

Simple Confession

Psalm 51

Introduction

- Discovering the board game Clue when I was a kid
 - Went to my grandparents' second floor where no one really went except to retrieve something, so it was a great place to explore when I got bored
 - I reached underneath an old bed and discovered 3 board games: Monopoly, Scrabble, and Clue.
 - At the time, these games were all new to me. I had never played them before.
 - Come to find out, they were my mom's board games from when she was a kid!
 - So I pulled those old games out and played them with my grandparents.
 - You remember the board game Clue, don't you?
 - Cards are drawn and stashed away in an envelope; they determine who is the real killer, which room they committed the murder, and with which object they used as a murder weapon
 - Everyone picks a card, which identifies them as a character in the game.
 - Players take turns moving from room to room, collecting clues to the mystery of who killed who, in what room, and with which object.
- **Psalm 51:1-2**
 - Someone is guilty of sin
 - We have the confession
 - But, what brought this confession about?
 - Why is the confessor so open about their sin?
 - What do they hope to receive from this simple confession?
- How many of you like to confess your sin?
 - The admission of guilt is sometimes difficult to bring ourselves to
 - Yet, truth be told, all of us have committed sin and all of us have been in need of confession.
 - Sin has never been something that humans have willingly wanted to admit
 - Adam and Eve- Adam blamed Eve, both of them hid from God
 - Peter's denial of Christ
 - David's sin of adultery and murder
 - Sin has become something that our culture has tried to remove any responsibility associated with the idea of doing something against God
 - Despite all attempts to sweep sin under the rug it still remains ever before us
- Speaking of David
 - 2 Samuel 11 records King David enjoying a walk on the roof of his house, overlooking Jerusalem
 - As he is looking over the kingdom that he has established through great military victories, he notices a woman bathing on her roof.
 - Obviously this woman catches his eye so he sends a request for her to join him in the king's palace.

- There are several red flags that should alarm us about David's actions, however the main one is that David is married and Bathsheba, the woman he summons, is also married. This can't end good; no matter how enticing the moment may seem!
- A couple of months after this encounter, Bathsheba discovers that she is pregnant. Now her husband, Uriah, has been out on the battlefield for several months. Bathsheba has had no interaction with him at all, so when she discovers that she is pregnant, she turns to the only man she knows to turn to; David.
- Immediately, David begins to work on damage control. How can he clean up his mess so that no one else will discover what he has done? He is avoiding his sin.
- The plan that David devises is to send for Uriah who is on the battlefield, get him drunk, and then have him sleep with Uriah. If all goes well, then Uriah can take responsibility for David's sin and no one will be the wiser.
- The problem in David's scheme is that Uriah happens to be a man of integrity and when he comes home from the battlefield, he refuses to take part in anything that will cause him to lose focus on the job required of him on the battlefield.
- David's next move is fatal. He counters Uriah's actions by having him put on the frontlines of the battlefield so that he will be killed and David can claim Bathsheba—And you thought *Days of Our Lives* was messed up! There's not a soap opera that can rival the drama of humanities sin!!
- **2 Samuel 11:26-27 (ESV), "When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord."**
 - There are so many things wrong with what David has done, but out of everything it is the last sentence that makes all the difference.
 - You see, too often we try to justify our sin, sweep it under the rug or make it seem like it really isn't that big of a deal. BUT what really matters is that last sentence.
- God sent Nathan, the prophet, to confront David. Like the board game Clue, Nathan shares a story about a rich man and a poor man. The moral of the story is that the rich man was unwilling to help a traveler in need, however the poor man gave of the little he had to help the traveler. Nathan's approach is to provide clues for David to see his guilt.
 - David's Response- **2 Samuel 12:5 (ESV), "Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, 'As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die.'" Obviously, David is not getting the clue!**
 - Nathan's Response- **2 Samuel 12:7a, 9a (ESV), "You are the man! Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight?"**
 - David's Confession- **2 Samuel 12:13a (ESV), "I have sinned against the Lord."**
- Backdrop for Psalm 51

- We have the tendency, its part of our fallen nature, to respond to our sin in a similar way as David.
- Whether we get away with it, or not, what really matters is that we have displeased our Lord.
- Things will not be right until we simply confess our sin.
- Theologian John Goldingay writes, “We need to be taught to repent. It doesn’t come naturally, partly because we are usually busy making excuses to ourselves for what we have done or not done.”¹
 - We need to be taught to repent, it doesn’t come naturally.
 - Psalm 51 we find a simple confession
 - The difficult part is admitting our sin, but once we come to the point of acknowledging our sin, we need to repent of it.
 - Without repentance, sin defines our life.
 - **1 John 1:9 (ESV), “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

Repentance is about returning to the core of who we are

- David has a desire to be cleansed of his sin
 - In order to be cleansed of his sin, he has to look back before he can move forward
 - Discussion about vision
 - Often think about vision as something in the future
 - However, sometimes in order to move forward we have to look back
 - Repentance is about reflecting back on our sin.
 - We can’t move forward, without repentance
 - David is ready to move forward beyond the episode with Uriah, but it takes Nathan to get David to look back at his sin.
 - David is blind to his sin. He’s not innocent. Be it arrogance or pride, David is unwilling to confess his sin until Nathan gets his attention
 - We all have blind spots or areas of our life that we want to ignore. We need a Nathan in our life who is willing to be honest with us and that we are willing to listen to in order to recognize the sin in our life.
 - As David reflects on his sin, he recognizes something about himself
 - **Psalm 51:3-6**
 - David recognizes that this sin with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah is not an isolated incident, but a result of a systemic problem from his birth. He was born into sin.
 - David’s systemic problem is something that all of us have to come to grips with. The reason we sin is because we have all been born into a fallen world. Our sin is birthed, literally, from living in a fallen world.
 - But as David considers his sinful tendencies, he also recognizes that God has worked within the core of who he is.

¹ John Goldingay. *Psalms for Everyone: Part 1*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013. Pg. 162.

- Reference last week; David was a war hero, not because he was strong but because he had faith
- The David that we see today, does not seem like the David from last week
- What has happened? David has lost the simple focus of God's role in his life.
- This is where sin grows and manifests itself in our life.
- At David's core, he is a man after God's own heart. He is a man of faith.
- When Nathan confronts David, David begins to realize that his actions with Bathsheba go against the core of who he really is
- Hence, the need for repentance!
- God has called us to be something more than our sin.
 - Confession is necessary in order to bring us back to the core of who we are in God.
 - We can't move forward without confession.

Cleanse me from my sin

- **Psalm 51:7-12**
 - So much of David's prayer is a return to the core of who he is, however David recognizes that God is the only one who can truly grant his request.
 - Interestingly enough the Old Testament Law provided no atonement for such a sin as murder (Lev. 20:10; Num. 35:31-32). As Warren Wiersbe wrote, "David could appeal only to God's mercy, grace and love."²
 - Sin separates us from God and has the potential to quench the Spirit of God in our lives.
 - This is why we have to confess our sins and repent.
- Season in our family life
 - We don't have sports schedule that we are committed to right now
 - Things are quiet for the most part, simple and we have a routine
 - Time of reflection especially as we think about the core of who we are as a family and how we live within that core.
 - Things got crazy, maybe at times the Spirit was quenched. This is an opportunity for us to start with a clean slate before Spring and Summer activities begin again.
 - Admitting this is hard, but is necessary in order for God to redirect our lives.
 - Keep it Simple focus for our lives as we enter 2020. A return to the core of who we are. And living within our core so we can be the best of who we are supposed to be.
- Significance of Washing
 - Remember Peter's experience with Jesus and washing feet
 - None of the disciples understood why Jesus was doing what he was doing

² Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Study Bible: Be Transformed by the Power of God's Word; New King James Version*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2019. Pg. 799.

- “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.” (John 13:7, ESV)
- Peter asked Jesus to wash his entire body
- Shortly after this Peter denied Christ and then he remembered who he was at his core, that time that Jesus washed their feet, all of Jesus’ teachings, how his life had been transformed. In his sin, Peter was a coward, but was a called disciple, he was a man of courage. He needed to repent in order to return to the core of his calling.
- From that point on, Peter became a great leader. It took a simple confession to cleanse Peter of his sin and restore Peter to a great leader.
- Applying simple faith to the complexity of our lives.
 - We may not fully understand it in the moment
 - But we need to reflect on how we are living out God’s call, the core of our calling in our lives.
 - It’s through this confession that God’s grace and mercy can cleanse us from our sin.

Take Responsibility for Our Sin

- **Psalm 51:13-15**
 - One of David’s gifts was worship
 - Plays for Saul when he is troubled by a spirit (1 Samuel 16:14-23)
 - Dances when the ark is brought into Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:12-15)
 - His sin turned him from God and David began functioning outside of his calling and giftedness.
 - Confession is an opportunity for us to acknowledge that we have turned from our core
 - David was a man after God’s own heart- David was confessing from the heart of who he is
 - Once that confession is made it opens the door for God to restore us to the calling and purpose of our life.
- We need to recognize something about the fallen world that we live in
 - We live in a culture that doesn’t take responsibility for our sins
 - We blame other people or the world that we live in for our mistakes
 - OR, when we are caught in our sin we have the tendency to avoid confession so that we aren’t convicted of guilt—legal system; caught, but as long as we don’t admit wrong then we can’t be convicted—settle things out of court. We find a way to wiggle out of responsibility
 - We live in a culture that doesn’t take responsibility for our sins
- We will never live to our full potential, the core of who God has called us to be, using our gifts unless we take responsibility for our sin!
- It is important to recognize the significance of the word “THEN” in verse 13.
 - A lot of us just want to move on to the “Restoring” part of confession
 - BUT, David desires to be made new, to take responsibility for his sin, to return to his core, a man after God’s own heart, before the “THEN” can take place.
- It’s like a child that says, “I’m sorry” every time they get in trouble

- They know the proper response to get them out of trouble
- However, if there is no change in behavior then there's no point in saying, "I'm sorry"
- **Psalm 51:16-17**
 - Relate to Micah 6
 - What does God require of us?
 - When we sin, take responsibility for your sin
 - Confess it
 - Fall on the mercy of God
 - Return to your core
 - Live out the calling and giftedness that God has created within you.

Conclusion

- What we have probably all been confronted with is that confession really isn't that simple.
 - It's hard because God requires us to confront our sin
 - And yet, if we would simply confess our sins before God, **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** (1 John 1:9, ESV)
- The consequences of David's sin would impact not only David's life, but the generations after him; however his confession restored his relationship with God and God's eternal promise of establishing an Everlasting Kingdom through David's example was fulfilled through Jesus Christ.
- Remember that game of Clue?
 - All the players are looking for who could have committed the murder
 - None of the players consider that they are the murderer so they continue to look for clues for who the murderer really is
 - Today, we've provided enough clues to reveal that we are all guilty of sin
 - The question is how will we respond to what Nathan said to David, "You are that man!"
- Simply confess your sin
 - Return to your core
 - Allow God's mercy to restore you