

The Cross in Psalm 51

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the critical importance of the cross in understanding sin, repentance, and the nature of God's mercy as illustrated through David's psalm of contrition.

Duration: 1:14:35

Scripture: Psalm 14:3, Psalm 51:1-5, Psalm 51:15-19, Isaiah 53:5

Topics: "The Cross"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the holiness and costliness of God's mercy. He warns against reducing the message of salvation to a formula or turning it into shallow choruses. The speaker highlights the need for sacrifice and judgment to pay the penalty for sin. He also discusses the consequences of living in sin and the importance of living in righteousness and obedience to God. The sermon concludes with a call to repentance and a plea for God's heart to be received.

Transcript

Good evening, dear saints. Bless you for coming. Thanks for providing a privileged environment for the Word of God.

And I'm holding my breath in expectation. I think the Lord wants to pull out all the stops and to touch a subject that has suffered chronic and historic neglect, which is the cross of Christ Jesus, which will be central, I believe, to all that I'll be sharing from this first speaking and right through Sunday. The cross, the crucifixion of Jesus, death and atonement, sin and righteousness.

I'm doing this for my sake. You're invited to listen in because I don't believe that the church, even in its best forms, has understood or appropriated this deepest of all realities, the single most pivotal and epic, E-P-O-C-H-A-L, event in history. And to allow that to suffer neglect or to be swept under the rug or to become, as I so often say, a non-event is tragic beyond all speaking.

The cross, the event of God in the earth in time and history, the Son of God submitting to the abuse and devastation, violence of men in order to shed blood, to perform a propitiation for sin to affect salvation, atonement. What does all that mean? And we need to probe and open ourselves and be permeated and affected. We need an existential appropriation of the cross or else it will degenerate into merely an article of the faith.

We'll give it a kind of a scant, polite acknowledgement, but we will have missed it. And you cannot believe how disastrous that will be. It will trivialize God.

It will rob us of significance and meaning. It will void the power that's intrinsic to the most holy faith. It will rob our souls.

The cross is everything. So Lord, remember the prayers that have already gone up even today. Insane prayers, extravagant prayers that if you'll answer them even so much as in part, who will be able to stand the reply that you will give? Who can bear it, Lord? So we're asking that you would look upon this time and this occasion and these days as something ordained in your wisdom and will whose time has come, that you have been chafed.

You have pursed your lips. You have gripped your teeth, observing the conspiracy of silence against you, the trivialization of the cross. You've watched the American athletes wear it around their necks on gold chains who can well afford such opulence and the movie stars between their breasts studded with diamonds.

The whole thing, my God, is a terrible farce and a fraud. And we're asking that you would be jealous over the meaning of what you have performed through your son, whose suffering you shared and that his soul might be gratified and the church, my God, brought to its apostolic foundations and so that you'll redeem these times together. Devastate us, Lord.

Lay us out, do us in. Take, as I prayed this afternoon, this evening, take your sword out of your sheath, your sharp two-edged sword, and just cut, strip, penetrate, pierce. Do what you will, my God, for all of the subterfuge that has grown up, all of the deceit, all of the religious nonsense and phraseology and talking and cheap, easy, glib things, my God, that shroud the truth and rob us of its reality, which is to rob us of all reality.

For if we lose the cross, we lose all. So, Lord, come, redeem and restore and speak in such a way. We're asking an event, my God.

Whatever the cost to ourselves, we're willing and we desire to be poured out like water before you. And we confess the best of us, myself, including that we don't know as we ought to know. And we must know, Lord.

We must esteem, we must appreciate. Gratitude is love. Love is worship.

Worship is service. Everything is intricately bound up, inextricably joined, put it on the screen, inextricably, inseparably joined with the cross. There's no true worship.

There's no true service. If the cross has suffered loss, so come, my God, strip it of sentimentality, all of the ways in which it has been abused by men, and give us the pristine, original, pure, holy intention of God by setting in time and history that event. As I prayed this evening, Lord, that there would be shockwaves and tremors going through this room and out from this church into Asia because of the speaking of these days, that as the earth shook and there was an earthquake, when your cross was put into its socket in that hole in the earth, something, the thud, was heard and reverberated unto eternity.

And we're asking, my God, that you'll insert the cross again and that the thud, the effect, the ripples, the sound, the weight will pierce our very souls. Save us, my God, from shallowness. Save us, my God, from

religious play-acting, from false piety, from celebration that is just something that we can perform but does not have a right auspices, a right cause.

So we thank you, Lord. Precious God, I am willing to be your fool again to topple off this platform because I will be beside myself for their sake and for your sake. Possess this mouth as your own, this body, this frame that you birthed in 1929 and gave it its particular cast for the very purposes that are now coming to be.

So we thank you, Lord. Come and delight your own soul and ventilate your soul and express the deeps of it, my God. Your servants are hearing.

This is a choice, people and environment. They have borne this servant and have established a relationship of welcome and trust, my God, that is rare. So we enjoy and we're privileged and don't want in any way to offend against it and yet willing to risk all if it should please you that for some reason, Lord, there's a collapse and a failure and a disappointment.

I'm more willing for that, Lord, than we should enjoy a shallow success and a nice pat on the back and an enjoyment. So come, my God, and give us your heart, we pray, and receive even now our gratitude for the possibility of it as we thank you and give you praise in Jesus' name, God's people said. Amen.

Amen. So now that I've come respectively, tie and jacket, removed the jacket, loosed the tie, purchased in Moscow. Simon has arranged my 17 flights, took two to get here, two days of travel, 12-hour layover in Frankfurt, and that's only the beginning of 17 flights to seven nations in seven weeks.

So appreciate your prayer. This is the beginning. And what the Lord will hatch here will not remain.

I'll take it with me. And the saints in New Zealand and Australia and Uganda and Kenya and Cameroon and Burkino Faso will receive the benefit of what has passed through the furnace of the earth here for a first time. So you could turn with me to Psalm 51, one of the most eloquent, profound, classic, I don't have enough adjectives to describe the choices of statements on repentance to be found in all scripture.

That is the genius of David, of what is Davidic, why he's beloved by the Father, the depth of this, the cry of this, that such a man, a sweet singer of Israel, the one who faced Goliath single-handedly with a sling and stones, who brought the ark of God to Jerusalem with sacrifice and with worship and dancing, the greatest of Israel's kings, and the one whose name the Father is not ashamed to ascribe even to Jesus as the greater David, that this one, this giant, this holy man, this lover of God who stood for the honor of God would not allow the armies of God to be defamed by a pagan, by a Philistine and mocked, that this man should fall and fall shamefully in adultery and murder, sin of sins, the most horrible conjunction, and the one hand in hand with the other, it's staggering to contemplate. How could David have succumbed to temptation of that kind and allow its logic to be enacted in his life in such a way as to imperil his kingdom and to traffic in and abuse the very name of God which he has celebrated in psalm and in song? How could that be? Nevertheless, it is. And he has left for us a statement of the deepest contrition and brokenheartedness and authentic repentance that is to be found in all the holy writ, that leaves us without excuse, that if we don't know what repentance means or how it's to be expressed and what it is for which God waits, that is actually a key to the kingdom.

For if there's no repentance, there's no forgiveness, there's no reception, there's no restoration. So we want to examine this remarkable heart's cry and its implications for us over the issue of sin and judgment,

atonement and forgiveness that is caught up and expressed in this most remarkable statement. Psalm 51, and in this edition of my seminary Bible, *Falling Apart*, it says in italics, prayer for cleansing and pardon, a Psalm of David.

When the prophet Nathan came to him after he had gone into Bathsheba, that begins, have mercy on me, O God. According to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you alone have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. You desire truth in the inward parts, therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness.

Let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence. Do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit.

For then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation. My tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

O Lord, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise for you have no delight in sacrifice. And if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. But the sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you'll not despise.

Do good to Zion in your pleasure. Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in right sacrifices and burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings.

Then bowls will be offered on your altar. Amen. How do you like that? Can you empathize, can you sympathize, can you relate? Does your corresponding chord in your own heart that reverberates to this? Can you pick up from the beginning the cry, have mercy? Have you ever cried like that? Have you ever needed to cry like that? Have you ever needed mercy as desperately as David? How then shall you have obtained it? And if you don't obtain it, how shall you extend it? Because the issue tonight is far more than yourself.

If you can understand it, the issue tonight is the redemption of Israel. The restoration of Israel in the last days, in their final extremity, when they shall be uprooted and dispersed through all nations, cast off, hated, despised, victimized, marred more than any man, they shall have no beauty, any shall desire them. That if they don't find mercy at that time, an entire people will perish.

Because the hatred, the vehement, venomous hatred expressed through Islamic sources will hound them unto death. No nation will be able to protect them. If they don't find mercy, they're finished.

And that's why Paul in Romans 11 says, that by your mercy, they may obtain mercy. But do you have a mercy to extend? You're too nice. You're much too polite.

You're nice guys. I mean, you're, after all, you're Chinese. You're respectable and moral and ethical, basically.

So what need have you for mercy? Unless you can see yourself in David's predicament, you can vicariously identify with David in his cry. And it doesn't wait for you to commit adultery. It only waits for you to acknowledge that if so great a giant as the sweet singer of Israel was capable of a falling of this kind, who are you? And what are you made of better stuff than he? You understand that? He fell in shame for your sake, that none of us can flee the requirement of God for the deepest contrition and brokenness and repentance for which he waits.

We're found out, we're convicted, we're guilty. It doesn't wait on being proved by the actual event of our fallenness. His fall is our fall.

Got the picture? You know, have mercy, the cry, because there's only one thing that will suffice when a man comes to a condition of this kind where he finds himself inadvertently through one circumstance after another that began only by gazing upon the beauty of that woman, that he's now not only an adulterer and a liar, but a murderer. The King of Israel is a murderer and his sin haunts him. It's rotting his bones, his guts.

It's with him day and night. He can't shake it. He can't drink something down or shoot something in or find distraction in some way that would lessen the enormous anguish that sin is morally when one knows it and has performed it and knows that there's no rectification, there's nothing that one can do for oneself in that condition.

You can't lie down on a bed of nails. You can't go to a school of discipline. Sin is pervasive, it's deep.

We're caught, we're found out, and we have sinned against God in his sight. Against thee and thee only have I sinned in your sight. Think on that, that everything is naked and transparent to him with whom we have to do.

There's nothing hidden and concealed that he does not see. I'm always astonished, not only at the sins of men and the sins of Christians and the sins of ministers, but that it can be performed before the face of God with impunity. Get that on the screen.

I-M-P-U-N-I-T-Y, impunity, as if to say God is not seeing. He doesn't see, he doesn't care, he's indifferent. He's not that absolute and all-seeing.

We can play hanky-panky, we can get away with this. Sin, in the last analysis, is extravagant human presumption against God. The adultery is not the issue so much in itself.

As the remarkable hubris, H-U-B-R-I-S, the Greek word for human pride, the extravagance of ego and self-assertion that thinks it can pull something before the face of God and get away with it as if it was not done, as if it was not seen, or to put it bluntly, as if God is not God, that is the nature of sin. And who is exempt from it? Who has not taken his liberty and gotten away with it before men, but don't know that there's an accounting in the day of judgment in which God will bring before them in full remembrance, everything that they thought was hid and concealed. "I know my transgressions," David says. "To know your transgressions like that is already to be on the way to a salvation to the uttermost.

How saved are you? Are you nominally saved, shallowly saved, technically saved? You've made a right decision, you've called on the name of the Lord, you've performed something, it's all sweet and hokey-dokey now? There's a salvation to the uttermost that has escaped most of us and will continue to do so until we are acutely aware of our transgressions, not because we have performed them, but because we are human, all too human, and are capable of its performance. The fact that it has not taken place, it means that we've not yet met the Bathsheba who's calculated to do us in, but that doesn't save you from your propensity. "I was born in iniquity," David says.

"I came into the world like this, "it's in my bones, it's in my guts, "it's the way I'm constituted humanly. "My sin is ever before me, not just the event of it, "but the condition of it. "And who's going to save me from that?" "Follow me in a prayer, brother.

"Say after me, his cry is not to man, "his cry is to God, have mercy upon me." I wish I had a gift of persuasion. I wish I had the ability to articulate in fine words to say what mercy means and why it is the deep-souled cry of David who is as much aware as the depth of his transgression as he is that the only entity in the world that can relieve the pang of his sin is God in his mercy. To know God that way is to know God and not to know God that way is not to know God, however much lauded over you are with end-time understandings.

The knowledge of God begins with what God is in himself, which is to say his mercy. So Moses said, "Show me now thy glory." And God said, "Okay, I'll hide you in the cleft of the rock "and I'll let my hind parts pass before you." And he said, "Having done that, "I've exhibited my tender kindness. "I've exhibited my Rahmans, my pity." That's Jewish.

"I've shown you my mercy. "You asked to see my glory, I showed you my mercy "because to see my mercy is to see me. "This is what I am.

"This is my nature as God is mercy. "And if it wasn't for that, we would all be dead. "We would have no eternity.

"There'd be no prospect, this life would be grim "as it is in fact for the countless minions "who do not know God "and are living in absolute independence of him. "It's a grim existence "and a more far than grim eternity "if they remain in that condition. "It's his mercy that saves us "out of death, out of ourselves, "out of our pitiful egotism.

"There are things that we can pull stunts and do things "and get away with it "because who is God that he can see?' You need to sense David's ache and his cry that the only thing that can relieve this continual perpetual crush upon his heart, the weight of it is the mercy of God. And if it comes, it will come as a blotting out of my transgressions. Blotted out, Lord.

Don't patch it up. Don't put a band-aid or a strip of something. Blotted out.

This has got to be extricated. This has got to be taken out, branch and root and branch. The whole works, it's into me.

It's my condition. And unless you blot it out and create in me a new heart, I'm a dead duck. So you have to be God for me, a God who will extend mercy even though against you and you alone have I sinned.

You have every right to be insulted that the David whom you have chosen as Israel's king and have anointed can perform this in your sight with impunity, which means as if he could get away with it. And if it were not for Nathan, the faithful prophet, to tell him a little parable in a story about a wicked man who used someone else's sheep and then said, thou art the man, David would have gone on in his deception because sin by its nature deceives, does not reveal itself as sin, gives justification. You had it coming.

Listen, you fought all those battles. Here's a little compensation. Here's this beautiful woman.

It's only just a fluke that she's married to this guy. He doesn't deserve her. She's appropriate for a king of Israel, not just an ordinary warrior who's not even himself Jewish.

So you have a full right to appropriate that woman and you need it. You need the compensation. I'm giving it to you.

It's a grace. How many ministers of our generation have fallen exactly on that basis and for that kind of reasoning that they had it coming? And when they're found out, not only are they defensive and self-justifying, they refuse to submit to judgment, even so mild the judgment as a three month cessation of their ministries. But of course, how can they cease for three months when the world depends on their ministry? And so they balk and they refuse even that correction and then fall into a yet more disgraceful and shameful expression of that sin.

Are you following me? Should I tell you who I'm talking about? You know. Jamie, what's his name? But David is not like that. He does not conceal his sin, but blessed is that man whose sin is not concealed.

That is openly acknowledged, bears the shame of it and cries out to the God alone who can blot it out. Not just the incident, but the root that made the incident possible, his human sinful nature that he shares with Adam as do all of us being man. David anticipated that God had made already provision of a lamb that was slain from before the foundations of the world.

Put that into your pipe and smoke it. Chew on that, choke on that, splutter on that. Mystery, he was the lamb of God slain from before the foundations of the world.

And David, poet, prophet, giant saint, intuited and knew that the father had already made provision that was not to be acted out until seven centuries later, but the reality of which was already to be obtained through faith. Blot out my transgression with hyssop, that rude plant, common shrub, and dip it into the blood and wash my transgressions away. Blot them out.

Then I will tell transgressors of their way. Then I will teach men about your salvation, but first deal with me. First be merciful to me who deserves the greater judgment because of the greater knowledge and the greater privilege of relationship for me to sin against you and you alone is most grievous.

I ache from it, I can't sleep, I can't eat a decent meal with every bite that I chew and masticate, I'm thinking of my condition and it's without relief. No one can comfort me. There's no solace that can be given, no advice, no counsel, no patting on the back, no one justifying me and say, well, God understands, you had it coming, you made a little mistake.

I wish you could see my newspaper clippings. Right now, I would say in the last almost three years, they're about a foot and a half high from the New York Times. I'm preparing an indictment against the world and American civilization, particularly the world of finance and the world of so-called culture, whose ballets are

now being performed nakedly and the stage is now exhibiting open fornication and the most lewd, vile conduct.

The rap artists are being celebrated as if it is a form of art that talks about miscegenation, the abuse of women and mothers, the most foul language and selling by the billions. What's his name, 50 Cents? You guys know about this? I've never heard a rap thing in my life. I've never even heard the Beatles.

But this guy, this black character, there's so many of them black coming out of that environment that the white middle-class people are buying up by the millions within a week of the availability of this CD that he produced. It was already top off the list in the charts. It was already being sold by the 50 millions.

Would these guys hold their tours? It's nothing for them to gross 50 to 100 to 150 to 200 million for a tour. It's big dough. And how do you differ from these other guys if you don't bring a little something more extraordinary, more bizarre, more daring, more risque? So there's something, there's an evolution, there's a logic that requires the culture to become every day more decadent.

We're moving towards Sodom and every day in the financial section of the Times, another CEO, another head of a corporation indicted and charged with fraud, with charge with misuse of funds, charge with criminal corruption in obtaining millions as if there's no God to see. And seem to it that even if they're caught, that somehow they'll buy their way out or they'll make a transaction with the Attorney General and where they'll pay something like 30 or \$40 million in penalty, but what is that next to the billions that they've already acquired in false profits? And they will not acknowledge either that they have violated or have been exonerated. They will not allow the moral issue to be factored into the settlement.

They'll pay their way, but they don't want to have to acknowledge that they have been at fault. And if there's any concession, they used language, they made a mistake. It was an error.

It's never a sin. It's always just a little trifle. It's a boo-boo.

It's a failure of judgment in a moment that allowed a transaction to take place by which 50 to 100 million fell into a man's pockets through manipulation of the vilest kind. Every day, there's not a day that the papers are not full of these exposés, but there's no sense of shame. Hey, listen, you guys, we're living in a world that has forgotten how to blush.

There's no remorse. It was just a mistake. Anybody can make a mistake, but no one is crying out, my God, have mercy upon me.

I'm greedy. It's not enough that I have a salary of 50 million a year. But I've seen to it that I would leave with an additional 150 million as a retirement fund and a honorary settlement for my years of service.

What do you do with 150 million that you could not have done with your first 10 million or 20 million or yearly or annual salary? It's greed, greed. It's lust for money, for power, for avarice, for sensual delights, for \$6,000 shower curtains. While on the same newspaper, little further down on the same page, there are the people starving to death in Africa.

There are the women that are being raped helplessly in the Sudan. And on the same page are these guys swallowing an unbelievable wealth acquired through corruption, criminal offense. Without regret, they made an error, maybe, but they'll not acknowledge it even if they pay the fine.

One lady went to jail, what's her name? Martha Stewart, and she had a ball. I don't know if it was a jail or it was a vacation resort. I think she had art and craft classes and I don't know what else she did.

But she came out smelling like a rose. Enjoyed her time and the publicity was already prepared and her company and its stock has risen by virtue of the shameful indictment by which she's had to go to jail has been turned to celebration. Have mercy on me, oh God.

According to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. If I'm sure of my sin, which is ever before me, I'm equally as sure of your ability to forgive, to purge, and to cleanse. And if that were not so, I would be a man entirely without hope.

I would carry into eternity without relief the things that now presently haunt me, the image of my fornicating with another man's wife and seeing to the arrangement of his murder. It would haunt me. There would be no relief.

It would be a hell of a tortured conscience that could never be pacified. Save me. I'm glad you're that kind of a God.

Your steadfast love. What is the word for that in Hebrew, Simon? Your chesed, C-H-E-S-E-D. Your merciful nature is my only hope.

And the remarkable thing is you give it without qualification. You don't require some course of rehabilitation where I show myself to act differently. The only requirement that you make is that I acknowledge my transgressions that are ever before me.

If you hear that confession, you bring this deliverance. What a God. But at what cost? Not some cheapie wiping the sin off the book.

Righteousness requires judgment, not just a blinking, looking, okay, you missed it this time, you're forgiven, go on. No. If there's a blood into which that hyssop can be dipped, that can be applied, what blood is it? Not the blood of bulls and of sacrifices.

Something more perfect, more enduring, and more eternal, and more righteous is required than that given by an animal. It's going to require the righteous blood of God himself. But how shall he supply it? By sending his son to die on a cross and bleed.

Not just on the cross, but as I said this morning with the little group that assembled for prayer, Calvary began in Gethsemane. He sweated drops of blood. One version says clots of blood oozed out of the pores of his skin with his agonizing cry before God because he knew what he was required to perform for the father and asked if it were possible this cup should pass, but it was not possible.

He would have to drink it. He would have to suffer, not just the physical pain and torment, but to be made sin that we who knew no righteousness would become righteous because he who did not know sin became sin and he became sin in so graphic and real a way that the holy father had to turn his face away from him. He could not look upon his own son who had become sin.

And so he had to cry out, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Well, maybe you can stand to be a little God forsaken, but the son of God cannot because he's had a longstanding relationship with the father even before he came down to earth. Proverbs chapter eight says, before the foundations of the

earth was laid, I was with you in a loving relationship that for me is my food and my drink to know you, to know the father and the love of God and to be in that environment and relationship was for me very life and I can bear everything else, but to bear the sense of your absence that you would have to forsake me, that I would not be conscious of your presence at a time when I most desperately needed it is part of the suffering that I have to bear and the cup that I have to drink so that the Davids that follow me can have a blood to blot out their transgressions. Got the idea? Listen, dear saints, to turn this into a few little snappy choruses on the blood, it would be better if we were silent.

To reduce this to a little formula for salvation, step one, step two, is travesty against God. This is too holy, this is too costly, this is tragic and there was no shortcut for the expression of God's mercy was more than just a condescension and an okay, I'll let you go this time. Mercy required sacrifice, sin required judgment, the penalty had to be paid, there was a chastisement that came upon him so that Isaiah 53 says, for our transgressions, he was stricken, he bore our iniquity.

Of course, what has that to do with you, your nice Chinese congregation? Iniquity? You've never talked back to your mother. You've always been superficially polite to your father. What iniquity are you talking about? Cats, I'm talking about the iniquity of David, which is yours, whether you're Chinese, Jewish, white, yellow, black, red or green.

Because you were conceived in iniquity from your mother's womb. Are you trying to say that my mother was not a moral woman? No, she could have been the choicest of the handmaidens of the Lord and you still would have been conceived in iniquity. It wasn't what was her moral condition at the time in which you were birthed or generated.

It's a statement of the intrinsic condition that belongs to every man that breathes. It's in us, we're from Adam. It's an iniquity, we're born in it and with it.

Pity that we'd have to wait to agree with God about the truth of that by having to fall. Because if you're not agree with the truth of it on the basis of the word and on the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus, you'll have to experience it. And that will be a mercy that he allows you to sin that you can cry out when you have to bear the terrible shame and stigma and pain of the moral unresolved thing that's a lump in your gut.

And in fact, if it's not resolved, it'll be a physical lump. It'll go from being a moral blight into a cancer or a tumor. The body is not made for unrighteousness.

And if you conceal it, it will break out in varicose veins or ungainly lumps that will eat your flesh. Sin is a terrible thing, it's evil, it's death. It's going to require an answer from God of an ultimate kind that only he can give and has given in the crucifixion of his son.

For this reason, have I come. No man takes my life, I lay it down. You dear saints, if you can only say tonight on the basis of the preached word and this text, innocent though you are, young though you are, you're hardly out of puberty and into adolescence.

You've hardly yet even begun to experience the sexual thing that will have its expression increasingly as you grow up. And yet even before the possibility of giving expression to that in a sinful way, you can say that my transgressions are ever before me. Not on the basis of what you have subjectively experienced, but on the basis of what the word of God says is the condition of all men.

Because if it's David's condition, how shall we be exempt? We have to repent with him, with a contrite and broken heart, not waiting first to fall to prove the truth of God's word, but to accept it on its face value that there's not a righteous man upon the face of the earth that doeth good and sinneth not. That if God were to mark iniquity, who can stand? So that you're justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

Well, the last thing that I typed as the clock was ticking away in New York prior to my departure to come here was from Spurgeon's commentary on the Psalms. Don't fail to get all three volumes of the treasury of David. It's cheap and it's gorgeous.

It is a sublime commentary on the entire book of Psalms as only Spurgeon could comment. I'll give you some examples. He says, in David's cry for mercy, what he is really asking is act, oh Lord, like yourself, be yourself, express the mercy that is intrinsic to your very nature.

The cry, wash me, is in view of one great pollution, polluting his entire nature. It's not just a boo-boo. It's not just the act of adultery.

It's not the conspiracy for the murder. Those are only the acts that reveal the truth of the condition and it's the condition that's pervasive and it will not express itself through adultery or murder. It will express itself through cheating, through lying, through any and every form that is vile, that is sinful.

It's a condition. Wash me is in view of that great pollution that pollutes one's entire nature. The one sin against Bathsheba served to show the psalmist the whole mountain of his iniquity of which the foul deed was but one stone.

Did you follow that? The foul deed was one stone to show David the mountain of his iniquity. And if that's true for David in having committed the act, what is it possible for you in reviewing the act? Can it be a stone that shows you your mountain? God said he would send his spirit to convict us of unrighteousness and that's what I'm trusting is working now through the word. I wanna see you writhe.

Not because I'm malicious or I have a little something against the Chinese, but for your sake, for the church's sake, for Israel's sake through you, I desire to see deep conviction, discomfort, a sense something growing up as you're hearing the word that it's me being described. I'm capable. If that was true for David, it's true for me.

I don't have to wait to prove it by falling. This is my truth and I need to anguish before God and cry out for his mercy to blot out the transgressions that I'll inevitably perform because my nature will compel it. It's a new nature that I need.

I'm creating me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. Merely saying yes Lord and calling on the name of the Lord as a little step one, step two salvation has not done it. And when the time comes that God brings Israel through Singapore and Asia and they need your mercy and you have not ever obtained it because your transgressions have never been blotted out by the mercy of God, what shall you be able to extend to them? What an embarrassing failure in that moment to which all history is now tending for the issue of the church is the issue of Israel's redemption.

But the church that is the church of redeemed souls who have acknowledged their transgression that was ever before them and believe for the mercy of God and the crucifixion of Jesus and have had their sins blotted out and a new heart created within them and live with a renewed spirit by which to serve him. My

sin is ever before me, David said, sin that is never out of mind. The pain on account of it is not transient and occasional but intense and permanent.

Can I give you the other side of that coin? Have you ever enjoyed righteousness? Have you ever come to a place in your condition before God in relationship with him and with men where you enjoy the sense of what it means to be righteous in God? Have you ever tasted that? It's better than the rarest wine. The taste it wants is to be spoiled forever. And you know what? God intended that as the normative condition and experience of mankind that we should live in righteousness and breathe freely and have minds that are not corrupted and polluted and whose conduct and actions is in keeping with God's nature and is pleasing in his sight that you don't scheme and plan.

You don't curse and shout. You don't look for your own way. You don't, you're living in the righteousness of God.

It's a Mechaya, it's life, it's joy unspeakable. What's the alternative? My sin is ever before me. I'm haunted day and night.

I can't shake it off. I can't spit it out. I hate myself.

I have no self-esteem and therefore I'm a candidate for yet more degrading acts. So against thee and thee only have I sinned in your sight to commit treason in the court of the king and before his eye is impudence indeed. You got that word? To be impudent.

It's the arrogance of man to think that he can perform something in God's own sight and get away with it. It's detrimental to God. It denigrates God.

It nullifies God as God. It makes him less than man that he's not capable of seeing or that he's indifferent, that he's not himself the supreme moral agent in all creation and very righteousness himself. And how does Paul conduct himself? The judge is ever present.

He's at the door. Saul, the apostle Paul, always aware that God observes. God sees him.

He says, you know what manner of man I was before you and God is my witness. He lived always in the consciousness of God as a brooding judge who is one day will come and judge. And he can say to the Athenians that this Jesus whom God has raised from the dead will one day judge all men.

And he's winked in times past but he commands all men everywhere now to repent. The apostle Paul knew the judge. He knew judgment.

He said, we'll be held accountable for everything that we do in our bodies, both bad and good. He lived always in the consciousness of God as judge. And it's not a complex.

He didn't have a hangover. He didn't need a psychiatrist. That was not a formula for mental derangement.

That's a formula for sanity to understand God as God as all seeing judge and who will chase him and require judgment and will express it in wrath is to have your head screwed on right and have your feet grounded in reality that you can move and live and have your being in the truth of God. Anything less or other than that is fraudulent. It's a play acting.

It's a religious hype. It's false piety. And therefore it doesn't impress the world or touch it.

I was shaped in iniquity. My mother was a chaste handmaiden. I was born in wedlock.

I was not illegitimate. So the cry is the acknowledgement of inborn sin. I am in my very nature a sinner.

The fountain of my life is polluted. Mine is a constitutional disease. It's with me and only you can blot it out and create in me a clean heart and renew in me a right spirit.

For redemption is creation and only the God who creates the heaven and the earth can create us anew. It waits only on our cry that we need to be made new, that we can't, what's the word, swallow down our condition and try to live ethically and morally despite it and try to get by in the best way that we know minimally. God wants exuberant, chaste, virtuous souls testifying of his reality and living with remarkable freedom and the power of the new life because they've acknowledged that in the old life there's no man good, no, not one.

Men will, Kavil will hedge at this doctrine about the total depravity of man because it's unbecoming in our modern generation to speak so of man as a universal condition. After all, we're all individuals and I'm different and I'm not like that. And if I did a boo-boo, it was circumstantial.

I couldn't help it. It was only an era that I acquired 150 million by arranging for my retirement payoff with guys who were in the same conspiracy with me and getting their payoffs. It was only an era and I'm not even sure of it.

After all, I deserved 150 million. What can men do on this earth that will ever deserve remuneration of that kind? I'm not experiencing it. I may have to go in hot just to pay for the expense of this trip.

So they will hedge that this doctrine is too devastating and negative and my Jewish people say that's Christianity. They're so dumb. They don't even know that that doctrine is born out of the Old Testament statements of God.

It's not a New Testament doctrine. The New Testament only reiterates what the Old Testament has already acknowledged, that there's not a righteous man upon the earth that doeth good. That David said, I was born to this iniquity.

It's in my very frame and nature and except you give me mercy, I'm stuck. Those who will not cry it up, who will not acknowledge this truth will suffer it but he is most blessed who in his own soul has learned to lament his lost condition. Wow.

Who will learn it without having to wait for the proof that comes through sinful conduct. You don't have to wait for the transgression. It's already there.

If you'll acknowledge it, you'll be spared from the humiliation shame of having to experience it. You're a blessed soul when you learn to lament your condition and your estate and cry out to God for mercy and he'll be quick to give it. So he desires truth in the inward parts.

Purge me with hyssop, sprinkle the atoning blood upon me. Give me the reality. Nothing but blood can take away my blood guilt, my stains.

Nothing but the strongest purification can avail to cleanse me. Let this sin often purge my sin. None can need it more than me.

Foul as I am, there is a power in the blood. There's a power in the divine propitiation. You've made provision.

Your mercy is actual but it costs you something and I bow before that sacrifice and I will ever honor you for it and it will be the basis for my gratitude, for my love and be expressed in worship and in service. I'll not need worship teams to get me to worship. It's continually rising up within me.

It flows out of a gratitude for what you have performed in me that was totally undeserved, that I could not commend myself, that I could not earn, I could not obtain. You gave it. You gave it expensively and you gave the application to free me from my sin and gave me a new heart only because you heard my cry and you had mercy on me.

If that's not a basis for gratitude and undying love and worship that is more than choruses that expresses itself in service and sacrifice, then there is no basis. And then the other kind of worship that we perform, not having come to this condition is just a cosmetic overlay. It's a musicality.

There's something performed and I shall be whiter than snow. What a condition that is. With a man like me, I don't even wanna be autographical.

35 years old when I was saved but what was my history before that time? What kind of relationships of a sinful kind? What was the debris and the clutter of broken lives and cast off women that are left behind me as a trail? What was the price paid for my egotism and vanity and self-assertion and pride? I shudder to think of it. Blessed is the child who comes to God early and doesn't have to bring the baggage of a misused life in before God and even have to suffer the memory of it to be whiter than snow, to have an innocency in God. But I'll tell you what, God's mercy is so great in blotting out your transgressions that he makes as if you had never acceded to sin.

He takes away the haunting memory. He makes you feel virginal and new and chaste as if you had never been into the mud, as if you have never had an ugly history and spoken an ill word. It's a remarkable innocency that is not born because you have been saved from exposure, but that he has performed as blessing and mercy through your exposure.

Because the greatest innocency is the innocency that knows the truth of man and man's condition and the realities that are in the world and evil and still shines transcendentally with a purity and an innocence, not because he's ignorant of evil, but because he has transcended it through the blood of the lamb. That's salvation. That's deliverance.

You'll be whiter than snow. Oh, that the reader may take heart even now and obtain mercy. That their sins need not be before them morning and evening, day and night to be haunted and experience the grief or to be shallow and not yet experienced the grief.

Maybe that's worse. And to be in a kind of superficial Christianity, callow, C-A-L-L-O-W, singing its choruses and yet not yet having recognized the truth of its own condition or its need or its remedy. Speaking about Jesus as Savior because it's part of the vocabulary that we acquire, but not having experienced his Saviorhood, his mercy.

If we have not obtained that mercy, we have nothing to say to Israel. And I'm asking again and again to you tonight, are we required to duplicate David's sin in order to obtain mercy? Does it have to wait until we ourselves are transgressors and adulterers and murderers? Or can we share vicariously of what is the

truth for every man and not needing the shameful experience to prove it? So David is here speaking in this psalm in behalf of all saints and not his own person only. And is this not a proof that my nature is more deeply infected and corrupted by sin than I thought? I, who yesterday was chaste, am today an adulterer.

I yesterday had hands innocent of blood and today I'm a man of blood guiltiness. For any man to offend in the sight of God and not to be moved by it is in the deeps of sin. What is sin? It's to transgress in God's sight and not be affected by it, not be pricked, not be haunted, that you can do it with impunity and in a casual way and swallow it down and go on to the next, as if God is not God, as if God is not seeing, as if God is not righteous, as if God will not judge.

That's an error against God, which is the heart of sin is the failure to reckon upon God for what he is in himself, righteous as well as merciful, all knowing, all seeing. Every sin is an act of presumption against God. To fail to reckon David's sin as our own is yet to be in our sins, the worst of which, as I'm saying, is presumption.

Are you made of better stuff than God's beloved, the sweet singer of Israel, who could compose psalms and fight against Goliath, lead a nation? Who complete exception? Are we made of better stuff than David? David? It's defiant not to acknowledge the truth of David's condition as our own and need to be pricked in our hearts with the feeling of this evil that we might enjoy the benefit of God's provision, the blood that he quickly employs to that one whose repentant cry he hears, who recognizes and acknowledges, it's not just a boo-boo that I'm asking you to blot out, it's a nature, it's a condition, it's Adamic, it's evil. I need your work, the newness that only you can give that corresponds to your own righteous nature. Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

Don't withdraw the benefits of your comfort and counsel and assistance or I'm a dead man. Uphold me with your free spirit because I'm conscious that if I could commit adultery and murder, then I'm weak, I'm morally weak, I'm susceptible, I'm capable of the worst transgressions. You need to uphold me, not just save me once then, but continue to uphold me by your free spirit or I'll find myself again in a comparable condition or worse and build again the walls of Jerusalem because I have done mischief against it.

I have harmed the church. My sin is not just my own personal thing, but it has had consequence for others with whom I'm related in the church. I have demeaned the church, I have reduced its witness, I have negated the reality of God.

So I'm crying out, Lord, build again the walls of Jerusalem. Not only forgive my transgression, but make up for it in whatever loss the church suffered by my failed conduct because I'm not in this alone. I'm affecting a whole people.

We're in something together. There's a corporate reality of which I'm part and my sin and my example has affected others adversely. The walls of Jerusalem have suffered loss and I'm asking you to build it up in your great mercy again, even more strongly than before out of the repentance that I acknowledge.

Hasten it, O Lord, because I have dishonored your name, dishonored your church. And then I can tell sinners of their transgression and lead others to salvation. Even Israel itself that doesn't have the faintest inkling that David's condition is its condition.

And so I end by reading a quotation quoted by Spurgeon in his great commentary on the Psalms where a man whose name we would never know, his writings would have been lost to us had not Spurgeon

collected these gems and added them to his own comments, writes, I cannot doubt the prophetic bearing of this Psalm upon the nation Israel. In the latter days, they shall consider their ways. Repentance and self-loathing will be the result.

Blood guiltiness heavier than David's has to be removed from that nation. They will become teachers of the Gentiles when first the iniquity of their own transgressions has been purged away. Lord, mercy, Lord.

Mercy for these precious young ones, Lord. Mercy of a kind to understand something that's over our heads and beyond our present experience that we will acknowledge the truth of your word and of our condition as transgressors and cry out for your mercy and receive the blood of the sacrifice of Jesus's death effectually, experientially, existentially. It will be real for us.

We'll feel lightened. Something will go out from us. Darkness will feel an inward change in a quiet way.

You'll touch us in our deeps. You'll create in us something new. Thank you, my God, for that availability.

May there be some tonight, many tonight who will appropriate it by faith, acknowledging the truth that you have said is our condition with David and giving us the mercy for which he himself pleaded and we ourselves need. Lord, I'm praying for this congregation, precious heads and shoulders above many, but I'm praying that its joy, its worship, its reality, its witness, especially to the Jewish community as well as to its own nation and Asia will be birthed out of the deepest reality and appropriation of the cross of Christ Jesus, which is available even tonight for as many as will cry out and call. So I don't know how to give an invitation.

Where you sit or you need to do something physical, radical, a break with the past, as I've asked my son, who has gone back onto drugs, onto crack, and now is giving it up momentarily until he shall be depressed again and need a lift, who has had long hair for most of his adult life and cherishes this long ponytail as if somehow it is sacrosanct and can't find employment in Minnesota. And I said, Ariel, cut your hair. They have an abundance of candidates for employment and they don't have to take a risk on one who comes before them with a physical statement that says it's tied to the world.

Cut your hair because your father requests it. Obey your father, honor your father. It will go well with you and it will break your stubborn pride, which is the root of your sin, which if it's not broken by this act of obedience to which I'm calling you, you'll fall again into yet more degrading sin.

Pray for Ariel. Pray for the sons, the children of ministers who are indifferent to the call of God, who have their own superior observations and reflections and don't need to go that way, that they will acknowledge the truth of their condition and their insubordination and their egoistic superiority and humble themselves before God and break and say, I'm not better than David. Have mercy upon me, Lord, and blot out my transgressions.

So avail yourself of the mercy of God, even tonight, when you hear his voice, harden not your heart. Come out of your seat if you need to. Go down on your knees by your seat.

Talk to God. He waits to hear from you. He's a God of truth.

And it's difficult to persuade those that are virtuous who have not had occasion for sin. They're too young. They've not yet come to the promptings of their sexual things that will encourage fantasy and conduct that is sinful.

And yet God says, you will come to it and you'll not have the strength to triumph over it unless you realize now that you were birthed in iniquity. From your mother's womb, you came with the Adamic taint. And if you'll not acknowledge and repent of it and forsake it and ask my mercy, it will have its own logic and its fulfillment into shameful transgression for which he wants to save you now while you're young.

So you come and avail yourself of the mercy of God. The blood that flowed from Emmanuel's veins is potent to blot out all our transgression, all our iniquity, all our false and sinful nature. That he might create in us a clean heart and renew in us a right spirit.

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