

# Personal Revival

by Ron Bailey

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## Transcript

Good afternoon. This is another accent and a voice for you to get used to. Of course you always all used to speak like this until you went off on your independent ways.

But if God should give you repentance and you come home, we'll kill the fatted calf for you. It's really been a wonderful joy just to be together. And what a feast.

Isn't it wonderful how glorious, gloriously original God is? He doesn't make two blades of grass the same, and he doesn't make two men the same, or two women the same. When Peter wrote his letter, he uses a word that in the Greek actually means variegated. He speaks about the manifold blessing of God.

And he uses the word which means variegated, which means all shapes and all sizes. He also speaks of variegated trials, so you can judge which one you're going to get now. I have a little commission to fulfill.

I am part of a group of, a very small group of Christian churches in the UK, and so small that we don't register on any radars. But we have a purpose that God has given to us. We are the Benjamites of the church in the UK, small and insignificant, but God has something for us to do.

And they asked me just to greet you in the name of the Lord and to tell you that they are praying for us today. Amen. I have a passage of Scripture on my heart.

I intended to come just simply to stand with Greg and others and to support them and what they were doing here, but then Greg said, if I had a word on my heart, would I tell him? And immediately something came, and I've had a passage of Scripture that I have read, I think, most days since that time, maybe hundreds of times by now, and thought about it and prayed over it, and I want to turn you to it. It's an amazing passage of Scripture. Effectively, it is a kind of 3,000-year-old prayer journal that has found its way into the public domain.

And it isn't an accident that it found its way into the public domain. It was the design and purpose of the person whose prayer journal it was. I'm referring to Psalm 51.

If you'd like to turn with me to Psalm 51, this is an amazing psalm. It's a passage of Scripture which reveals the heart of a man that God had spoken to. It's David, and I want to go fairly simply through the psalm and just see where God takes us, and we'll tarry where we can, and we'll move on if we feel it's appropriate to move on.

I'm going to start with verse zero. That's to say, the little introduction right at the very beginning, when it says this, to the chief musician. If you know this psalm, you will know that it's part, really, of a very serious sin and confession that took place in David's life, and you might have thought it was the kind of thing that he would have wanted to hush up, and he would have wanted to say as little as possible about it, but apparently, at some point, David must have put this into the hands of the chief musician.

So that's how it begins. It's dedicated to the chief musician. I don't know whether it had the next little bit to begin with.

This is sheer speculation. I wonder whether David gave this because it was such an expression of what had happened in his heart, and he knew that it would have eternal relevance. It wasn't just a local thing.

It wasn't just something of his own experience, but he knew that the way in which God had dealt with him would be significant for other people. So he passed it on, apparently, to the chief musician, and then maybe sometime, maybe even after David had died, this other little bit is added to it, where it says this. It is a psalm of David when Nathan the prophet came to him after he had gone into Bathsheba.

It's significant that it isn't just after he had gone into Bathsheba, but it's when Nathan the prophet had come to him after he had gone into Bathsheba. That's to say, this psalm doesn't come from David's remorse. It doesn't come because of a worldly sorrow.

You know how Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians of a worldly sorrow, and he says, actually, a worldly sorrow works death. There is a kind of sorrow, a kind of remorse, a kind of brokenness, which actually isn't constructive at all. It's destructive.

But Paul speaks about a godly sorrow that works repentance. And this comes as a direct result of God intervening. It's because God sent Nathan the prophet, not because David suddenly realized what a mess he'd got himself into.

It isn't because he's overtaken with remorse. It's because God arrests him with a word and speaks to him. And from that moment comes this psalm.

So what I'm going to do is I'm going to go back a little bit into 2 Samuel, to give us the context of this particular psalm. You know what had happened. David had been a man who had been wonderfully taught

of God, a man of energy, dynamism, a man of great passion and love and care, a man who was willing to risk his life.

If you remember the story that he told to Saul when he wanted to fight Goliath, he told Saul that on one occasion a lion had come and a bear had come and they had taken a sheep. And David never hesitated. He simply went into the teeth, into the jaws of these animals to deliver this sheep, this lamb.

Maybe that's when God said, this is the man with a heart like mine. The kind of man who won't think twice about his own safety, but someone who will always put the flock first. This was the kind of man he was.

And you know his story. You know the story of what happened with Goliath. And maybe you know the other stories as well, amazing stories.

There's one of the richest stories in the Bible is here, the story of a broken young man whose name was Mephibosheth, a man who was in a far country, who was living on the other side of the River Jordan because his family had been in rebellion against David. And David sins for him because Mephibosheth is the son of Jonathan. And David says this, he said, I want to know if there's anyone left of the household of Jonathan because I want to show the loving kindness of God to him.

That's what David says. And David brings this young man back and it's an amazing passage of Scripture. The reason I'm saying this is to illustrate the fact that David was a man of great passion.

He was a man of discernment. He was a man who could hear the voice of God. He was a man who in his behavior could actually reveal the nature of God in amazing ways.

And yet there's a point in David's life here where he is overtaken with a sin. And I wouldn't be surprised if when it happened, David might even have thought to himself, how on earth could this happen to someone like me? You can imagine this happening to somebody else, someone who doesn't have the devotional life that David has, someone who can't write psalms, someone who can't break his heart, someone who can't dance with abandonment before the Lord. Maybe you could imagine someone else suffering like this, but David? How could this have happened to David? Well, there are all kinds of speculations as to why it might have happened.

It's interesting that David actually saw Bathsheba when he was on the roof of his palace. And for many years, of course, David had been a fugitive and he had lived with his men, his comrade-at-arms on the run. No doubt he was used to sleeping on the floor.

He was used to being in company with them. But when he became the king, it's an interesting thing, this. Maybe this is speculation, but you can think it through yourselves.

When he became a king, as a sort of coronation gift, a man named Hiram, who was the king of Tyre, actually paid the price to build David a palace. And David's palace was built not with money that came from Israel, and not as a direct result of a word that God had spoken to him, but it was built as a result of a gift from the king of Tyre. If you know Ezekiel 28, you will know that there is a spirit behind the king of Tyre, a spirit that loved to lift itself high and make much of itself.

And I expect that the palace that was built for David was magnificent. And part of the effect that it would have, of course, is that subtly it would separate him from the people that he had lived and worked with. So he finds himself isolated, more isolated.

There's a great danger when men and women of God have been blessed of God, owned of God, recognized perhaps by other people as God's servants, that they become detached from the people that God has made them part of. And they begin to think that they are invulnerable to the things that other people are vulnerable to. Other people may suffer these kind of trials, but not me.

Look how God has blessed me. Look where I live now. Well, David looked, and he followed the ancient pattern of Eve.

He looked, and he wanted, and he took. Sin generally follows that pattern. Sin generally follows that pattern.

He looked, he saw, he wanted, and he took. And what he took, you know this story as well as I do, he took the wife of a man named Uriah. Now, Uriah wasn't a stranger to David.

If you look elsewhere in the Scriptures, you'll discover that Uriah was one of David's mighty men. That's to say he was one of David's elite core, a personal bodyguard that worked with him. This was a personal friend of David.

This is someone who would have fought side by side with David, maybe back to back. This is someone for whom David would have been willing to spill his own life in time past. But David saw something, and he wanted it, and he trod, roughshod over all his old companions, and anything that it meant, just simply to get what he wanted.

And he got what he wanted. He took Bathsheba, and they slept together, and she conceived. And then David did this terrible thing in trying to hide the consequences of what he had done.

And he called Uriah back from the front lines, and tried to arrange circumstances which would make it seem as though the child was Uriah's child. Uriah was a man of great integrity, a real warrior. He wouldn't live at ease in Zion while the people of God and the ark was out on the front lines.

He refused to go home, even when David got him drunk. He still wouldn't go home. And then David did this almost unbelievable thing.

He conspired to have Uriah murdered, so that Uriah would never know what had taken place. And David sent this message to his own field marshal and said, put Uriah in the most dangerous part, put him right at the front of the battle, and then when the battle is hard and fierce, withdraw from him so that he can be killed by the people of Ammon. And they did it.

And he died, and others died with him. And the message came back from the front lines that what David had commanded had been done, and it seemed as though David had got away with it. Let me read you these verses.

This is right at the end of 2 Samuel chapter 11 and verse 26. 2 Samuel chapter 11 and verse 26. And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

And when the morning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife and bared him a son. He got away with it, apparently. That's how it seemed.

I don't know whether you've ever read these things and thought about the passages of time that this must represent. This must be at least nine months, wasn't it, for this child to have been born. And although if

you read into the next passage, next chapter, you'll know that this child ultimately died.

We don't actually know how old this child was when it died. We just know that it was a child. It may have been just a few days old.

It may have been a few months old. But what to all intents and appearances, it seemed as though David had got away with it. This terrible sin against his friend, against this woman, he got away with it.

I wonder whether the people who were around him thought that he'd got away with it. I wonder if when they watched him, they began to think, he's not quite how he used to be. He's not quite what he was, David.

There's something happened to his testimony. The light's gone dim. How would he have a testimony? How would he be able to speak to anyone amongst his people about the things of God? We are required to give an answer for the hope that's within us with meekness and a good conscience.

What would David have had to say? Nothing at all. I have a suspicion that he probably withdrew more and more into himself. I guess there were no more hymns that he wrote during this time.

If it was God who opened David's mouth and gave him his hymns, there would be no hymns coming. Maybe he was singing the old hymns. Maybe he was going through the motions.

Maybe he was going through the whole pattern of things, so that to all outward appearances, it looked as though David was just exactly the man he'd always been, and nobody knew. How about you, my brother? My sister? Have you been there? Have you done something? And in your heart, you've known that it's displeased the Lord. You've known it's broken God's heart.

But you've gone on. You've gone through the motions. You've preached your sermons.

You've done your witnessing. You've sang your songs. And all the time on the inside, you've been dying quietly.

This is what's happening to David. It looks okay on the outside. On the inside, he's losing it.

He's dying. I remember hearing once, many years ago, an interview when a radio interviewer was talking to a world-famous concert pianist, a pianist. And he was asking these questions, and he said, well, do you still have to practice? And the world-famous pianist said, I still do five or six hours a day.

And the interviewer said, well, surely you don't need to do that amount of practice. I mean, look at your skills, look at your abilities. And he said an interesting thing, and I can't register it in my mind.

He said, well, he said, if I don't practice for one day, he said, I know the difference. He said, if I don't practice for a week, my wife knows the difference. If I don't practice for a month, my followers know the difference.

This is the steady slide. This is David. He's lost his vital contact with God.

This man who has known so much of God, he has so much information, he's had so much revelation in the past. He has been the mouthpiece of God. He has been the servant of God.

It was to David that God actually gave the designs of the temple. He had been given amazing victories, so that he had amassed an enormous fortune, which actually funded the temple. He was a man who was personal friends with prophets like Nathan.

And yet now he's lost it, and it's going. And no doubt when he thinks he's got away with it, all this is what happens in chapter 12 and verse 1. And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. Remember how Paul says when he writes to the Romans that people can't believe unless they hear a preacher, and how shall one preach unless they're sent? God sent this man, Nathan.

He sent him with a message to David. He sent him with a story. He sent him with a parable.

There are some interesting definitions of parable. I think the one I like the best is that a parable is one of those stories that just when you're beginning to enjoy it, it gets you by the throat. And that's what David discovered with this parable.

Let me read it to you. It's a wonderfully applied parable. You know, when God speaks, He always speaks to our condition, and He speaks in the language that we understand.

He knows how to get our attention. He knows our history. He knows where we've been.

He knows what we're like. So in order to get David's attention, God gives Nathan a story about a sheep. This is what the story goes like.

David, the Lord sent Nathan unto David, and he came to him and said to him, There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had brought up and nourished up, and it grew up together with him and with his children. And it did eat of his own meat and drank of his own cup, and it lay in his bosom and was unto him as a daughter.

There came a travel unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd to dress for the wayfaring man that was come to him, but took the poor man's lamb and dressed for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man." This is extraordinary hypocrisy, if you think about it. This is extraordinary hypocrisy.

David has conspired to cause several murders, to steal another man's wife. He has put all kinds of things at risk, and yet he is in a passion about this man who has killed this little lamb. There's something about the human heart which is impossible to fathom.

You know, don't you that the gods at Auschwitz would go home at the end of every shift to play with their families? They would take their dogs for a walk, and they would fondle their cats on their laps. There's something in human beings which defies imagination. There is an ability to be so hard and harsh and vicious to get your own will, and then like this, to react because he hears of some... It's interesting how passionate people can be about other people's sins, is what our brothers have been saying this morning.

We may see the sins of our nations. God is interested in ours. It's right that we should understand and have a heart for what God has wanted to do in the nation, but it's also important that we allow God to focus things down until we are dead center of what God is saying.

There is a very sobering verse in the Proverbs. It's one of those obscure verses, and it simply says this, the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth. Be careful, brothers and sisters.

It's possible to be very conscious of all the sins that are going on in the ends of the earth, to know what's going here and there, and to be incensed, to be activated to do something about all these terrible things. And meanwhile, you've got this festering at home. The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.

This is how it goes on. David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, as the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die, and he shall restore the Lamb fourfold because he did this thing and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, thou art the man.

This is the word of God, and in any genuine revival, be it community-wide or individual, there has to be this sense of God putting his finger upon your chest and saying, thou art the man. I'm not talking about anybody else. Thou art the man.

This is genuine revelation. When the word of God comes, and it doesn't just float in the air, but it's applied personally by God to someone, thou art the man. One of the reasons I still use my kind of old English version is because of words like thee and thou.

Conviction and repentance is really an I-thou encounter. It's not an us and them encounter. It's an I-thou encounter.

That's to say, really, there are only ever two people involved in repentance, me and God. There may be all kinds of other people who have been implicated by my sin. There may be all kinds of other things I will need to do in restitution or reconciliation, but primarily my sin is against God.

And what happens here is God comes through this man, Nathan, puts his finger on David and says, thou art the man. The word of God has to come to where we are. And this is the faithfulness of God that he knows where we are, and he knows how we got there, and he knows how to speak to us.

I think another of my favorite verses is the little story of Jonah, when he had disobeyed God and ended up in the fish's belly. And then when he spewed out on the shore, the scripture simply says, and the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time. Isn't that grace? That's grace.

God knew where he was, God found him, and the word of God came to him the second time. And this is God here speaking to this man, David. David's turned his back on God.

He may be going through the motions, but he's turned his back on it. He can't cope with the consciousness of God. We've had several definitions of revival during these couple of days, and I suppose I have my own as well, but at the bottom line, revival is God consciousness.

It's God consciousness. It's communities, or it's individuals who become supremely aware of God. The supreme fact of their life is God.

The Bible language speaks of baptism in spirit, and many people have lots of ideas as to what that might mean and how it can be evidenced. Well, if you think of the picture that it's really based on, if you think of kind of something like baptism in water, if someone is baptized in water, what are they supremely conscious of? Water. Yeah, water.

If they're very spiritual, they may say, it's a wonderful time, and I was thinking this and this. But if they're being honest with you, they'll tell you that when they're baptized, you're supremely conscious of water. And when someone is baptized in the spirit, they're supremely conscious of God.

It is absolute, overwhelming God consciousness. God comes to this man, and he puts his finger on him, and David knows he's been arrested. Just like Saul on the Damascus Road, God's arrested this man.

He's put his hand on him. Thou art the man. This is how the story continues.

Thou art the man. And then God reminds him of his faithfulness to David. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul.

I gave thee thy master's house and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah. And if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house, because thou hast despised me, and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. In these two verses, verse 9 and 10, notice the way it says, first of all, thou hast despised the commandment of the Lord. And then in the next verse, God says, thou hast despised me.

When we despise the Word of God to our hearts, when we despise the law that God makes clear to us, it isn't just an arbitrary law that we're breaking, we're actually acting in defiance of God. Every sin, understand this brothers and sisters, every sin ultimately is a clash of wills. Every sin is a clash of wills.

It's effectively saying, I will not have this will to reign over me, I will do what I want to do. It's David. He sees, he wants, he takes.

He rides roughshod over the laws, the will of God, because he will have what he will have. What he is doing is actually behaving in the way that Satan suggested with almost a promise to Eve. When Eve said what would happen when they took the fruit, the devil said to her, has God said that? You won't die.

You'll be like God, knowing good and evil. This passion to be like God, to be in charge of our life, to be the ultimate person who makes the decision, to have no one ruling us, is the essence of sin. It is the essence of sin and it's here.

God puts his finger on it and he says, not only have you despised what I've said, but the reason you've despised what I've said is because you've despised me. The reason you've not taken any notice of what the thing that I said to you is because actually you've set yourself against me. You've determined to have your will against my will.

And this is a man who knew things of the Spirit. This is a man who had rich devotion of life. This is a man who knew victories in his life.

This was a man who had revelation. This was a man who was a leader. He had all these things and yet this thing is reared its ugly head, this I will have what I want to have.

It's almost a parody of that thing that the Lord Jesus said. This is a man saying, not thy will, but my will be done. And that's what sin is every single time.

And that's why, brothers and sisters, we have to give sin its hardest honest name and not call it something which glides over the surface and don't call it weaknesses and characteristic traits and little oddities that I have. And this is my particular problem. Call it sin and call it rebellion because that's what it is.

Every single sin is an act of rebellion. To him that knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin. In fact, genuine faith is actually a response to revelation.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. So God speaks His Word and the response in you is to say amen to it and that is faith. But when God speaks His Word and you say no to it, that is sin.

To the man who knows to do good and doeth it not, to that man it is sin. That's two very simple definitions for you. Faith is right response to revelation and sin is wrong response to revelation.

This man is setting himself up against God. I'm sure he didn't tell himself that. There's nothing so permanent, they say, as a short-term compromise.

And I suppose that David may have thought, excuse the language I'm going to use, that this is just a one-night stand. Maybe this is easy. It just went wrong in that the woman conceived and now he's committed in some way.

But it isn't a casual thing and it isn't just a temporary aberration. Every single one is actually an act of rebellion against God and this is what's happened here. So it goes on like this, verse 11, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this Son.

For thou didst it secretly, and I will do this thing before Israel and before the Son. Now at this moment, all heaven poises to see what David's response will be. Our brother yesterday reminded us of Asa.

There was a time when the Word of God came to Asa through a prophet, and Asa didn't like what he heard, so he had the prophet in prison. Many centuries later to this, there was another king who did the same thing. Amongst the many evil things, says the Scripture, that Herod did, he added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

Listen to the language. He shut up John. He silenced the voice of God.

That's what Herod did. He silenced the voice of his conscience, and that's what Asa did, and that's why it crippled his walk. Do you know the story of Asa? He died because his feet were diseased.

He did not seek the Lord, but he sought to the physicians, and he was diseased in his feet, and he died. So what will David do? What will you do? When you know actually in your heart something that you've done, and God has put his finger on it, and he said, thou art the man, now what are you going to do? How are you going to respond? Are you going to hide it? Are you going to pretend and say, no, well, it wasn't really me. It wasn't me that God was speaking to? Or are you going to be honest now? Whatever it costs, are you going to be honest? One of the great things about David, and for this, he has a great testimony.

I sometimes say that David could turn, I'll change it for you, he could turn on a dying piece. He could be heading in one direction with all the passion of this tremendous man of passion and strength, and the word

of God would come, and David will turn around 180 degrees and go in the opposite direction. This is the man, if you remember, who had had it in his heart to build a house for God.

Not only had he had it in his heart, but God had given him amazing victory, so he had been able to amass this great fortune, so he had all the resources. He has the desire, he has the resources. Then God actually gives to David the design for the temple.

So now he has the resources, he has the desire, he has the plan of God, he has his vision statement, he has his strategy. It's all together. And if that isn't bad enough, he has a friend who is named Nathan, who is a prophet, and Nathan said, do whatever is in your heart.

So now he's really got the go-ahead on this. The amazing thing is that Nathan goes away, kind of sleeps when it gets up in the morning, and comes back to David and said, slight modification, for do read don't. You're not allowed to build a temple.

You've been a man of blood. God will raise up a house for you, but you can't raise up a house for God. And if you read the story of that, you will discover that there's not a murmur of complaint in David.

He instantly embraces the word that God has said to him, and thanks God for it. His whole life had been heading in a certain direction. Every sign it had was evidence that this was the will of God.

And at the last point, God says no. And this man is so sensitive to God that he turns around and heads in the opposite direction. And this is the man who has hidden his tracks.

He's tried to do everything he can to make sure that nobody knows what he's done. And now he's going to do something which will make his sin absolutely public. The old Puritans, wise and cautious people, sometimes they would struggle with this issue of, what do you do with someone who has been a servant of God, known as a servant of God, who then falls into conspicuous sin? Is it ever possible for this man to serve God again? I guess we would have different answers if we asked that of each one around the meeting tonight.

They had a very wise saying. They used to say, in answer to the question, can such a man ever be a servant of God again in a public pattern? They would say yes. When his repentance becomes as notorious as his sin.

That was their language? When his repentance becomes as notorious as his sin. Just look how this continues, and then we'll move on to Psalm 51. Verse 13, verse 12, Thou didst this thing secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. No mitigating circumstances. He doesn't say, it wasn't my fault, she shouldn't have been bathing where I could see her.

He doesn't blame Hiram for this great palace he built for him. He doesn't blame the pressure of events. He just simply says, I have sinned against the Lord.

And God has to bring us to that simple honesty. Sometimes, you know, we are far too eloquent in the way that we do things and say things. The language of genuine love has a very small vocabulary.

You say, I love you, or you say, I love you very much. And if it's a lot more than that, it may not be nearly so genuine as it seems to be. The language of genuine worship also has a very small vocabulary.

And the language, I believe, of genuine repentance has a very small vocabulary. And here it is. I have sinned.

No excuses. I have sinned. Now look at this and notice the speed of this verse.

Verse 13, David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, the Lord also hath put away thy sin. Thou shalt not die.

Did you time that? How long did it take before the word of assurance came that God had heard this confession and the sin has been put away? Shall I read it again? I'll read it again. See if you can time it. You need to do it in Hebrew to time it accurately, I suppose.

And David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, the Lord hath also put away thy sin. That is the speed of God's response to genuine acknowledgment of sin.

If we confess our sins, our Authorized Version says, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In fact, William Tyndale's version and Wycliffe's version of that verse translate it differently. They actually say, if I acknowledge my sin.

It's a Greek word which actually means to say the same thing as. So I agree with God about my sin. I agree, whatever God calls it, I agree with God's diagnosis.

I acknowledge it. And if I acknowledge my sin, He is faithful and just to forgive me my sin and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Now for David, there were consequences that would spread out into his family and into his nation.

But David as an individual receives instant forgiveness from this moment. So where does Psalm 51 fit in? How does that happen? There's a gift that many artists have, I suppose all artists have, whether they're poets or sculptors or painters or musicians. And it's the ability to freeze a moment in time to give you a chance to look at it.

Because there are all kinds of things that take place every split second. And sometimes you need someone who can stop the whole thing and give you a chance to look at it. I'm quite convinced that what happened here is after David received this word of assurance, he went away and meditated on it.

He went away and considered the things that he had done. We know certainly if you follow this story through, that for the next seven days or so, David wept and fasted, praying for deliverance and for God to change his mind and destiny for his son. He was a broken-hearted man.

Let's turn to Psalm 51. Psalm 51. You can read this Psalm in about three minutes, and you will have wasted your three minutes.

We need to slow some things down. And give our spirits time to digest what God is doing. Sometimes you hear this.

Sometimes you hear people pray and there's a whole torrent of petition after petition after petition after petition. Some dear folks, you think they must be breathing through their ears. They don't even seem to pause for breath.

But where is the pause? Prayer is fellowship with God. Where is the pause? For some years I attended, I don't go there now, I attended the most extreme Pentecostal church in the UK. I'm not going to tell you where it was, but it was notorious for being the most extreme Pentecostal church.

And they did many strange things. But they were in an area where there were lots of ordinary working-class people with not a great deal of education. And sometimes you would get amazing prophecies that would come through in the meeting.

And I have a distinct remembrance one time of hearing a prophecy that came through the meeting that said something like this. I'm not going to give it word perfect, but it said something like this. Tell my people that they're behaving like a madman on the telephone.

I pick up the phone, saith the Lord, and I hear people speaking. And they're calling on me. And they're asking me to do things.

And they're saying all kinds of things that they have done. And just at the moment that I'm about to answer, they put the phone down. Now, that might not be kind of very elegant.

It might not be very majestic. It certainly isn't King James Version stuff. But there's a tremendous insight in there.

Let's look at Psalm 51. I'll tell you something else about Psalm 51. Although it may look almost like a literary composition, this is the psalm of a heartbroken man.

There are five times in this psalm when you get not a single word, but a single letter, O. Just the word O. I don't want to be theatrical, but let me read the first verse for you and show you what I mean. Have mercy on me. O God, according to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.

Can you see what I'm doing? There was a very famous preacher in England at the time of Wesley, more famous than Wesley actually during his day, whose name was George Whitfield. And there was also a very famous actor, a man whose name was David Garrick. And David Garrick's plaque is in Westminster Cathedral.

And there's a theater still in London called the Garrick Theater. And he was persuaded to go to listen to George Whitfield. And he went to listen to George Whitfield.

And when he came home, someone said to him, well, what did you think? And David Garrick said this. He said, I don't know what I think. He said, but I would give a hundred guineas to be able to say, oh, like that man.

But George Whitfield wasn't an actor. He was a man with the heart of God. He was a man who was feeling the passion of God.

And when he said, oh, it went through men and women. If you read some of the stories, you have hard miners. They've worked all day underground on a shift.

They're in their dearth. They're caked in the stuff. They're exhausted.

They're on the way home. And George Whitfield begins to speak to them. And the tears are running down their cheeks and cutting little gullies and furrows through the coldness.

The man who could say, oh, in the way that God said. This is David. He's broken now.

He's broken because God has granted him not just, it isn't just that God has exposed him. God has revealed something to David. Our sister sang the other evening and she used a phrase in one of her songs, staggered by sin.

David is staggered by sin. He will now see the implications and it comes through in this amazing song. Let me kind of read on a little bit.

Have mercy on me, oh God. According to thy loving kindness, that's to say your covenant mercies. According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.

And you see again that David is bringing no excuses, no mitigating circumstances. His only hope is the mercy of God. His only hope.

This is the basis of his prayer, that God is a God of covenant and that God is a God of mercy. His only hope is the character of God. That's his only hope.

Not the intensity of his prayer. Not his ability to understand what's happening here. His only hope is the character of God.

It's like that verse again in Proverbs which says, the name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous runs into it and in this safe. And as our brother said just the other day, the names of God are revelations of his character.

They're not random labels. They're revelations of his character. I was saying this just the other day to someone that our names are very often are fairly random.

My name is Ron and or Ronald to give it such full space. I only ever get called Ronald when I'm in trouble. But I'll tell you how I got my name very briefly.

When my mother was carrying me during the war years in 1942, she went to a cinema and she saw a film and there was a good-looking American actor in this film with a lovely deep voice and a nice smile and she'd never thought he would become a president of the United States, but she liked this name. So I'm actually named after Ronald Reagan. It's a peculiar kind of twist of fate.

Now this tells you absolutely nothing about my character. It tells you something about my mother's character, but it tells you nothing at all about my character. But every name of God is a revelation of his character.

Every name. The name of the Lord, the character of God is a strong tower. The righteous runs into it in this safe.

Listen to the other verse we quoted from Won Jong. If we confess our sins, listen to his character. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just.

That's his character. It doesn't even say loving and merciful. It actually says he is faithful and just.

It's God's unchanging character and that's what David is dependent upon here. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgression. Here he is.

He's owning up to this thing. He's not hiding it. I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me.

I do believe, brothers and sisters, that this is another genuine, authentic aspect of revelation, of revival. That people become not only conscious of God, but they become conscious of their sin and it is ever before them. That's to say, it's almost obsessive in the impact it has upon them.

It fills their whole horizon. They can't just get on and do something else. They can't decide, well, I need to go down to the shops now or paint the house now or go to work now and I'll come back later on and I'll seek God for forgiveness.

They can't do it. Their sin is before them. It's constantly in their face and this is what's happening to this man.

And look at this in verse 4 and this is the recognition that changes everything. Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight. This is David recognizing that what he has done is he has despised God and he has sinned against God.

And it's bad enough the consequences it's had for the family of Uriah and Bathsheba and the other people who died in the assault. It's bad enough for the effect it will have upon his family and upon his nature, his nation. But more than any of these things, David is conscious that his sin is against God.

This is genuine conviction. It's possible. I don't think it's even too difficult.

It's possible by using Bible verses or by going through logical processes to convince the listener of vice, that's to say sin against yourself. It's possible to convince the listener of crime, that's to say sin against society. But only the Holy Spirit can convict people of sin against God.

Only the Holy Spirit can do it. It is His unique prerogative. When He is come, He will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and unjudgment.

And we preachers can't do it. We need to preach the truth. But we preach the truth understanding that the Holy Spirit must take the words and use the words because only God can do this.

Only God can bring a man or a woman face to face with God so that God fills their whole horizon and all they can say is, it's against you I've sinned. And then David begins as he waits before God to see something of his own character that overwhelms him. And he says this, he says, Behold, I was shaped and literally twisted.

I was twisted, he says, in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. I'm not going to go into the aspects of original sin at this point. I'm sure that's included in here.

But I think what David, I don't think David is making a theological statement here. I think David is simply reacting. He has begun to see his life and it seems now as though from the very beginnings of his life right up to the present day, his life has been one twisted, distorted representation of what it ought to have been.

It seems as though from the very beginning of my life I've been like this. He's begun to see now not just the sin, he's begun to see sin itself. He's begun to see the nature.

This is a revelation. Only God can do this. He's begun to see something.

I was shaped in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. And then he says this, Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts. When a man or a woman has been in some aspect of responsibility, maybe they've been honored by the Christian community, it's often very difficult for them to be absolutely honest like this.

But it's a necessary cost because God desires truth in the inward parts. Not superficial truth, but truth on the inward parts. And that's why God has to bring us to the places our brother was sharing last night.

He has to bring us to rock bottom so that we begin to see what we're like and what we've done and what the consequence of all that is. Because this is not my saying, but it's absolutely true. God cannot change the person you are pretending to be.

He cannot change the person you are pretending to be. And that's why He has to bring you to truth and He has to bring you to agreement. And David actually goes on in this part earlier on when he spoke about God being justified.

What he's really doing is he's siding with God against himself. He's actually agreeing with God's judgment. He's offering no plea, no mitigating circumstances.

He isn't standing against the accusation at all. He's actually saying, I agree with you. Everything you say is right.

And this is truth in the inward parts. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

We haven't got time to go into all these things, but hyssop was used. It's a kind of, it's a herb that grows in the rocks and they often used it to dip into blood to dew on the lintels and the doorposts of the house. Or they actually mixed it with a thing called the sacrifice of the red heifer, which was a sort of an instant cleansing sin offering that you could use.

It was really like instant coffee. I'm not being disrespectful, but you had a sacrifice, this sin offering. It was a red heifer and you mixed it and you burned it and you put the dust into a vessel.

And then when Israel was on the move and the altar fires had kind of gone out, if the priest sinned and the priest needed to be cleansed, you could actually reconstitute this sin offering by just adding living water. It's an amazing picture. You think about it.

Actually, there's a sense in which what the Lord Jesus Christ did upon the cross is a red heifer. He provided a sacrifice that is kept and is secure and it needs the living water of the Spirit of God to make that sacrifice real in your personal experience. That's what it needs.

It needs a personal application of the Spirit of God personally applying the merits of Jesus Christ's death to you. That's what happens. So these are kind of ritual things he's talking about here.

I'm going to go down to verse 10. My time's gone. Down to verse 10.

This great cry here, create in me a clean heart. He's come there to the language of creation. He knows that what he has seen in his life which has staggered him, which has horrified him, is something that can't be treated superficially.

You can't. Jesus Christ is not a patcher. He is not someone who adds new pieces of cloth to an old garment.

He doesn't do it. He is a creator. He's a creator.

And David knows that his condition is of such a nature that there's no amount of modification which is going to cure him. There's no amount of minor adjustments or tweaking or taking on Bible verses or going to this course or doing this. He knows that what's necessary now is his only hope is that God starts right from the beginning again.

That's our only hope. And it's one of the things that has often come through in revival that men and women see not just their sins but they see their nature. And they begin to understand that this is why they cry to God for mercy.

Because they know it's not their own personal disciplines. It's not their choices. It's not them saying over New Year's resolutions or deciding to be different.

They know they need God to do something. About six months or so ago I went to a wedding of a lovely young couple in Exeter, the city of Exeter in the UK. And the wedding took place in an old Salvation Army citadel.

That's what they used to call their meeting halls. And this one was well over 100 years old. And they have in this particular citadel the old mercy seat or the penitential form.

Are you familiar with the way that the Salvation Army used to preach the gospel? In the early days General Booth used to say that the mission of the Salvation Army was salvation soup and soap in that order he used to say. They got the order a bit mixed up now. But he said salvation soup and soap in that order.

They would have at the front of their meetings a large pew facing the congregation. It wasn't to sit on. It was so that people could come and kneel on it with their elbows and they could pray.

So that when they preached the gospel they expected people to respond and to come to the front and to plead with God until they were sure that God had heard them. They had no canceling techniques. They had no sinner's prayer.

They just encouraged people to come and to pray. And I went to this particular wedding and they've got a, it must be 40 or 50 feet wide this particular citadel. It's a big building.

Not as big as this but it's a big building in the UK. We're a little country so our bigs are really quite little in comparison to your bigs. But it's a beautiful magnificent oak piece of furniture over a hundred years old, highly polished.

And it has written on it in golden letters this high. What's that? Two feet high I would think. It's split into two parts.

In the middle there are the two words salvation and holiness. Because the salvation army used to have two meetings on a Sunday. They had a holiness meeting on the Sunday morning and they had a salvation meeting in the evening.

And that was the only meetings they had. And there's this thing here and it's split into two parts and it says in these giant letters, it simply says, bring here thy bruised heart. They didn't expect people to come unless they were conscious that their hearts were bruised.

They weren't cajoling people to come out. They weren't trying to persuade another soul to come out because we're singing the last verse for the last time. They were expecting people to have no choice but to come out.

Bring here thy bruised heart. It brings these kind of cries. He cries to God, creating me.

And I'm just going to go on very quickly to say a couple of things. You may think, well, are the things that we're saying not a little bit sort of inward looking? Look at this in verse 12. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Then, notice the sequence here. He's already asked earlier on, take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Then will I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto thee. When? When you've created in me a clean heart. That's when.

Did you understand this? That the salvation of some of your relatives depends upon you getting right with God? Do you understand this? God is a moral God. He works in ways that he is determined to way. He cannot ignore sin.

He cannot ignore unrighteousness. What testimony can you have? How can you give an answer with a clear conscience if you don't have a clear conscience? David knows it. This is why I said I wonder what kind of relationship David had had with his friends in the preceding time.

Maybe they had some issues and they came to him but David would have no word for them. I guarantee that David wrote no psalms during that 12 months. There'd be no inspiration.

You can go on what God said last year. You can go through the rituals. You can go for the for the four laws of salvation.

You can go through the things that somebody else has done but you'll have nothing to say, not yourself, until God has put these things right. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God. Thou God of my salvation and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

Then listen to him here. This is the man who's praying that God will give him a new heart, a clean heart, to create a new heart. O Lord, open thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

God will give you your song back. God will give you your song back when he's created in you a clean heart, when he's shown you what you're like and you've given up on yourself, when you're sick to death of yourself, when you can no longer live with yourself and you cry to God for him to do something brand new. He'll give you a song.

Thou desirest not sacrifice. He's seen something now, hasn't he? Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it thee. Thou delightest not in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Remember God had said to him, you've despised my commandment, you've despised me. And David said, I know what you won't despise.

You will not despise a broken and a contrite heart. He knows he will have access to God with a broken and a contrite heart. He knows that God will never turn away the broken and the contrite heart.

Look at verse 18. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion. Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

This man has come to understand that his sin has not only damaged him and his family, it's actually breached the walls of Jerusalem. And my sin will breach the walls of my family. And my sin will breach the walls of the church that I am part of and so will yours.

Because each one of us has a place on the wall. Each one of us has a responsibility to be a watchkeeper on the wall. And if we have sinned and not put the thing right, we cannot do it.

And our gap in the wall is empty. And David's praying here. He's praying that God will now rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

And then verse 19, my last thing I want to say. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offerings and whole offerings. Then shall they, that's the first time the pronoun they comes in there, then shall they do something.

What will they do? They'll offer bullets upon thine altar. In other words, David is saying this. He knows that his abandonment to God will be contagious.

That's what he knows. These aren't sin offerings. These are burnt offerings and free will offerings.

Free will offerings and burnt offerings are the offerings which personified or symbolized people giving themselves in entirety to God. Abandoned, burning their bridges behind them, no hold barred, everything given to God. Psalm 103, one of our brothers put it on his presentation just yesterday.

Thy people shall be, literally it says in the Hebrew, thy people shall be as free will offerings in the day of thy power. That's here. This is David.

It begins here, not in the ends of the earth, brothers and sisters, it begins here with us. And if this afternoon as we've shared these things together, God has put his finger upon you and said, thou art the man. This thing needs to be resolved.

I beg you, I beg you for the church's sake. I beg you for your family's sake. If an Englishman is allowed to do this, I beg you for America's sake, get these things right.

Take this opportunity. Don't fight him. Let there be truth in the inward parts and call upon God for this miracle.

I said I would give you my definition of revival. I think revival actually is restoration to the full pristine power of authentic regeneration. I think that's what it is.

And things in life happen that sometimes we'll lose the edge and we'll begin to lose the way. And God in his grace comes and he fills all the bowls up to the top again. And some haven't even begun and they receive the touch of the revival and they're filled from bottom to top all in the same moment.

But it brings everything into full orb life. It was the promise of God that he would send us seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. He will, said the preacher, send Jesus.

Do you need to get something right? Do you need to call upon God? I'm going to pray briefly and I'm just going to let you have a minute or two. If you want to come to the front and put that kind of seal on it, please do that. Father, have we been hiding from you, Adam-like, because we knew things that were wrong? Have we avoided the places where you might even speak your word to us because we didn't want to hear what you might say? And we've gone through the motions and we've done the same things this week as we did last week and the year before.

And oh God, oh God, by the Spirit, Lord, come and put your finger on things. Come, you who wield the sword of the Spirit that can separate and pierce even the division of soul and spirit, bone and marrow. Come, Lord, with pinpoint accuracy so that each soul knows it's not guesswork but the work of God.

Put your finger upon what needs to be dealt with in our lives. Give us the courage, Lord, to come and make our confession, to get these things right, to call upon you, Lord, with all of our hearts. Create in me a clean heart, oh God.

Oh, thou who camest from above the pure celestial fire to impart. Kindle a flame of sacred love on the poor altar of my heart. There let it for thy glory burn with inextinguishable blaze, trembling to its source return with humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire to work and speak and think for thee. Still let me guard the sacred fire and still stir up thy gift in me. Revive thy work, Lord, in the midst of the earth.

Amen.

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