

It was a gorgeous spring day. The pride of recent successes was still flooding the mind of a handsome young man as he awoke from a mid afternoon siesta. He strolled out onto his deck and his eyes caught a glimpse of a beautiful young woman sunbathing a few doors down.

He turned away. Slowly he turned his head again ...this time more closely.

This man was a follower of the Living God. (like many of you) But now, the only thing filling his heart and mind was this woman whom he had never before but now he could not think of anything else. He asked his friends who she was and they told him she was the wife of a soldier who had been deployed.

It just so happened, this man, was the soldier's commander in chief. This man, was David, King of Israel.

This man was the same guy we heard praying last week from Ps. 4 out of the confidence of his identity as the anointed of God. But **lust** pushed all that aside and he followed his flesh to a fleeting encounter that would soon become **wormwood** in his soulfor the rest of his life.

Bathsheba conceived. David tried to cover it up by bringing Uriah (her husband) home to spend the night with her. But Uriah was too noble a soldier to do such a thing. His countrymen were at war..... where David **should** have been.

So he arranged a **hit** on Uriah. David rationalized it all away...

David's Faith had Failed.

His **lifeline of trust** in God's leadership and presence in His soul was kinked.....cutting off all communication

We are accustomed to **failures** in our life....

We have **tire** failures..... cell phone failures..... power failures.....

But for **those**, we have a PLAN in place.... mentally we know just what to do.

Even if someone we know is having **heart** failure.... we already know the number to call...

Some of you have even been trained to offer emergency medical assistance on the spot in that case.... blessing....

But what is our plan for a **faith** failure?

Either in our own life or a brother or sister in Christ?...

Through David's fall into sin.... God shows us a brilliant pattern.... (a plan if you will) for when our faith fails.

See the saddest part of most faith failures is that we don't realize the grave danger we are in..... that we are walking hand in hand with Satan....when we are intentionally walking in sin.... David did so for nearly a year....

While the grace of God was not extinguished in his heart.....it was effectively **SMOTHERED** by his love for sin....

Does that happen to you?

Might be the case of someone here today.... You believe in God.... You believe He sent Jesus to Die in your place.... to pay for your sin....you believe God raised Him from the dead...

Yet, you have allowed some wayward **lust** (some passion, some pursuit) to captivate you.....and like David... you have **RATIONALIZED** it all away...

If God is bringing that to mind as I speak.... and you know (from The Bible) that what you are chasing or involved in is **sin**....

it is a transgression of God's law...

He is calling you now to REPENT.

b/c God loves us.... He won't leave us to DIE in our sin....

He sends His servants to **WARN** us!

Maybe you know of someone you love that is in **sin**.... and God wants to send you to them with His Word.....

God sent **Nathan** the prophet to save David with a prophetic word....

Through that word.....he Holy Spirit brought conviction of sin....He brought the reality of judgment and brought to light once more the holiness of God which David had despised.

David **repented**. But the consequences of his sin remained, and God afflicted the child Uriah's wife had born to David....and he even though David fasted and prayed.... the child died.

It was during this time of SORROW...over the grievousness of his sin... that David wrote...

Psalm 51:1-17

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 only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the 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 broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

A Recovery Plan for Faith Failure

Because the very first symptom of **unbelief** is a break in communication with God... this whole plan is a prayer....

It is a prayer of restoration.... of **reconciliation**.....

Sometimes we feel so laden down with guilt (rightfully so)... we don't even know **how** to approach God....or how to posture our hearts before Him.....

If you have a desire to be reconciled to God.... so you can pray the words of this psalm directly....

However.... b/c our hearts are so prone to deception... I want to point out the vital signs of your heart should be **as** you pray...

This should be the **attitudes** of your **heart**....

Admit to God....

1. You ARE Right, I Am Wrong.

Unlike many trials that take place in our land today.... God is not swayed by some cleverly devised defense designed to evade actual guilt...

David had been using everything in his power to make himself **APPEAR** innocent before God brought conviction through Nathan....

True repentance begins with believing that God is a Judge Who knows the **whole truth** before you even approach the bench.

Your first plea... must be to admit that He is right....you are guilty as charged of whatever one of **His laws** you have broken...

Because (like David) our sins tend to snowball....

Most of us are guilty of breaking **all** of them at the **heart** level..

Our ONLY hope resides in God's mercy.

So ask for it....according to Who God is...

¹ Have **mercy** on me, O God,
according to your **steadfast love**;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out¹ my transgressions.

David appeals to God based on God's proven faithfulness to His own character.... not according to any merit within himself.

Derek Kidner – points out that “steadfast love” is a covenant word....

It is the good news that even if you are unfaithful God **never is**.... His love endures forever.

Because He chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world.... you **STILL belong** to Him even though you have been living as if you don't.

The very fact that you are responding to His life giving rebuke is evidence that you are His child... and you can come to Him as the prodigal son did... calling Him “Father.”

But David goes on to ask for grace in a much more intimate way:
“**abundant mercy**” is a deeply emotional term of the heart... indicating that David realizes He needs the tender forgiveness of God for gravity of the wrong he has committed.

1

Isaiah 43:25

““I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”

Isaiah 44:22

“I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.”

"According to Who You Are God... please **wipe my slate clean...**"

You who know & believe the gospel....understand... exactly how God could forgive the heinous things you have done.. Because you are under His fully disclosed New Covenant in Jesus Christ...

Colossians 2:13-14

"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross."

Truth of the cross... must be applied to your sin.... directly.....

The restoration of your relationship with God.... comes through your return to the foot of the place where the price for your sin was paid in full.

There you can pray....

- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

It is crucial that you see your sin as moral pollution.... you have stained the garment of God given to you freely through faith in His Son....

In many ways a little boy's mentality is so cute.... one of mine would not think a thing about putting on a clean shirt over top of a filthy t-shirt.... that is easier than taking it off you know...

Don't we do that..... rather than give up that which we know displeases God... we just try to put some good action OVER top of it....

Proverbs 28:13

"Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy."

If you are humble.... and honest.....the cleansing power of Jesus' blood is readily available for you to wash in!

The fountain of cleansing is yours for the asking!

1 John 1:9-10

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

God is after your **heart**. He wants nothing short of full disclosure... B/C He desires the fullness of Christ's love to FILL those places you are trying to fill with other gods..

His purpose is to bring your deeds into the light.... so that **YOU** can realize how they drastically they contrast with His holiness...

Because sin, by nature is deception... it is only God's grace that brings it to your attention so that you understand it for what it is..

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

What did David KNOW?.... Was he realizing... like I hope you do when you sin.... how many people were affected by his selfish lust?

David had violated the **marriage covenant** of another couple.... He had spoiled the pristine devotion of a young bride and groom....

Then he murdered the woman's husband... and implicated the leader of his army in his death...

when it became known.... no telling how many other men repeated his folly when they **learned how** from their king!

Because of David's sin.... Bathsheba not only had to mourn for her husband but nine months later she had to mourn over the death of her firstborn son...

But David realizes that all of that put together paled in comparison to the grief he had caused God.

4 Against you, **you only** have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be **justified** in your words
and blameless in your judgment.

You are RIGHT God.... entirely.... Your assessment of my situation is 100% accurate.... I AM wrong.

Kidner points out this helpful insight in talking about David's sin:

“The crime was no freak accident, it was in his character. David now understood it as an extreme expression of the warped creature he had always been and the faulty stock he sprang from.”

Do you think of **your** sin that way? Do you find yourself surprised when you do (or even think something evil)?

“I don't know what came over me!” As if you were this big slab of innocence before the wind blew some dirty deed your way....

David not only understood that he was wrong in that particular series of events.... He understood that he had never really..... been right.

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Your parents might have been some of the most upstanding people in town... David's certainly were.... but the original sin of Adam... was imputed to you through them....

Your nature (according to the flesh) has been CORRUPTED with this virus since you were conceived...

So... herein lies **the rub**....

God is righteous altogether.... God is light and in Him dwells no darkness at all...and we are not.

Like Isaiah....David has now seen the degree of **difference** between God's holiness...purity... steadfast love....

And the ugliness of his own **self absorption**.

Ever so subtly Satan strives to convince the church that God is just like man..... it is a LIE... God is Holy....and we are corrupt.

Yet God has gone to great lengths to **reconcile** this great divide.... and every time you come to him in repentance and faith... He is eager to RESTORE you through the truth of what He has done for you in Christ Jesus....

So you can ask your Father.... in covenant love.... to make you like Himself.

2nd heartcry... we can learn from David's pattern...

Recovery Plan for Faith Failure

2. God, Make me Like You

I feel and understand the difference between us and I don't want to stay the same! I want to **CHANGE**... I want the truth of your gospel to transform me from the inside out!

⁶ Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the **secret heart**.

I really admire Special Ed teachers.... in fact I married one.. The reason I do is their compassionate **patience** in consistently instructing those who are by nature difficult to teach.... that models God's actions towards each of us..

Instead of just despising our lack of wisdom....and dullness of heart.... God keeps on forgiving... SO THAT He can keep on teaching us!

Make sure you understand.....External conformity is not what God is after.... He wants change at the HEART level.

In many ways an **honest sinner** is closer to the Kingdom than a self righteous hypocrite....

God wants the HEART of His children...

By grace working through His truth...He changes us in the most **private sectors** of our being.... as we commune with Him in honesty and integrity....

As we receive the Word implanted... which is able to SAVE our soul...

Is your heart level desire to have God's truth **supplant** your corrupt ideas and tendencies?

Then join Him in praying He will do just that as you learn to rely on what Christ has already accomplished in the gospel...

Looking by faith through the symbols of redemption God had given to Israel... David clings to the atonement of the coming Messiah...

Remember that - the way you see Christ proclaimed in the OT is largely through the symbols of temple worship which pointed to what He would finally make ... a reality...

You may recall last week that I believed God wanted me to share with you the word picture of us being much like the OT **lepers**.... because of our sin...

We are, by nature UNCLEAN before God.... and left alone... we likewise defile other people with our corruption....

In the OT... God prescribed the ritual (again which pointed fwd to Christ) whereby lepers could become ceremonially **clean**...

The priests were to take a branch of **hyssop**, which was a leafy plant that used to grow on the walls of the temple...

And he would dip it in the basin of blood which had been drained from the sacrificial lamb...then he was to sprinkle that blood on the leper.... 7 times...

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

To purge – literally to **DE**-SIN..... like if you were to try to purge the stink bugs from your attic.....or a virus off of your hard drive...

David's faith was looking to a symbol of which you now have the reality...

As you ask God for cleansing...your great High Priest... sprinkles your soul with His own shed blood. His Holy Spirit personally purifies your guilty conscience as you believe....

No matter how DIRTY you were..... though your sins were as scarlet.... (Isaiah says) they shall be white as snow...

David believes by faith here..... God will make Him **whiter** than snow!

Just like David could point to the symbols of the OT rituals.... Christ has given us **this table** by which to experience (in a tangible way) the ongoing cleansing of His blood...

As you drink the cup... God would have you recognize that (by faith) you are taking into yourself...through a means He has ordained.... a physical representation of the blood Jesus spilled for you.... to cleanse you from your SIN...

It is through this cleansing that God transforms us and makes us like Himself.

The RESULT is renewed fellowship with our Father. Like David, we should **not** be satisfied with that as an intellectual concept....

As some dry fact..... David wanted to EXPERIENCE reconciliation in the presence of God!

- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

When defiled Israelites returned to camp... or to the city.... the people of God would cheer with gladness over the restoration of their brother...

Scripture tells us that there is more joy in heaven over ONE sinner who repents than over 99 who need no repentance...

David wants to HEAR that.... like you and I he longs to experience the fruit of reconciliation...

Literally...the Hebrew says (v. 8b) let the bones you have broken **DANCE!**

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is LIBERTY... and your worship should be fueled by a David like hunger to experience God's joy since He has chosen to no longer look upon your sin...

God, **make me like Yourself!!**

A Recovery Plan for Faith Failure

3. I Want to be Where You are....

New Creations in Christ Jesus WANT to be in the presence of God. They **loathe** the idea of anything **distancing** them from the God of their salvation...

- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Until Jesus returns... living in God's presence means being a conduit of His grace in **two directions.... (verticle and horizontal)**

- 1) The Joy He puts in your heart should be directed back at him in WORSHIPin like measure to the forgiveness you have received.

He who has been forgiven much **loves much**. The Joy of the Lord should be sought after...fought for...by faith in His promises to give you what your heart desires..

- 2) You experience God's grace as you **join Him** as **an agent** of reconciliation.

- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

You can not effectively teach others how forgiving God is... unless you are yourself enjoying the fruits of His mercy on a regular basis....

That does not mean you should intentionally sin more.... so grace can abound....

It means that even SMALL sins should be dealt with as acts of treason against this God of love...

Otherwise.... you will be telling stories of something God did decades ago.... over and over again..... which have no fresh grace upon them....

If you do not find any fresh joy in your heart over the abundance of God's mercy upon your soul..... Could be your heart is still weighed down with guilt....

After having Uriah murdered ...even here in the midst of his worship..... David's conscience still needed more washing....

You know how difficult **blood stains** are to get out right? Not only do they take the best Wisk or Shout has to offer.... but most often you have to rub them....

David prayed...

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

Few men in history are better examples of their **faith failing** than Peter....
In His denial of even knowing Christ 3 times on the eve of his trial..... Peter must
have felt the guilt of Jesus' blood being on his hands...and yet God gave him grace
to turn and repent...

So that (through Peter) He could bring other sinners to be **reconciled** to God!

So that his mouth could be used to bring glory to the grace of God actively working
through the GOSPEL! Peter knew personally the depth of what God could forgive!!!

That is part of the way God works even our failures together for GOOD!

- 15 O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- 16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.
- 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

We are about to celebrate... in a very tangible way... the **ONE sacrifice** which your
sin demanded.... the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross...

The offering up of the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

It requires two things from you.....if you are going to enjoy God's presence though
it...

- 1) A heart that is broken over your sin..... one that shudders at the idea of
causing pain to a God so tender towards an enemy like you....
- 2) Faith in the reality that Jesus paid your sin in full... and you have now been
justified in God's sight forever....

You have to believe.... that Jesus' cry... it is finished.... means that the guilt of your
sin has been separated from you as far as the east is from the west....

In order that you might be DONE with sin..... and seek to live RECONCILED to
God...

I urge you... as an ambassador of Christ..... Be reconciled to God.

Pray