "well". And so I hope that you are detecting a pattern here. What makes a broken person is not that he doesn't get discouraged, and it's not that he doesn't sin and feel miserable about it. What makes a person someone who falls on the Stone and is broken in pieces is the *connection* that he has with Jesus Christ that shapes how he thinks and feels about his discouragement and his sin and guilt.

Now, right off the bat, we have to understand that the **Psalms** were the main hymnbook of the early Church, which is why they are in the middle of your Bible. These words were not all written at the same time or by the same people, but they were compiled together and put into the middle of your Bible because these **Psalms** were meant to not only be read, but to be sung, which is why we sing the **Psalms** after

reading them. So the **Psalms** were designed by God, on purpose, to awaken and express and shape the thoughts and feelings of all those who love and serve Jesus Christ.

So, for example, we learn from the **Psalms** how to think about things like discouragement and guilt. And we learn from the **Psalms** how God would have us feel in times of discouragement and in times of horrible regret. So the **Psalms** show us how to be discouraged "well" and how to regret "well" and how to be broken "well".

And so my prayer is that you will form the habit of living in the **Psalms** so much that the world of your thinking and the world of your feeling will be transformed into full-blooded Biblical thinking and Biblical feeling.

Now **Psalms 51** is one of the few **Psalms** that are pinpointed as to their historical origin. And the heading of the **Psalms** goes like this:

"To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba."

Now what happened with Bathsheba is well known. Here it is in crisp biblical words from **2Samuel 11:2-5**:

2 Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance.

3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

4 David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.

5 The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, "I am pregnant."

So David then *compounded* the problem by trying to cover his sin by bringing her husband Uriah home from battle so Uriah could lie with her and think it was his baby. But Uriah was too noble to go in to his wife while his comrades were in battle. So David arranged to have him killed so that he could quickly marry Bathsheba and cover the sin that way.

And in one of the most understated sentences of the Bible, **2Samuel 11** ends with these words:

2 Samuel 11:27

the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord.

So God sent the prophet Nathan to David with a Parable that entices David to pronounce his own Condemnation. Then Nathan says, **“You are the man!”** and asks, **“Why have you despised the word of the Lord?”** And David breaks and confesses, **“I have sinned against the Lord.”** But then, *astonishingly*, Nathan says:

2 Samuel 12:13&14

13 ...The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.

14 "However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die.

Now wait a minute! This is just outrageous! Uriah is dead. Bathsheba is raped. The baby will die. And Nathan says, **“The Lord has also taken away your sin?”** Just like that? David committed adultery. He ordered murder. He lied. He **“despised the word of the Lord.”** He **“scorned God.”** And the Lord just **“took away [his] sin”**? (**2 Samuel 12:13**). What kind of a Righteous Judge would do that? You don't just pass over rape and murder and lying. Righteous judges don't do that.

Now I was discussing this very issue the other evening as I was teaching the Doctrines of Grace, and nothing I said could persuade the group that a vicious child molester who murdered a little baby girl could or should be forgiven.

And as I saw their skepticism I found myself agreeing with them, until I brought up one thing. You see, the Apostle Paul shared our outrage about this. But he didn't stop with the obvious lack of Righteous Justice at a vicious criminal like that being set free. No, Paul went on to explain how God could be both Righteous and the One who justifies murderers and rapists and liars, and, yes, even child molesters, by writing one of the most important Passages in the whole Bible- **Romans 3:25&26** that says:

25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

26 for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Now this is one of the most important sentences in the entire Bible for understanding how Christ relates to the **Psalms**- and to the Old Testament, in general. Because, when Paul says at the end of verse 25 that God:

... passed over the sins previously committed

... that's exactly what **2 Samuel 12:13** says God did for David! God "passed over" David's willful and blatant and evil sin and declared David to be forgiven, even though Uriah was dead and Bathsheba had been sinned against and even though the baby was about to die. So why would God do this? Look again at verse 26:

for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

In other words, the outrage that we feel when God seems to simply pass over David's sin would be good outrage if God were simply sweeping David's sin under the rug. But, He isn't doing that. God sees from the time of David down through the centuries all the way to the Death of His Son, Jesus Christ, Who would die in David's place, so that David's Faith in God's Mercy and God's future Redeeming Work unites David with Christ. And in God's all-knowing Mind, David's sins are counted as Christ's sins, and Christ's Righteousness is counted as David's Righteousness, and God justly passes over David's sin.

So the Death of the Son of God is outrageous enough, and the Glory of God that it upholds is great enough that God's Justice is vindicated in passing over David's adultery and murder and lying. And so, from that we learn a great Truth:

Being Broken is Realizing that Your Faith is *Not* the *Basis* of God's Choosing You, but the *Result* of It.

Now that is the objective reality of how David is forgiven for his sin and justified in the Presence of God. But what **Psalm 51** describes is what David *felt* and *thought* as he laid hold on God's Mercy. Some might say that Christians, after the Death of Jesus, are not supposed to pray and confess this way. Many teach that we are not supposed to think and feel this way. But I don't think that's true.

Jesus, once for all, by His Life, Death, and Resurrection purchased our Forgiveness and provided our Righteousness. And we can add nothing to either the Purchase or the Provision. We share in the Forgiveness and the Righteousness of Jesus Christ, not because we have earned them or because we are worthy of them or because we have done anything to deserve them. And we must know that God is not obligated to do any of this for us.

No, we share in these glorious Realities by faith alone. But in view of the Holiness of God and the evil of sin, it is fitting that we *appropriate* and *apply* what Jesus bought for us by prayer and confession every day. For example- Jesus told us to pray:

Matthew 6:11&12

11 'Give us this day our daily bread.

12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

So we *continue* to make daily requests for bread, because God has promised to meet every need. And we pray to make daily appropriation for forgiveness, because it is fully purchased and secured for us by the Death of Jesus.

So **Psalm 51** is the way God's people think and feel about the horrors of their own sin. This is a **Psalm** about how to be crushed for our sin "well". I will try to guide you through four of David's responses to his sin.

1. He Turns to God

First, David turns to his only Hope, the Mercy and Love of God.

Psalm 51:1

Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

This is what God had promised His people back in **Exodus 34:6-7**:

6 Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

David knew that there were guilty people who would *not* be forgiven by God. And he also knew that there were guilty people who, by some mysterious Work of Redemption, would *not* be counted as guilty, and would be forgiven. And **Psalm 51** is his way of laying hold on that "Mystery of Mercy".

Now we know a whole lot more about the mystery of this Redemption than David did, because we know Jesus Christ as He has been revealed in 27 additional Books that David never saw. But even though that is true- we lay hold of God's Mercy in the same way David did.

And the first thing David does here is to fall on the Stone and be broken into pieces. David doesn't begin by saying how much he loves God and how hard he has tried to be obedient. He doesn't begin by listing all the things he has done for God. No, David turns absolutely helpless to the Mercy and Love of God. And today, if we are going to fall on the Stone and be broken, we must turn helpless to Jesus Christ.

2. He Prays for Cleansing

Psalm 51:2&7

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin.

7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow

Now according to **Leviticus 14:51**, hyssop was the branch used by the priests to sprinkle blood on a house that had a disease in it to declare it clean. So David is crying out to God as his ultimate Priest that He would forgive him and count him clean from his sin.

And it is fitting that we *ask* God to do this today as well, because according to **1 John 1:7–9**, Christ has purchased our Forgiveness. He has paid the full price for it. But that does not replace our asking. Rather, it is the *basis* for our asking. It is the *reason* we are confident that the answer will be, “Yes!”

So first, David looks helplessly to the Mercy of God. And second he prays that, in this Mercy, God would forgive him and make him clean.

3. He Confesses the Seriousness of His Sin

Next, David confesses at least five ways that his sin is extremely serious.

3.1. He says that he can't get the sin out of his mind. It is blazoned on his conscience. Verse 3: **“For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.”** Ever before him. The tape keeps playing. And he can't stop it.

3.2. He says that the exceeding sinfulness of his sin is that it is only against God. Nathan had said David despised *God* and scorned his word. So David says in verse 4: **“Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight”**. Now this doesn't mean Bathsheba and Uriah and the baby weren't hurt. It means that what makes sin to be sin is that it is offensive to God. Hurting people is bad- it is *horribly* bad. But that's *not* the true horror of sin. Sin is a blatant attack against God- it is the *belittling* of God's Glory. And David admits this in striking terms: **“Against You, You only, I have sinned”**

3.3. Notice that David vindicates God- rather than himself. There is no self-justification here. No defense and no escape. Verse 4: “. . . **So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.**” To David, God is completely justified. God is utterly blameless. So what David is saying here is that if God chose not to forgive him and chose to cast him into hell, God will be completely innocent. Now that is radical

"God-centered Repentance"! And I suggest to you that this kind of repentance is the product of falling on the stone and being broken. Because this is the way *all* saved people think and feel. God would be absolutely Just to damn me. And the fact that I am still breathing is sheer Mercy. And the fact that, in addition to not being damned, and in addition to being allowed to breathe, I am forgiven and loved by this magnificent God is sheer Blood-bought Mercy! So David vindicates the Righteousness of God, not himself.

3.4. David *intensifies* his guilt by drawing attention to his inborn corruption. Verse 5: "**Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me**" Some people use their inborn or inbred corruption to *diminish* their personal guilt. But David does the opposite. For him, the fact that he committed adultery and murdered and lied are expressions of something far worse: He does these things- because that is who he is. And David knows that if God does not rescue him- he will do more and more evil.

3.5. David admits that he sinned not just against external law but against God's merciful Light in his heart. Verse 6: "**Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.**" God had been David's Teacher. God had made him wise. David had done so many wise things. And then sin got the upper hand. And, for David, this made it all the worse. *"I have been blessed with so much knowledge and so much wisdom. O, how deep must be my depravity that it could sin against so much light."*

So in those five ways- David joins the prophet Nathan and God in condemning his own sin and in confessing the depths of his own corruption. And what I am trying to say this morning is that this is the way people pray who have fallen on the stone and been broken.

4. He Pleads for Renewal

Finally, after turning helpless to God's Mercy, and then praying for Forgiveness and Cleansing, and then confessing the depth and greatness of his sin and corruption, David pleads for more than

forgiveness. He pleads for renewal. He is passionately committed to being changed by God.

David pours out his heart for this change in at least six ways. And as I draw your attention to them- I pray that you will take them up and meditate on them. Because the main point here is: Forgiven people are committed to being changed by God. The adulterer, the murderer, the liar, the child molester hate what they have done and who they are, and they set their faces like flint to be changed by God.

4.1. He prays that God would confirm to him his election. Verse 11: **"Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."** I know some say that Christians who are elect and secure in the sovereign Grace of God should not pray like that because it implies you can lose your Salvation. I don't think that is what it implies at all.

When I pray, *"Don't cast me away, and don't take your Spirit from me,"* I mean to say, *"Don't treat me like somebody who isn't chosen. Don't let me prove to be like one of those in Hebrews 6 who have only tasted the Holy Spirit. Don't let me fall away and show that I was only drawn by the Spirit and not held by the Spirit. Confirm to me, O God, that I am your child and I will never fall away."*

4.2. He prays for a heart and a spirit that are new and right and firm. **"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."** (Psalms 51:10). The "right spirit" here is the established, firm, unwavering spirit. David wants to be finished with the kind of instability that he has just manifested.

4.3. He prays for the joy of God's salvation and for a spirit that is joyfully willing to follow God's word and be generous with people, rather than exploiting people. Verse 8: **"Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice. "** Verse 12: **"Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit."**

Now don't you find it astonishing that nowhere in this **Psalm** does David ever pray directly about sex? Because all this mess started with sex, leading to deceit, leading to murder. Or did it? I don't think so. Sigmund Freud may think that all our hang-ups start with sex. But David (speaking for God) does not see things that way.

So why isn't David crying out for sexual restraint? Why isn't he praying for men to hold him accountable? Why isn't he praying for protected eyes and sex-free thoughts? The reason is that he knows that sexual sins are merely *symptoms*- but they are *not* the disease.

People give way to sexual sins because they don't have the fullness of joy and gladness in Jesus Christ. Their spirits are not steadfast and firm and established. And so they waver. They are enticed, and they give way because God does not have the place in our feelings and thoughts that He should. And so the reason that sexual sins abound in our day is because we are not falling on the rejected Stone and being broken.

And David knew this about himself. And it's true about us, too. David is showing us, by the way he prays, what the real need is for those who sin sexually. Not a word in this **Psalm** about sex. Instead listen how he prays: *"Let me hear joy and gladness, let the bones that you have broken rejoice. . . . Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing, firm, established spirit."* This is profound wisdom for us.

4.4. He asked God to bring his joy to the overflow of praise. Verse 15: **"O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise"** Praise is what joy in God does when obstacles are taken out of the way. That is what he is praying for: *O God, overcome everything in my life that keeps my heart dull and my mouth shut when they ought to be praising. Make my joy irrepressible!*

4.5. He asks that the upshot of all this will be a life of effective evangelism. Verse 13: **"Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You."** David is not content with being forgiven. He is not content with being clean. He is not content with being God's elect. He is not content with having a right spirit. He is not content with being joyful in God by himself. He will not be content until his broken life serves the healing of others. **"Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You."**

4.6. Which brings us to the last point. Under all this, **David has discovered that God has crushed him in love, and that a broken and contrite heart is the mark of all God's children.** Verse 17: **"The sacrifices**

of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

So I hope you can see that this brokenness is foundational to everything we are and everything we do. Being a Christian means being broken and contrite. So please don't make the mistake of thinking you get beyond this in this life. Because being broken marks the life of God's happy children until they die. We are broken and contrite all the way home—unless sin gets the proud upper hand. Being broken and contrite is not fighting against joy and praise and witness. It's the flavor of Christian joy and praise and witness. And I close today with the words of Jonathan Edwards who said it better than I can.

"All gracious affections [feelings, emotions] that are a sweet [aroma] to Christ . . . are brokenhearted affections. A truly Christian love, either to God or men, is a humble brokenhearted love. The desires of the saints, however earnest, are humble desires: their hope is a humble hope; and their joy, even when it is unspeakable, and full of glory, is a humble brokenhearted joy. . . ." (*Religious Affections* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959], pp. 339f.)

Amen. Let's pray

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The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729 www.covenantofpeace.net

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.