

David's Spiritual Secret— Overcoming Life's Unending Struggles Study Guide

David's Spiritual Secret DSS: Message One (060108AM)

When we get to the end of everything--what is left? In other words, what will last forever?

Revelation 22 ends with God, Heaven and one more element—servants serving God. Who are those surrounding God's Throne?

*Revelation 22:3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and **His servants shall serve Him.** (NKJV)*

*Revelation 22:6, 9 Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to **show His servants** the things which must shortly take place. 9*

*Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am **your fellow servant**, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." (NKJV)*

And who are God's servants and how do they serve? That is what God's Word is all about. If we are to someday spend eternity serving God, how are we doing at our current serving?

There are almost three thousand biographical portraits in the Bible. In fact, the Bible is the single greatest source of biographical information from antiquity. There are more different individuals from a wider scope of history recorded in God's Word than any other single source in the world.

Most of the lives recorded in the Bible are only mentioned by name, but some are very clearly examined and analyzed by God. Those deeply explained lives give us great reasons to pause and listen to what God may have to say about them. After all He took the time and went to all the effort to capture these portraits for us and then delivered them to us in a forever settled in Heaven book—the Bible.

So, whose life is considered important to God? Well, who did God chose to write more about than any other single person in the whole history of the world? The answer is the young man we are going to meet this morning.

*Acts 13:22 And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also **He gave testimony** and said, "I have found David the son of Jesse, **a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.**" (NKJV)*

And what does someone look like that is “God-hearted”? It is a whole new way of looking at life as Paul continues and says—

*Acts 13:36 For **when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation**, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. (NIV)*

David was “God-hearted” which meant he served God’s purposes. The word “served” is the verb form (*hupereteo*) of the word for an under rower (*huperetes*) that we have often studied as a model of how to serve the Lord.

David was under God’s command, he did what the Lord asked him to do, willingly unseen and obscure—always wanting the Lord to get all the glory. A simpler way to say that is—David was God’s servant all his days. No wonder Paul uses the very same concept to describe his own life and ministry.

*1 Kings 15:5 because **David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. (NKJV)***

There are more chapters (141) devoted to the life of David than any other person next to God Himself—in all of His Word. That is a profound truth.

We know more about David’s words, thoughts, fears, strengths and weaknesses—than anyone else who has ever lived. And we know about all that from God Himself, and from His perspective. But that’s not all. We also know one very important thing for sure—it is God Himself who tells us about David. David was God’s man—His heart was after God, and for God. David was serving God as a servant of the Lord for life.

David is the most described man in the Bible for a reason—God has made him our prime Old Testament example of the life of God’s servants. This morning I’d like for you to study God’s Word with me and see what I like to call David’s Spiritual Secret.

Let’s read the start of a great biography, divinely penned by the Author of All Things—God Himself as he introduces us to David in 1st Samuel 16:1-13.

What is a person’s life like when they are committed to being God’s servant? God wants to explain that to us! First--

David’s life was on God’s mind. *God uses the unchangeable features of servants for His Glory!*

David’s family life again shows God’s grace. He was not oldest, strongest or most likely to succeed. He was overlooked and even abused. But what matters is if God has His hand upon you! God uses our circumstances! David is the youngest, David is neglected, David is unwanted, and David is left out. Yet with all that potential life warping treatment—David just keeps

following the Lord he loved. God's choice of the younger over the elder is another picture of His grace as we've already seen with Abel, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and now see with David!

*1 Samuel 16:11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, **and there he is, keeping the sheep.**" And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here."*

David's life was disciplined. *God uses the disciplined lives of servants for His Glory!*

God uses the diligent. He is handsome and hard working. When Samuel sent for David they called him from where? They knew he would be right where he was supposed to be, watching the flocks!

1 Samuel 16:12a So he sent and brought him in.

Check out Psalm 132 for a moment. What did David do during those monotonous, endless hours with the dumb, fearful and easily wandering sheep?

1. Note in v. 3-4 He sought God ahead of personal comforts;
2. v. 5 He made time for the Lord;
3. v. 6 This was as a shepherd boy;
4. v. 7 He longed for God;
5. v. 9a He was pondering the priority of personal purity;
6. v. 9b He was strengthened by righteous living because the righteous are bold as a lion, they have quietness and assurance from God and their hearts overflow with joy!

David's life was available for God to use. *God uses the available lives of servants for His Glory!*

David was chosen by God because God is always on the lookout for servants!

*1 Samuel 16:12b Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; **for this is the one!**"*

What is a someone after God's heart like? They are God's servants. They are in harmony with God, burdened with what burdens God, obeying all they know that matters to God. In others words—their heart is all God's. Is your heart for God? Does He have your heart? Is it all His?

*2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong **on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.** In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars." NKJV*

David was on God's mind (1st Samuel 13:14); he was loyal (1st Chronicles 16:9); and as God later reveals—David was a man of integrity (Psalm 78:72).

*Psalm 78:70-72 He also chose David His servant, And took him from the sheepfolds; 71 From following the ewes that had young He brought him, To shepherd Jacob His people, And Israel His inheritance. 72 So he shepherded them **according to the integrity of his heart**, And guided them by the skillfulness of his hands. NKJV*

David was schooled by sheep which vary little in their habits, they walk so often down the same path it is soon a rutted canyon.

- Sheep are helpless - they can't even clean themselves.
- Sheep are dumb – they can't even find food unless they are led to it.
- Sheep are dirty – they walk around and collect any and all filth they come into contact with.
- Sheep are helpless, dumb, and dirty – and can only be cared for by the patient.

David was forged by God in the desert as he watched the sheep. His life was trained by solitude. His will was shaped by obscurity. His will was steeled by monotony. His mind was trained by reality. When God trains us on the inside He takes His time.

So David was a patient man, who sat on the same hills as his grandfathers had sat upon, watching the same stars and seeking the same God. Only God saw a man of integrity, a man of loyalty, a man God could trust and count on!

David's life was empowered by the Lord. *God uses His Spirit to empower servants for His Glory!*

Never forget that it is God who will empower His servants. The Spirit of God anointed David—and anyone else who ever does anything worth anything for God. Nothing apart from God will last. Only what is attached to God will have any value.

1 Samuel 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

Do you know what that verse does to my heart? Each time I read it my heart wells up with the cry of the hymn writer—

*Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me.
Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me.*

David: Serving God

DSS: Message Two (060108PM)

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David's life was an example of godliness to others. *God uses the actions of servants for His Glory!*

Others watch our life. David's actions provided a powerful testimony to those who saw him—and they were willing to tell what they saw. What kind of advertisement have we been this week for God? A good one or a bad one?

*1 Samuel 16:18 Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, **I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite**, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the Lord is with him."*

Does that remind you of what we are all to be? Listen to Paul—

*1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, **but be an example to the believers** in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (NKJV)*

What do people see in my life, what do they remember, and what do they report to others? Is it something that pleases the Lord?

David's life displayed true humility. *God uses humble servants for His Glory!*

David never sought the spotlight. David resisted the pride that often tempts us after great accomplishments. David had a job to do and he humbly did it. He was consistent, faithful, dependable, and as a humble servant--genuinely unaware of himself. A test of humility is whether or not one is unconcerned who gets the credit.

*1 Samuel 16:19 Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David, **who is with the sheep.**"*

After David was anointed by Samuel as the next king—what did he do? Did he hang up a sign, “King David lives here”? No—he went back to his obscure, humble, monotonous job with those dumb and dirty sheep!

David never seemed to let life go to his head--he tended the sheep, worked as a courier for his dad during the war by taking provisions to his brothers in the army. Then after defeating Goliath he had been hired by the government (King Saul) and worked in the various departments: entertainment (he played his harp), military (he was sent out to raid and kill the enemy Philistines), and finally as a member of the cabinet (he sat at Saul's table as his son-in-law and advised him on security and military issues and led a squad of warriors for the king.

After being elevated to being the king, David goes on with life, stays the same humble servant of the Lord that he was before that day.

David's life ministered to others. *God uses the ministry of servants for His Glory!*

It produces comfort in others. David's love and passion for God warmed the souls of those around him. David's spiritual influence even calmed demonized Saul.

*1 Samuel 16:23 And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then **Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.***

We are to be salt (preserving decay around us) and light (the beacon of truth pointing at Christ) to a lost and dying world around us. By your kindness and goodness impress a lost world with Christ's love!

David wanted to honor God with his work. *God is glorified by diligent working servants.*

David was responsible. He kept at his job until it was finished. Can't you imagine what a tragedy it would have been if David didn't finish things—like the 23rd Psalm? Oh, I'll get to that someday...

1 Samuel 17:15 But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

Nothing entrusted to him was too small to maintain. **David cared for one lamb!**

*1 Samuel 17:34-35 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear **came and took a lamb out of the flock**, 35 I went out after it and struck it, and **delivered the lamb** from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. NKJV*

*Matthew 25:21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you **were faithful over a few things**, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*
(NKJV)

As a shepherd, David had to risk his life for a lamb, for his dad, and for his family. He took life seriously and responsibly. By the way—when do great men and women start to be great? Isn't it just a continuation of many little choices? You will never become something in the future that you are not doing now. Your current habits and character only will enlarge. Are you responsible or careless? Are you self absorbed or others oriented?

What has God entrusted to you? Adults you may have a marriage, a family, a job and a ministry. Young people you may have a smaller brother or sister, school, your room, a bike, a job? What are you doing with what God has put under your care? Jesus said something about little things once.

*Luke 16:10 He who is **faithful in what is least is faithful also in much**; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. (NKJV)*

David wanted to honor God with his habits. *God is either honored or dishonored by the habits of His servants.*

Did you notice David's habits? This next verse lists several. David is disciplined, responsible, trustworthy, and obedient.

*1 Samuel 17:20 so **David rose early** in the morning, **left the sheep with a keeper**, and **took the things** and **went as Jesse had commanded him**. And he came to the camp as the army was going out to the fight and shouting for the battle*

Do you really think that was the first time he acted like that? Be careful what habits you allow to grow up and take hold in your life! Every action and habit we allow has an either positive or negative consequence in our lives. Beware of bad habits and sinful actions.

Sin **always** pays us back with boredom, guilt, shame, loneliness, confusion, emptiness, loss of purpose, not to speak of--loss of rewards. But obedience **always** produces eternal blessings!

*Galatians 6:7-9 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; **for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.** 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

David wanted to honor God with his life. God wants us as His servants to give our lives back to Him—He had Divine perspective. He was God fearing. So immediately David thought of one thing—what can **I do** for the Lord!

*1 Samuel 17:25-26 So the men of Israel said, “Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be that the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father’s house exemption from taxes in Israel.” 26 Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, “What shall be done **for the man** who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that **he should defy the armies of the living God?**”*

David’s Epitaph--Nine Words

DSS: Message Three (060115AM)

What would you like to have written on your tombstone? When people remember your life and mine—what would we like for them to remember?

What's really interesting is, God wrote many epitaphs, memories of what the life that was lived was all about. Hebrews 11 is a chapter filled with monuments to lives lived for God that pleased Him.

ep·i·taph [noun] Definitions: 1. **inscription on a tombstone:** an inscription on a tombstone or monument commemorating the person buried there; 2. **speech or writing commemorating a dead person:** a short speech or piece of writing celebrating the life of a recently deceased person.

If God sent down an order to write out an inscription to the monument company—what would He send? God epitaph for David is written down in Acts 13. I invite you to the marker that captures an entire life lived on planet earth. And in 9 words God sums up what a servant is all about. This is what I like to call **David's Spiritual Secret!**

*Acts 13:36 For when **David had served God's purpose in his own generation**, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. (NIV)*

Who will be in Heaven? God's Servants.

And what does Paul in the New Testament and David in the Old Testament have in common? Both called themselves God's servants and both looked on life as serving God, and the end of life as having finished their course of service for Him.

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1. **David's life was on God's mind.** *God uses the unchangeable features of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:11*
2. **David's life was disciplined.** *God uses the disciplined lives of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:12a*
3. **David's life was available for God to use.** *God uses the available lives of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:12b*
4. **David's life was empowered by the Lord.** *God uses His Spirit to empower servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:13*
5. **David's life was an example of godliness to others.** *God uses the actions of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:18*
6. **David's life displayed true humility.** *God uses humble servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:19*
7. **David's life ministered to others.** *God uses the ministry of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:23*
8. **David wanted to honor God with his work.** *God is glorified by diligent working servants. 1 Samuel 17:1; 34-35*
9. **David wanted to honor God with his habits.** *God is either honored or dishonored by the habits of His servants. 1 Samuel 17:20*
10. **David wanted to honor God with his life.** *God wants us as His servants to give our lives back to Him. 1 Samuel 17:25-26*

Now look with me at the rest of the elements of a servant's life that God wants us to see.

❖ **David wanted to magnify God's hand in his life.** *God is honored when His servants remember His Hand in their lives.*

*1 Samuel 17:36-37 Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.³⁷ Moreover David said, **The Lord, who delivered me** from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, **He will deliver me** from the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you!"*

When David is asked to talk about himself by King Saul, and explain the biggest qualifications he can think of for the job of facing Goliath—what does David say? He tells the king that his greatest accomplishments came from the Hand of God. Do you see the Hand of God in your life? Do you tell others about what God is doing in your life? We should because-- *God is honored when His servants remember His Hand in their lives.*

❖ **David wanted to honor God's Name.** *God is glorified when we honor His Name.*

*1 Samuel 17:45-46 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you **in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.**"⁴⁶ This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, **that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.**"*

Our world has marginalized God. The True and Living God who created everything and upholds all things is slowly being erased from the public life of our world. His truth is minimized, His Word is neglected, His people are ignored. All that He asks of us is one thing—magnify Him!

❖ **David wanted to dedicate his trophies to the Lord.** *God is glorified when His servants dedicate their trophies to Him.*

Compare these two verses for an incredible spiritual lesson about what made David tick, and what it was that God wanted so much for us to see in his life.

*1 Samuel 17:54 And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but **he put his armor in his tent.***

But a few years later, where was that very special trophy carefully stowed away? In David's room, on his wall for all to see and point to him as the greatest warrior? No way—he had taken it to the tent of God, the place most associated with the Lord on planet earth. His treasure was on deposit with God!

*1 Samuel 21:9 So the priest said, "**The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, there it is, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod.** If you will take that, take it.*

For there is no other except that one here.” And David said, “There is none like it; give it to me.”

David took the sword of Goliath, the ultimate trophy of the day—but he didn’t take it to show off how great he was. David had started a habit of pointing the glory to God. Any trophy David ever received in all his years of undefeated conquests, he seems to always give back to the Lord as an honor to Him! David was God’s servant and so he gave his trophies to God all the way through life. He measured life from God’s perspective.

*1 Chronicles 18:11 **King David also dedicated these to the Lord**, along with the silver and gold that he had brought from all these nations—from Edom, from Moab, from the people of Ammon, from the Philistines, and from Amalek. NKJV*

David made this a life long habit. As God gave him great victories, and David was given greater and greater trophies—he just kept giving them back to the Lord. There is no limit to what God will do with a life that keeps being given back to Him!

*1 Chronicles 28:9 “As for you, my son Solomon, **know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind**; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.” (NKJV)*

Probably every one of us in this room have heard the famous life’s motto that the great missionary Charles Thomas Studd (1860-1931) lived and died by--

*“Only one life,
‘twill soon be past;
and only what’s done for Christ—
will last.”*

However, few of us realize when it was that he said those words. It was on his deathbed with his precious family gathered around him. He had already told each of his children that he wished he had something to give to them, but he had nothing left. Then he said, “..but I gave it all to Jesus long ago.”[1]

This spiritual giant actually gave his children more than anyone could imagine. His children had seen their father grow year by year in the Lord. They saw his personal devotion to the Word of God. They watched him refined by constant health problems, reoccurring weakness and bouts with intense pain. They had watched his tireless devotion to the Lord that carried their frail dad to the remotest and most dangerous spots on earth—all to share the glorious Gospel of Christ. In the end, every one of his children served the Lord to their last days. They saw and followed the example of his great dedication to God.

When Avis B. Christiansen (1895-1985), the wife of the Vice President of Moody Bible Institute heard these precious words spoken by C.T. Studd at his death, she began to ponder them. A few years later in 1937, she wrote a now famous hymn, “**Only One Life to Offer**”. Listen to her reflections that turned into a prayer of devotion to the Lord she also served with all her heart (hymn # 378):

*Only one life to offer--
Jesus, my Lord and King;
Only one tongue to praise Thee
And of Thy mercy sing;
Only one heart's devotion--
Savior, O may it be
Consecrated alone to Thy matchless glory,
Yielded fully to Thee.*

*Only this hour is mine, Lord--
May it be used for Thee;
May ev'ry passing moment
Count for eternity;
Souls all about are dying,
Dying in sin and shame;
Help me bring the message of Calv'ry's redemption
In Thy glorious name.*

*Only one life to offer--
Take it, dear Lord, I pray;
Nothing from Thee withholding,
Thy will I now obey;
Thou who hast freely given
Thine all in all for me,
Claim this life for Thine own to be used, my Saviour,
Ev'ry moment for Thee.*

Look at the end of his life, what did David do with all those treasures?

*1 Chronicles 22:14 Indeed **I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the Lord** one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them.*

*1 Chronicles 29:2-3 Now for the house of my God **I have prepared with all my might**: gold for things to be made of gold, silver for things of silver, bronze for things of bronze, iron for things of iron, wood for things of wood, onyx stones, stones to be set, glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and marble slabs in abundance. 3 Moreover, **because I have set my affection on the house of my God**, I have given to the house of my God, **over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure** of gold and silver: NKJV*

So, are you seeking God while you are young? You say how do I start? Here's a quick game plan to be like David God's servant.

1. Like David--God's servant, MY life is on God's mind.
2. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs discipline.
3. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs to be available to God for His use.
4. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs to be empowered by the Lord.
5. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs to be an example of godliness
6. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs to display true humility.
7. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs to minister to others.
8. Like David--God's servant, I will honor God with MY work.
9. Like David--God's servant, I will honor God with MY attitude.
10. Like David--God's servant, I will honor God with MY habits.
11. Like David--God's servant, I will honor God with MY life.
12. Like David--God's servant, I will magnify God's hand in MY life.
13. Like David--God's servant, I will honor God's Name with MY mouth.
14. Like David--God's servant, I will dedicate MY life wholly to the Lord.

David's spiritual secret was a heart to serve. David wanted to serve the Lord.

[1] Elisabeth Elliot, *Passion & Purity*, Fleming Revell, p. 43

David's Legacy—The RICHEST Man in the World

DSS: Message Four (060122AM)

When the life of the greatest recorded servant in the Bible ended—what was left behind? Our legacy is what we leave behind to those we love. What did David God's servant leave behind?

Last time we saw David's epitaph, written by God, in nine words--***David served the purpose of God in his generation.*** So the first thing David left behind a life that testified that God saw him as a servant.

What else did he leave behind? Humanly speaking, ***David probably left behind the greatest fortune ever amassed by any one man on planet earth!***

But if you see things as God does you would see that David left everything behind (like everyone must)—except what he had given back to the Lord.

You see, David was a real servant of God. We have already followed his trail from his earliest days across the Scriptures. And we know from God's Word that a genuine servant doesn't really own anything—it actually all belongs to his master. He and all he has is owned and controlled by another—the master. And that is what David was—a servant.

So all he had was the Lord's. ***And that is how we are to be also!*** Remember those words that should ring in our ears as God's servants? Let's open there first this morning.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. NKJV

Or as that great servant of the Lord Ken Taylor wrote when he paraphrased God's Word for his children—

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Haven't you yet learned that your body is the home of the Holy Spirit God gave you, and that he lives within you? Your own body does not belong to you. 20 For God has bought you with a great price. So use every part of your body to give glory back to God because he owns it. TLB

Now go to the next book and see what that means in day to day life. To best do that, we need to read backward starting at 2nd Corinthians 5:15. Let's **stand** as you turn there please.

2 Corinthians 5:15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. NKJV

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; NKJV

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. NKJV

What do the following people have in common? And, what do you often think of first when I name the following people from modern history:

John D. Rockefeller, Henry Ford, J. Paul Getty, Warren Buffet, Bill Gates...

Usually the first thing most people associate with them is vast wealth and riches, right?

Now, let me try the name of another well know person. When I say David the shepherd boy and David the King—what do you think of? Maybe Goliath, maybe Psalms, maybe God's King of His people Israel, and sadly, maybe Bathsheba. But did any of you first think of wealth and riches? Probably not—yet David was far wealthier than all of those combined, and doubled, and tripled!

So how much wealth did David have? Is it really an unbelievable amount? Yes, three thousand years ago **David had five thousand tons of gold.**

*1 Chronicles 22:14 Indeed **I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the Lord** one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them.*

Yellow Metal

There are many physical aspects of the yellow metal which are truly amazing.

- Gold is the most malleable (able to be hammered into very thin sheets) and ductile (able to be drawn into a fine wire) of all metals. It is so malleable that a goldsmith can hammer one ounce of gold into a thin translucent wafer covering more than 100 square feet only five millionths of an inch thick.
- Its ductility is equally amazing. One ounce of gold can be drawn into a wire 50 miles long! Furthermore, **ONLY** one ounce of this marvelous metal is required to plate a thread of copper 1,000 miles long. That's really stretching it, wouldn't you say?
- Gold is also one of the heaviest metals known. It has a specific gravity of 19.3, which means it weighs 19.3 times as much as an equal volume of water. Therefore, one cubic foot of gold weighs 1,206 pounds. More than half a ton!

More unbelievable than its physical characteristics is its scarcity. It is well documented that the world's holdings accumulated during all recorded history to the present is only about 120,000 metric tons. Understandably, it is rather difficult for the average person to relate to this measurement. Suffice it to say that the total world's hoard of the shiny metal will occupy a single cube 60 feet by 60 feet by 60 feet - which is equivalent to the approximate volume of three 12-room homes. This is indeed a small volume of matter to have influenced the toil and destiny of so many people since biblical days. In fact the total world's holdings of the rare metal could be transported by a single solitary oil tanker - that's if Lloyds of London would ever accept the insurance risk on this priceless cargo. **The value of this priceless cargo would be approximately \$ 2.2 TRILLION!**[1]

How much is five thousand tons of gold (or 100,000 talents as the Bible describes it)? Well, right here in America we have a Federal Building called Fort Knox in Kentucky that has 4600 tons of gold (precisely according to governments records 147.3 million ounces) under very careful guard. ***That just happens to be the most gold reserves of any nation on earth.***

So the largest single pile of gold owned by anyone on earth today is 4600 tons here in the USA. So three thousand years ago David exceeded all the wealth in gold held by the richest nation in the history of planet earth (the USA). And David exceeded Fort Knox's holdings by 400 tons. That means David had ***almost a million pounds*** more gold than all of the USA!!

How Much Did David, God's Servant, Really Have?

If you dig into the commodities market you'll find the following facts in the endless tables of records kept in the precious metals archives. In all the history of the world to 1835[2] there was at the most a total of 20 thousand tons of gold ever produced. In David's day three thousand

years ago there was no more than ten thousand tons of gold on the planet. So at the very least—David held at the end of his life **half or more** of all the wealth on his planet!

David's gold was worth over 89 billion dollars in today's commodity markets. But in his day his wealth exceeded half of all the monetary gold valued wealth of the entire world. Some economists say that the sum total of all monetary wealth in the world is in the realm of 250 trillion dollars (that is loans, stocks, bonds, deposits, etc). So by comparison in the world of 2006—**David would be worth over \$125 trillion dollars!** Now that is wealthy.

David had wealth that is staggering and even hard for us to even believe. Yet NO ONE ever thinks of him as wealthy until after they study that part of his life.

If you wonder why David's wealth is usually never thought about—the answer is found in a study of the assets of God's servants. The assets of God's servants usually follow the words of their Master—

*Matthew 6:19-21 **Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 **but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (NKJV)*

*James 4:14 Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. **For what is your life?** It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. NKJV*

*2 Corinthians 4:18 While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. **For the things which are seen are temporary**, but the things which are not seen are eternal. NKJV*

And the wealth of any servant of God is held in hands that are attached to a heart that sings—

All I have belongs to you,

For all I have has come from you.

Nothing I own, nothing I possess,

Is by my own hands, its by Your Faithfulness.

So please take this offering,

From a heart of Thanksgiving.

For You've given all I have.

So David is someone we will meet in Heaven. Because who will be in Heaven? God's Servants. And what do God's servants do with their treasures? Just like David—they give them back to God. And that is just where we left off last time.

David was “God-hearted” which meant he served God's purposes. David was under God's command, he did what the Lord asked him to do, willingly unseen and obscure—always wanting the Lord to get all the glory. A simpler way to say that is—David was God's servant all his days. No wonder Paul uses the very same concept to describe his own life and ministry.

And we have been looking for week after week at the first of David's spiritual secrets. The first secret was the most important one—David was God's servant. And in the most written about life in the Bible, God has put the life of His servant David on display. Remember the characteristics we have already seen?

You may probably have these noted in the margins of your Bible.

If not—why not take a moment and jot them there as I go through them again? They can become a check list for each of us as we seek to cultivate a servant heartedness for the Lord like David's.

- ❖ **David's unique life was designed by God.** *God uses the unchangeable features of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:1-11*
- ❖ **David's life was disciplined.** *God uses the disciplined lives of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:12a*
- ❖ **David's life was available for God to use.** *God uses the available lives of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:12b*
- ❖ **David's life was empowered by the Lord.** *God uses His Spirit to empower servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:13*
- ❖ **David's life was an example of godliness to others.** *God uses the actions of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:18*
- ❖ **David's life displayed true humility.** *God uses humble servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:19*
- ❖ **David's life ministered to others.** *God uses the ministry of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:23*
- ❖ **David wanted to honor God with his work.** *God is glorified by diligent working servants. 1 Samuel 17:1; 34-35*
- ❖ **David wanted to honor God with his habits.** *God is either honored or dishonored by the habits of His servants. 1 Samuel 17:20*
- ❖ **David wanted to honor God with his life.** *God wants us as His servants to give our lives back to Him. 1 Samuel 17:25-26*
- ❖ **David wanted to magnify God's hand in his life.** *God is honored when His servants remember His Hand in their lives. 1 Samuel 17:36-37*
- ❖ **David wanted to honor God's Name with his mouth.** *God is glorified when we honor His Name. 1 Samuel 17:45-46*

Last time we ended with the characteristic of David's life that he **wanted to dedicate his treasures and trophies to the Lord**. *God is glorified when His servants dedicate their trophies to Him. 1 Samuel 21:9*

*1 Chronicles 22:14 Indeed **I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the Lord one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them.***

*1 Chronicles 18:11 **King David also dedicated these to the Lord**, along with the silver and gold that he had brought from all these nations—from Edom, from Moab, from the people of Ammon, from the Philistines, and from Amalek. NKJV*

David made this a life long habit. As God gave him great victories, and David was given greater and greater trophies—he just kept giving them back to the Lord. There is no limit to what God will do with a life that keeps being given back to Him!

David poured his life out as an irrecoverable offering because he believed that God deserved the best. Once David longed for the sweet water he had drank as a child that was now behind enemy lines. His mightiest warriors fought through to the well of Bethlehem, drew water, fought their way back, and presented the water to David. David amazed them and actually poured the water on the ground. David poured out the water to the Lord as a drink offering. A drink offering poured out was never recoverable as the ground absorbed every drop. So David gave to the Lord irrecoverably what was most precious to him. David poured out the water from the well of his childhood, just like the treasures of his career because David believed that God deserved the best of his time, treasures, and talents.

*2 Samuel 23:13-17 Then three of the thirty chief men went down at harvest time and came to David at the cave of Adullam. And the troop of Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. 14 David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. 15 And David said with longing, **“Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!”** 16 So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, **but poured it out to the Lord.** 17 And he said, “Far be it from me, O Lord, that I should do this! Is this not the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?” Therefore he would not drink it. These things were done by the three mighty men. NKJV*

Remember I told you last time that the only two individuals that call themselves under-rowers (bottom level galley slaves) in the Bible are Paul and David? Well here is another parallel. Both men "poured out" their lives for the Lord as an irrecoverable offering given to the Lord with no hope of return. That is the life of a servant and that is a life that God rewards.

David wanted to make sacrifices for God because he knew God deserved that which was costly. The prophet Gad told David what God expected—a sacrificial offering on Mt. Moriah. David went to the spot and the owner offered to give to David everything he needed. David

would not take the threshing floor without paying full price because David would not give to God that which cost him nothing!

2 Samuel 24:18-25 And Gad came that day to David and said to him, “Go up, erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.” 19 **So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded.** 20 Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. 21 Then Araunah said, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant?” And David said, “To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the Lord, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people.” 22 Now Araunah said to David, “Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. 23 All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king.” And Araunah said to the king, “May the Lord your God accept you.” 24 Then the king said to Araunah, **“No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing.”** So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. 25 And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel. NKJV

Look at the end of his life, what did David do with all those treasures?

*1 Chronicles 22:14 Indeed **I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the Lord** one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them.*

*1 Chronicles 29:2-3 Now for the house of my God **I have prepared with all my might:** gold for things to be made of gold, silver for things of silver, bronze for things of bronze, iron for things of iron, wood for things of wood, onyx stones, stones to be set, glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and marble slabs in abundance. 3 Moreover, **because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver:** NKJV*

How Can I Be Like David?

So, are you living like a servant of God? You say how do I start? Here's a quick game plan to be like David God's servant.

1. Like David--God's servant, MY life is on God's mind.
2. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs discipline.
3. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs to be available to God for His use.
4. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs to be empowered by the Lord.
5. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs to be an example of godliness

6. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs to display true humility.
7. Like David--God's servant, MY life needs to minister to others.
8. Like David--God's servant, I will honor God with MY work.
9. Like David--God's servant, I will honor God with MY habits.
10. Like David--God's servant, I will honor God with MY life.
11. Like David--God's servant, I will magnify God's hand in MY life.
12. Like David--God's servant, I will honor God's Name with MY mouth.
13. Like David--God's servant, I will dedicate his treasures and trophies to the Lord.
14. **David poured his life out as an irrecoverable offering because he believed that God deserved the best.**
15. **David wanted to make sacrifices for God because he knew God deserved that which was costly.**

Probably every one of us in this room have heard the famous life's motto that the great missionary Charles Thomas Studd (1860-1931) lived and died by--

*"Only one life,
'twill soon be past;
and only what's done for Christ—
will last."*

However, few of us realize when it was that he said those words. It was on his deathbed with his precious family gathered around him. He had already told each of his children that he wished he had something to give to them, but he had nothing left. Then he said, "...but I gave it all to Jesus long ago." [3]

When Avis B. Christiansen (1895-1985), the wife of the Vice President of Moody Bible Institute heard these precious words spoken by C.T. Studd at his death, she began to ponder them. A few years later in 1937, she wrote a now famous hymn, "**Only One Life to Offer**". Listen to her reflections that turned into a prayer of devotion to the Lord she also served with all her heart (hymn # 378):

*Only one life to offer--
Jesus, my Lord and King;*

*Only one tongue to praise Thee
And of Thy mercy sing;
Only one heart's devotion--
Savior, O may it be
Consecrated alone to Thy matchless glory,
Yielded fully to Thee.*

*Only this hour is mine, Lord--
May it be used for Thee;
May ev'ry passing moment
Count for eternity;
Souls all about are dying,
Dying in sin and shame;
Help me bring the message of Calv'ry's redemption
In Thy glorious name.*

*Only one life to offer--
Take it, dear Lord, I pray;
Nothing from Thee withholding,
Thy will I now obey;
Thou who hast freely given
Thine all in all for me,
Claim this life for Thine own to be used, my Saviour,
Ev'ry moment for Thee.*

❖ [1] http://www.gold-eagle.com/gold_digest/history_gold.html

❖ [2] More unbelievable than its physical characteristics is its scarcity. It is well documented that the world's holdings accumulated during all recorded history to the present is only about 120,000 metric tons. From 1910 to the present 75% of all gold that has ever existed has been mined (113,538 tons). Before 1910 there was a sum total of 40 thousand tons. From 1835 when mining records were established to 1910 a total of 16 thousand tons were mined. So there was about 20,000 tons on the high side by 1835. So just go back nearly three thousand years of digging and searching and you see how much David had amassed!

❖ [3] Elisabeth Elliot, *Passion & Purity*, Fleming Revell, p. 43

David--Standing Alone for God

DSS: Message Five (060129AM)

This morning, open with me to one of the greatest chapters in God's Word, 1st Samuel 17. The record of David and Goliath from God's perspective was David standing all alone for God! David is the person we know more about from God's perspective--than any other human that ever lived. David has more words written about him by God—than any other human who has ever lived.

David's life has been given to us by God to demonstrate how he lived a life for God's purposes. And so we have found that David's first spiritual secret was ***a heart to serve***. David wanted to serve the Lord. David was under God's command, he did what the Lord asked him to do, willingly unseen and obscure—always wanting the Lord to get all the glory. A simpler way to say that is—David was God's servant all his days.

A second element of his life is that David had ***a heart to stand***—David was willing to serve God even if he was the only one at any particular moment doing so. Just as all of us need to be life

long servants of God—we also need to decide that we too, like David will stand all alone for the Lord.

We Stand Alone for God by Denying Ungodliness

- Will you stand all alone for God when needed at work, at school, and at home? When the conversation, entertainment, or activities begin to dishonor the Name of the Lord—will you stand all alone for the Lord against it? We are called to deny ungodliness in any form that touches our lives. *Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, NKJV*

We Stand Alone for God by Hungering for the Lord Each Day

- Will you stand alone for God by reading His Word when you travel, while you are away at school, or when you are alone at home? Will you stand alone for God by praying over your meals even when you are alone? Will you stand alone for God by memorizing His Word instead of watching TV all night like most everyone else? Our world believes that Jesus is unimportant and that we are the reason to live not Him. The only way to counter that horrible lie is to show what Jesus said, that we His children live and believe. *Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"* NKJV

David was willing to stand for God--all alone. And there were few more lonely spots in the history of the universe than the hillside of the Valley of Elah in the "no man's land" between the armies of Israel and the Philistines.

Haven't we all sometimes wished we could have had a bird's eye view of the titanic confrontation of David and Goliath? That scene in biblical history stands as one of the greatest moments of God's Word.

Let's go back to the crisp, cool air of a Middle Eastern morning three thousand years ago to see David. Two callused feet slipped quietly out from under the warmth of a wool fleece and deftly into the sandals left carefully beside the low wooden cot. In the twilight of early morning's pre-dawn darkness the possibly red headed, teenaged-boy crept carefully out of the stone house on the outskirts of Bethlehem.

With the confidence of integrity and the joy of purity--young David was on his way to a moment never to fade from the pages of history.

Walking excitedly the rocky paths up and down the hills of Judah, the young shepherd boy was headed to the Valley of Elah a mere 8 miles off. Arriving before breakfast young David eagerly surveyed the eastern rim of the valley. Campfires and tents dotted the hillside as he looked at the army of God's people Israel. With a heart filled with gratitude and wonder David strode up to the first tent and asked if anyone knew where his brothers from Bethlehem were camping. The

special provisions his dad had sent them needed to be delivered, but they were only a part of David's purpose in coming.

David longed to see the people who stood for his God. But even more, David so loved the God of Israel; he wanted to see Him at work. David sang of His God on his long vigils around the hills of Bethlehem caring for his father's sheep. In fact, in his favorite song from the hills where he sat day after day as a shepherd boy--he sang of the Lord as his shepherd. And so with that Psalm 23 heart, David came as God's man for this very climactic moment in history!

Suddenly David's search for his brothers abruptly ended as a loud voice brimming with evil rumbled up the hillsides of that valley. In the distance a pillar of armor encasing God's enemy Goliath sprayed the venom of the ancient serpent from Eden across the faithless and frightened people of God.

Standing just above the height of a basketball rim, he was a full three feet taller than Michael Jordan. Goliath easily weighed over 400 pounds and was dressed in layers of shining armor of bronze that weighed in at another 150 plus pounds. Then at the end of an eight foot long pole was a metal spear point that weighed about 20 pounds. Goliath was equipped with the very latest military weaponry and was a fearsome sight.

Shocked, grieved, and angered--David heard for the first time this irreverent pagan reviling the God of Heaven. Instantly he wanted to stand for the honor of God at all costs. As we know so well, he did. Unafraid and with no concern for self he embodies what God can do with all who think only of the Lord and not of themselves.

With that brief insight, let's read God's eyewitness, on the spot account--of one of the greatest moments in history, as the unseen by all but David--God, defeats the most visible representation of all that God is not--Goliath.

Most people observing David and Goliath only saw two people out there facing one another. But David saw one more person--the Lord. He felt that there were three of them out there and that made all the difference! Just as he had found on the lonely hillsides as a shepherd boy--David "fear(ed) no evil for Thou [God] art with me"! What David had thought, believed, and sang to the Lord--was true in his life.

God was as real to confident David as the fearsome giant Goliath was to all the quaking Israelite army. David knew that the battle was the Lord's.

To stand alone, the first choice we see in David is ***God consciousness***. David acted just like Joseph had 800 years earlier, facing Potiphar's wife blurting out "how can I do this evil in God's sight"! A servant of God who stands alone resists finding pleasure in sin. 400 years earlier than David, a similar servant named Moses would turn away from the glittering pleasures of Egypt because he could see the God who is invisible to those without faith. (Hebrews 11:25-27).

So David, Moses, and Joseph all had God consciousness. They saw God was watching them. That changed everything. It meant that battles are not their's alone--but God's. Do you fight all

your own battles—all alone? Or have you come to the place that you realize that the battle is the Lord's? David did and that is why God wants us to remember him! He stood all alone for God.

- *1 Samuel 17:47 Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; **for the battle is the Lord's**, and He will give you into our hands.” NKJV*

The events of that day are indelibly sketched on our hearts. The shepherd lad, a handful of stones, a homemade weapon plus God--made an unbeatable army of one. David defeated the giant and became an instant and enduring hero of all the ages. Why? In our previous studies we went back and examined David in his youth and found what he lived for in those early days that made him great. That was the list of qualities God captured for us in 1st Samuel 16 plus the resolves of his youth that David made in Psalm 132. They are all part of David's Spiritual Secret. David thirsted to serve God when he was young!

A second choice for standing alone for God we find in David's life is **perseverance**. We see that quality starting back in v. 28. What is amazing about David is how he stood alone despite so many obstacles. Starting in 1st Samuel 17:28 we see that his oldest brother Eliab abused David (1st Samuel 17:28), then King Saul tried to discourage David (1st Samuel 17:33), and finally giant Goliath cursed David (1st Samuel 17:43). And yet David went onward to victory!

- *1 Samuel 17:28 Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, “Why did you come down here? **And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart**, for you have come down to see the battle.” NKJV*

David wouldn't be defeated by unfounded criticism.

- *1 Samuel 17:33 And Saul said to David, “**You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him**; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.” NKJV*

David wouldn't be defeated by unfounded fears.

- *1 Samuel 17:43 So the Philistine said to David, “**Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?**” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. NKJV*

David certainly would not be defeated by an unholy, God defying pagan!

In the face of his critics, even those of his own family David stood alone. In the presence of his own King and the one he was offering to risk his life for discouraging him—David continues to stand alone. And then in the face of the very enemy of God who was calling down the devil's legions with his curses—David stands. But never was he really alone—for God stood with him, beside him, and in front of him. David knew that God was with him and for him!

A third choice for standing alone is **having a divine perspective**. Goliath represented more than a formidable military challenge. He represented evil. His armor is described as having “scales” like the snake Satan embodied while tempting Adam and Eve. David recognized the true nature

of Goliath's challenge and accepted it with the correct underlying motive so that the world would "know that there is a God in Israel."

Joshua saw God at the crossing of the dried up Jordan River--Joshua 4:24 **that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.** (NKJV)

- David saw God at Elah--1 Samuel 17:46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, **that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.** NKJV
- Solomon saw God at the Temple--1 Kings 8:46, 60 When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; 60 **that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other.** (NKJV)
- Hezekiah saw God at the threat of Assyria--2 Kings 19:19 Now therefore, O Lord our God, I pray, save us from his hand, **that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, You alone.** (NKJV)

From history we find one more choice David made. **He chose to do everything he could do for the advancement of God's Kingdom.** Often we overlook one of the byproducts of David's troubles. It is very possible that David learned and brought the secret of iron making into Israel from his time living among the far superior technological culture of the Philistines.

When David's stone knocked Goliath to the ground, and David drew Goliath's sword and cut off the giant's head—the Philistines still were far more advanced than the Israelites. When King Saul became jealous of David and tried to kill him. David, his men, and their families were driven to flee to Achish, the Philistine king of Gath (1 Samuel 27), who gave David the Philistine city of Ziklag.

After years of running and hiding from Saul, when David became king of Israel the Israelites had learned to work iron and became the dominant culture in the region (2 Samuel 5:17-25). Consequently, the Philistines lost power and influence.

It is possible that David (or one of his men) uncovered the Philistine's secret of iron technology while living in Gath and brought it to the Israelites. [1] David wanted to use every means for God, and God taught David even in his hardest days lessons that would not only help him but give him ways to serve the people of God.

Truths God Can Use in Our Lives

For those who are willing to stand alone in God's power, for His glory--

1. ***God often use people who seem to have little to offer to accomplish His purposes.*** When we seek to accomplish God's work, our motivation and faith in God is far more significant than our talent or resources. David, for example, was a young shepherd who

appeared to have little to offer, but he acted as God's representative. He used his training and primitive tools in order to reveal the God of Israel to the world of his day. He used a simple sling to throw a stone at a man who had the best military technology an advanced culture could offer and he triumphed because God honored his throw.

2. ***God seeks each of us to use our particular gifts and talents to influence our culture for Him.*** David did what God had qualified and gifted him to do and because David was motivated by righteousness, he made a powerful impact on his culture. Likewise, we don't have to be anything other than the people God has created us to be in order to accomplish His purposes. Who He has made us to be is good enough. We need only to express the gifts and talents He has given us.
3. ***God wants us to use every resource, including the tools and technology of our culture, it's "iron" to accomplish His purposes.*** The Israelites achieved a decisive victory over the Philistines when David killed Goliath. Unfortunately, the Philistines remained the superior culture for quite a while afterward (1 Samuel 31). Only when the Israelites, under the reign of faithful King David, harnessed the Philistines' advanced iron technology and used it for God's purposes did they become a great influence and power. Today, Christians who hold a Bible-based value system and are able to shape and control the "iron" of their society will greatly impact their culture.[2]

And what happened when David stood alone? Because of this divine perspective on life David did what was impossible—and the Lord got all the glory. David will forever be remembered by God as His servant who did all God's will.

- *1 Kings 15:5 because David **did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.** (NKJV)*
- *Acts 13:36 For when David **had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed.** (NIV)*

David had a lifetime of situations after Goliath, where he stood all alone for God. Did David ever quit these simple choices? Did he grow out of simply being God's servant? No—he stayed that way to the end. That is why he is such a vivid example of serving God!

What does God do when we choose to stand for Him when all around us others do not? Join me as we see one other battle David had to face. Later in life David faces enemies fiercer than Philistines—some of his own family and friends turn against him. David's response? Again, as God's servant the battle is always the Lord's. And again we have a pattern of what we as God's servants should also do!

David portrays a life entrusted to God's care. He gives each care to the Lord. Watch him as David allows the Lord to guide, direct, and take care of every detail of his life.

God's Inspires Others to Come to Our Aid When We Are His Servants

- *2 Samuel 15:19-21 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. 20 In fact, you came only yesterday. **Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where?** Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth be with you.” 21 But Ittai answered the king and said, “As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, **surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be.**” NKJV*

David Did Not Take His Own Personal Safety Into His Own Hands—He Trusts the Lord and Waits for His Protection

- *2 Samuel 15:25 Then the king said to Zadok, “Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, **He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place.**” (NKJV)*

David left his burdens with the Lord so he didn’t have to take matters into his own hands.

David Bowd and Worshipped and Offered Up a Psalm of Praise to God—Even as He Wept Bitter Tears of Sorrow and Grief

- *2 Samuel 15:30, 32 So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and **wept as he went up**; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. 32 Now it happened when David **had come to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped God**—there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. NKJV*

God’s servants can continue in worship even when life is tough, difficult, and almost looking like it is impossible to go on. Turn with me to the exact record of the worship that flowed from David. This is what can flow from us if we like David—bow in worship when the bitter tears of sorrow and grief fall across our lives.

- *Psalm 3:1-8 A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son. 1 Lord, how they have increased who trouble me! **Many** are they who rise up against me. 2 **Many** are they who say of me, “There is no help for him in God.” 3 But **You, O Lord, are a shield for me**, My glory and **the One who lifts up my head**. 4 **I cried** to the Lord with my voice, And **He heard** me from His holy hill. 5 **I lay down and slept**; I awoke, for **the Lord sustained me**. 6 **I will not be afraid** of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around. 7 Arise, O Lord; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. 8 **Salvation** belongs to the Lord. **Your blessing** is upon Your people. NKJV*

David trusted God’s control. He relied upon it and prayed for it. Instead of fear he had faith and gave worship.

David Entrusted All the Uncontrollable Circumstances of His Life to the Lord

- *2 Samuel 15:31 Then someone told David, saying, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” And David said, “O Lord, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!” (NKJV)*

People often share reports that can either lead us to fear or prompt us to prayer. David lifted his heart in prayer to the Lord at this evil report!

David Realized That God Allows Adversaries to Reveal What is Really in Our Hearts

He entrusted his personal adversaries to the Lord.

- *2 Samuel 16:9-11 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, “**Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?** Please, let me go over and take off his head!” 10 But the king said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, **because the Lord has said to him, ‘Curse David.’** Who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’ ” 11 And David said to Abishai and all his servants, “See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? **Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the Lord has ordered him.** (NKJV)*

David knew that God raises up and puts down. He knew adversaries were allowed by God—and he wanted to respond correctly!

David Fled to the Lord When Suffering Affliction

He always entrusted his personal sufferings to the Lord.

- *2 Samuel 16:12 **It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing this day.**” (NKJV)*

David knew God cared, he knew God saw his troubles. He knew that the Lord can cause all things to work together for good.

David’s Situation Was Being Managed by the Lord

When we let God take care of us, and when we entrust our personal vengeance to the Lord—the Lord can do what we never could to remedy the situation.

- *2 Samuel 17:14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite [is] better than the counsel of Ahithophel. **For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.** (KJV)*

"Vengeance is mine saith the Lord" (Hebrews 10:30). Allow the Lord to recompense your enemies. David had many enemies and adversaries, but he let the Lord deal with them all.

David's Needs Are Met by the Lord

God works behind the scenes in the hearts of people to provide just what David needed to continue on. So a servant of the Lord must always entrust his personal needs to the Lord.

- 2 Samuel 17:27-29 **Now it happened**, when David had come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the people of Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, 28 brought beds and basins, earthen vessels and wheat, barley and flour, parched grain and beans, lentils and parched seeds, 29 honey and curds, sheep and cheese of the herd, **for David and the people who were with him to eat**. For they said, “The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.” NKJV

So David was God's servant. And his life is recorded as an example to us of how to serve the Lord. In similar fashion, Saul's life was recorded as a warning of how not to serve the Lord which we will see next time!

[1] Ray Vander Laan, with Stephen and Amanda Sorenson, *Faith Lessons on the Promised Land Leader's Guide*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, Pg. 140-41.

[2] Ray Vander Laan, with Stephen and Amanda Sorenson, *Faith Lessons on the Promised Land Leader's Guide*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, Pg. 140

Saul--How NOT to Serve God DSS: Message Six (060205AM)

"The greatest thing in all my life—is loving You, knowing You, serving You..."

Those are precious words, if they are true, and they are. And if the Bible ends with those who know, love and serve the Lord doing so forever—and it does. Then the most important element in our life is that knowing, loving, and serving the Lord!

We could say the greatest way we could invest our lives and live them well would be serving God. But then the opposite would also be true. *The worst way to live, and the greatest waste of a life would be to live for anything but serving the Lord!*

We have been considering the greatest servant in the Bible named David. His life is recorded more completely than any other—so we know more about how he served the Lord than any of Biblical character. God's Word often teaches us by means of contrasts. I'd like you to join me in looking at one of the sharpest contrasts in the Bible—the comparison of David and Saul. It is also one of the most sobering.

Side by side in God's Word is the amazing record God left us of the life of David who served God all his days—and the equally amazing record of Saul who didn't serve God all his days. This proximity of "**how to serve**" and "**how not to serve**" is very insightful.

I Samuel 17 is the record of the boy who stood all alone for God and saw the reality of what God can do through a person who is completely His—David had a heart to stand. It is the record of the boy who would grow into the man after God's own heart—David was a servant who loved and served God. But what happens in the chapter before all that? What precipitated the anointing of David by Samuel?

1st Samuel 15 tells us that David was chosen because of King Saul's unwillingness to serve the Lord. Remember that this book the Bible is God's Word—and is also supernaturally engineered by God. The Spirit of God planned every word, every verse, and every chapter of every book. There is no place, person or event that just happened to get included. The Lord has master planned this Book, engineering it to point to Christ in every way possible.

May I challenge you about how to NOT serve God? That is exactly what we see when we start in 1st Samuel 15. This chapter captures why God picked David, and why God rejected Saul. If you ever want to be sure that you are on God's Team and stay there—be sure you understand this chapter. This is one of the saddest chapters in the Bible—First Samuel 15.

What to Avoid in Life—Ways to Fail & Waste Your Life

1. Ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do. 1

Samuel 15:1-7 Samuel also said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord. 2 Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' " 4 So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. 6 Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. 7 And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. (NKJV)

What are some real clear and direct statements from God about what He wants us to do?

- *Mark 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (NKJV)*
- *John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. NKJV*
- *Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your*

mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (NKJV)

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do.**

2. Pick and choose from what God clearly tells you to do so that you offer God selective and partial obedience. 1 Samuel 15:8 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. (NKJV)

Remember that the clearest way to declare that you love the Lord is by obedience.

- *John 14:21 He who has My commandments **and keeps them**, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” (NKJV)*

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just pick and choose from what God clearly tells you to do so that you offer God selective and partial obedience.**

3. Hold on to the best and nicest parts of what God hates and has asked for you to destroy, and keep them for your own use. 1 Samuel 15:9a But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them...(NKJV)

Jesus told us what He thinks of loving what He hates—

- *James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (NKJV)*

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Hold on to the best and nicest parts of what God hates and has asked for you to destroy, and keep them for your own use.**

4. Only give God what you don’t want anyway and is worthless to you. 1 Samuel 15:9b ... But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. (NKJV)

Jesus told us how to live for eternal gain—

- *Matthew 16:24-27 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. (NKJV)*

God deserves the first, the best, the costliest of our time, treasures, and talents. If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just give God what you don't want anyway and is worthless to you.**

5. Honor yourself before others and remind people of your accomplishments instead of honoring the Lord.

1 Samuel 15:12 So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, “Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal.” (NKJV)

Jesus' harshest criticisms were for the proud religious leaders.

- *Matthew 23:1-12 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ 8 But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. (NKJV)*

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Honor yourself before others and remind people of your accomplishments instead of honoring the Lord.**

6. Be deceptive about the true condition of your spiritual life by making false claims about your dedication to God.

1 Samuel 15:13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord.” (NKJV)

Jesus honored honesty and condemned hypocrisy.

- *Luke 18:9-14 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” NKJV*

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Be deceptive about the true condition of your spiritual life by making false claims about your dedication to God.**

7. Blame others for your own personal failures. 1 Samuel 15:15a And Saul said, “*They* have brought them from the Amalekites; *for the people spared* the best of the sheep and the oxen...” (NKJV)

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Blame others for your own personal failures.**

The ominous warning of Saul’s life is that he had everything going for him possible. He was big, strong, blessed, gifted, chosen, empowered, and given every opportunity to serve God. But he didn’t. Saul failed because there were severe deficiencies in his character. God doesn’t need brains—He wants character.

- God doesn’t need brawn (huge strong muscles)—He wants integrity.
- God doesn’t need anyone’s wisdom, power, or wealth—He wants obedience.
- God doesn’t need ambitious confidence—He wants humble dependence.

Saul had money, muscles, and charisma—but he didn’t have integrity, humility, and a servant’s heart. So Saul was a colossal failure. Why not look at Saul’s ending as we begin our lesson on how NOT to serve the Lord this morning? Turn with me to 1st Samuel 31. Look at Saul’s end—his last supper with a witch (1st Samuel 28:3-8) and his death surrounded by his dead sons (1st Samuel 31:2).

Don't Waste Your Life Like Saul

DSS: Message Seven (060205PM)

When I read a letter or card I usually start by looking at the end to see who it is from. When I read a book I often look at the end to see whether the hero makes it alive to the end.

When I start a biographical study of a person God chose to be included in His Word I always look at the END of their life first. Why is that? Because God said that the way we finish is what counts. It is not how we start the race, but how we finish the race that really matters. That’s why Paul triumphantly said, “I have finished the course!” (2 Timothy 4:7)

So as we look at the life of King Saul, at the theme of “how NOT to serve the Lord” would you join me at the end of his life? Turn with me to how King Saul finished his life in 1 Samuel 31.

The End of Saul’s Life

On this windswept hill, three thousand years ago the mightiest man of Israel fell wounded; King Saul, with life agonizingly clinging within his tortured body, called out to a passing man and had

him end his earthly suffering. That man killed King Saul and took his crown. That man was an Amalekite.

After fiercely battling all day with the Philistines, arrows from the enemies he had fought gravely wounded King Saul. His sons and heirs to the throne lay dead around him, night was falling, the enemies had retreated, and Saul was alone. The mightiest man of Israel, head and shoulders taller than anyone else now dragged himself along trying to reach his sword fallen on the battlefield. When he had it at last he pushed himself upon it to end his dreadful pain.

As the night passed and morning dawned life still clung to Saul. The sound of the victorious Philistine warriors echoed up the hillsides, they came to abuse the wounded and strip the dead. Saul wanted to die. Hanging there, impaled on his own sword, Saul looked around through the mists of death and he heard a man coming. In the gray light of dawn he appeared scavenging what he could from the dead. Then Saul cried out to him and asked for him to kill him. The young man obliged, striking down the King of Israel. Then he took the crown off Saul's head. That man was an Amalekite. Next time we will examine why that little detail screams so loudly from God's Word. But for tonight—Saul what is it like at the end for one who fails the Lord? What does someone who fails to serve the Lord do to their life? What exactly does a wasted life amount to?

Saul had money, muscles, and charisma—but he didn't have integrity, humility, and a servant's heart. So Saul was a colossal failure. The last hours of life were spent with a witch—his last supper with a demonic spiritist medium trying to communicate with the dead (1 Samuel 28:3-8) and his death came as he was surrounded by his dead sons and his very triumphant enemies (1 Samuel 31:2). What happened when Saul refused to serve God and instead served himself? It led to Saul's eternal disgrace:

Saul's Eternal Disgrace

- **Saul's death was a Personal disgrace:** While certain cultures view suicide in time of adversity as noble, God's people regard it as always dishonorable and wrong. When Saul decided to die by his own hand (1 Samuel 31:4), he chose the lowest way out.
- **Saul's death was a Family disgrace:** When Saul died, he took his whole house with him. The royal father and three sons, including the popular and noble Jonathan, were killed on the same battlefield (1 Samuel 31:6). While the death of the king was tragic, the simultaneous loss of his heirs was disastrous.
- **Saul's death was a National disgrace:** All his life Saul had defended Israel from enemy assault. Now he lay dead at the hands of his enemies (1 Samuel 31:7). His death now signaled a Philistine advance unequaled in history and unparalleled in scope.
- **Saul's death was an International disgrace:** When the Philistines pinned his headless corpse to the wall of Beth Shan (1 Samuel 31:10), they made a strategic choice. Situated at the junction of the Jezreel and Jordan Valleys, Beth Shan controlled the crossroads of major highways. With Galilee and Damascus to the north, the Mediterranean to the west and Jerusalem to the south, travelers from many nations passed through this prominent city. Here in this public place, Saul's fallen form was a silent

witness to the triumph of the pagan powers. While thousands of residents whispered about it, tens of thousands of travelers trumpeted the news in every direction.

- **Saul's death was a Spiritual disgrace:** The greatest shame in Saul's death was that it was God's judgment. The end of his life was exploited as an opportunity for praise of pagan gods. The Scriptures tell us that his head was hung in Dagon's temple as a trophy of victory (I Chronicles 10:10), and his armor was placed as a votive offering in the temple of the Ashtoreths. These five degrees of disgrace were the solemn epitaph of one who fulfilled the worst in his death because he failed to live up to the best in his life.[1]

Life really does come down to servanthood—who we present ourselves as servants to obey as Paul said (Romans 6:13). Or as Jesus so clearly warns us, "no one can serve two masters." (Matthew 6:24).

- *Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. NKJV*
- *Matthew 6:20-24 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. 25 Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?*

How did Saul fall so far? Back up to where we started. 1 Samuel 15 explains why Saul would have an ignominious death. Look at verse 9. Saul used selective, self-serving obedience in place of total and God-honoring obedience.

“But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed” (1 Samuel 15:9).

How Did Saul Fail? How Can We Fail?

Now go back with me through this chapter and note the glaring examples God records for us in ways to fail, waste your life. Here is how not to serve the Lord!

1. Ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do.

Samuel 15:1-7 Samuel also said to Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord. 2 Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’ ” 4 So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. 6 Then Saul said to the Kenites, “Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. 7 And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt.

What are some real clear and direct statements from God about what He wants us to do?

- *Mark 16:15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” (NKJV)*
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If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do.**

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Remember that the clearest way to declare that you love the Lord is by obedience.

- *John 14:21 He who has My commandments **and keeps them**, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.*

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just pick and choose from what God clearly tells you to do so that you offer God selective and partial obedience.**

3. Hold on to the best and nicest parts of what God hates and has asked for you to destroy, and keep them for your own use. 1 Samuel 15:9a But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them...(NKJV)

Jesus told us what He thinks of loving what He hates—

- *James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (NKJV)*

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Samuel 15:9b ... But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. (NKJV)

Jesus told us how to live for eternal gain—

- *Matthew 16:24-27 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." (NKJV)*

God deserves the first, the best, the costliest of our time, treasures, and talents. If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just give God what you don't want anyway and is worthless to you.**

5. Honor yourself before others and remind people of your

accomplishments instead of honoring the Lord. 1 Samuel 15:12 So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." (NKJV)

Jesus' harshest criticisms were for the proud religious leaders.

- *Matthew 23:1-12 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' 8 But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your*

servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (NKJV)

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Honor yourself before others and remind people of your accomplishments instead of honoring the Lord.**

6. Be deceptive about the true condition of your spiritual life by making false claims about your dedication to God. 1 Samuel 15:13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord.” (NKJV)

Jesus honored honesty and condemned hypocrisy.

- *Luke 18:9-14 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” NKJV*

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Be deceptive about the true condition of your spiritual life by making false claims about your dedication to God.**

7. Blame others for your own personal failures. 1 Samuel 15:15a And Saul said, “*They* have brought them from the Amalekites; *for the people spared* the best of the sheep and the oxen...NKJV

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Blame others for your own personal failures.**

8. Experience God second hand, only through others, and not first hand and personally. 1 Samuel 15:15b “to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.” NKJV

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Experience God second hand, only through others, and not first hand and personally.**

9. Cultivate an exaggerated view of your own importance. 1 Samuel 15:17 So Samuel said, “When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel? NKJV

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Cultivate an exaggerated view of your own importance.**

10. Do your own thing even when God's Word tells you explicitly not to. 1 Samuel 15:18
Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, ‘Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’ NKJV

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Do your own thing even when God's Word tells you explicitly not to.**

The ominous warning of Saul’s life is that he had everything going for him possible. He was big, strong, blessed, gifted, chosen, empowered, and given every opportunity to serve God. But he didn’t. Saul failed because there were severe deficiencies in his character.

- God doesn’t need brains—He wants character.
- God doesn’t need brawn (huge strong muscles)—He wants integrity.
- God doesn’t need anyone’s wisdom, power, or wealth—He wants obedience.
- God doesn’t need ambitious confidence—He wants humble dependence.

Saul used selective, self-serving obedience in place of total and God-honoring obedience.

Life really does come down to servanthood—who we present ourselves as servants to obey as Paul said (Romans 6:13). Or as Jesus so clearly warns us "no one can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24).

[1] Linden D. Kirby, Footprints in the Holy Land, A Devotional Discovery Guide, Discovery House Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, p.154.

Saul--Rejected by God

DSS: Message Eight (060219AM)

The Lord of life, the Creator--God Himself, once said something very sobering. He said that the day of our death is better than the day of our birth (Ecclesiastes 7:1-2). Why would He tell us that? Because at the end, after the life is finished, the real person is known. That life with all of its opportunities and obstacles, accomplishments and failures is ready for review.

The chilling fact of God's Word is the individual life analysis that God Himself then performs—an autopsy not of the cause of death, but of the purpose of life. That is why the constant theme of Paul's exhortations to us in the church revolve around the idea of finishing well at the finish line, a life that survive the fires of the judgment seat, and a "well done good and faithful servant" analysis of our race by the Lord Himself.

So we will get the consequences of our choices in Heaven. There is a reckoning day for believers. So we do need to have regular investment reviews to think of what we are living for.

That brings us back again to the life of King Saul. The ominous warning of Saul's life is that he had everything going for him possible. He was big, strong, blessed, gifted, chosen, empowered, and given every opportunity to serve God. But he didn't.

Saul failed because there were severe deficiencies in his character.

- God doesn't need brains—*He wants **character**.*
- God doesn't need brawn (huge strong muscles)—*He wants **integrity**.*
- God doesn't need anyone's wisdom, power, or wealth—*He wants **obedience**.*
- God doesn't need ambitious confidence—*He wants **humble dependence**.*

Over and over in God's Word we see that God summarizes an entire life in a few words. The challenge of that summary is two fold. When God summarizes a life *He means it, and it is accurate.*

Do you remember God's summary of David's life? We can call that David's epitaph. God distills David's seventy-year life down to just 9 words in English.

- *Acts 13:36 For when **David had served God's purpose in his own generation**, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. (NIV)*

So what was God's summary of Saul's life? God only needs one word—rejected. God says five times in just three verses that Saul rejected God by disregarding His Word, so God rejected him.

The word that God uses for Saul's treatment of God and God's response back to Saul is a very strong word.

The Hebrew word that the Holy Spirit chose to describe Saul's treatment of God is the Hebrew word # 3988 **mawas**, used 76 times in the Old Testament and most often translated: despise 25, refuse 9, reject 19, abhor 4, become loathsome 1, melt away. In context when ever this word is used about someone's response to God--it is always bad. This is the word (despised) that described Israel's murmuring in the wilderness just before He sent the plague to kill many of them; this is the word that described Job's boils and sores (loathsome); and this is the word that is used by God for Israel's attitude they (despised) the worship of God the basis for His allowing Israel to be destroyed by her enemies and carried off into captivity.

So Saul rejected God when he used selective, self-serving obedience in place of total and God-honoring obedience. And what did he get as his consequence for that bad choice? Look at the record God left for us.

- *1 Samuel 15:23, 26 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because **you have rejected the word of the Lord**, He also has **rejected you from being king.**” 26 But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you, for **you have rejected the word of the Lord**, and **the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.**” NKJV*

- *1 Samuel 15:35 And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and **the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.** NKJV*
- *1 Samuel 16:1 Now the Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing **I have rejected him** from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.” NKJV*

Can you imagine what it would be like to have it all and yet be rejected by God? I can't because I want to obey the Lord. That longing, in spite of failures is the work of grace in our lives. You see David wasn't perfect—just forgiven. Saul wasn't perfect—just unconcerned.

- *1 Samuel 13:13-14 And Samuel said to Saul, “You have done foolishly. **You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you.** For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. **The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart,** and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.” NKJV*

Which brings us back to Paul's sermon in Acts 13.

- Acts 13:22 And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, “**I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.**” (NKJV)

David was imperfect, David was impatient, David was angry at times, wrathful at times, depressed, distressed, fearful, hopeless and tempted—yet he was God's man in that he didn't like being that way and didn't want to stay that way. He was grieved over his sin against God. What God said mattered to David, but it didn't seem to matter to Saul.

Let's experience the start of the fall of Saul. The first record of a problem he had that led to his ultimate disaster. Please stand with me and follow along as I read 1 Samuel 13.

Now go back with me through this chapter and note the glaring examples God records for us in ways to fail, waste your life. Here is how not to serve the Lord!

Just as the Spirit of God bears fruit, so does the flesh. When we don't obey God we are in rebellion against Him. There is no middle ground. The fruit of the flesh is also quite easily spotted in ungodly attitudes and actions. King Saul would not walk in step with God, so his flesh reigned in his life. Saul lived a life of ignoring the warnings of departure from God's way!

What were those signs? His pathway of rebellion involved the following elements that I call “**Ways we Don't Serve God**”! These are still danger signs to caution anyone who loves God, wants to serve Him and seeks to follow the Lord to this day.

We could sum up the tragic shipwrecked life of King Saul by saying that you don't serve God by doing what he did. Why not re-examine his life and see what made Saul the man who wasn't after God's heart. That is the contrast we find when we look at Saul and David side-by-side. (Emphasis added to the verses below.)

1. Neglect God's Leadership of your life so that you underestimate the strength of your enemy—and get completely defeated. 1st Samuel 13.1-7

King Saul faced a whole new type of enemy, he was the King—and he didn't even know how strong his enemies were! The times since Joshua's conquest had produced a whole new type of enemy. Fresh in from the islands of the Mediterranean, the sea peoples settled on the coasts and mixing with the ancient inhabitants became the Philistines. Saul needed God to defeat his enemies. So do we. Saul neglected God's leadership and failed. So will we if we also neglect to allow God to lead our lives.

Fact File on the Philistines:

1. *The Philistine's had a rich ethnic heritage:* They sailed from the Aegean world (Greece) and settled along the coast of Palestine from about 1400-1200 BC; about the time of the Judges in Israel. The Philistines developed a sophisticated culture around a circle of five city states named in the Bible as: Gath, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron.
2. *The Philistine's had excellent logistics:* The five main Philistine city states were located near the Via Maris trade route, which went through the coastal plain or lowlands along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea of Israel. So, the Philistines dominated world trade and greatly influenced other nations.
3. *The Philistine's had massive industrial production:* These powerful European businessmen had an elaborate olive pressing industry. (At Ekron alone archaeologists have found the remains of about 200 installations that could produce more than 1,000 tons or two million pounds of olive oil! Plus the entire infrastructure for what we already learned about last time--they're famous for iron making.
4. *The Philistine's had advanced military technology:* From the excavations, the graves, the paintings and etchings comes a historical picture revealing that Philistine soldiers were quite tall, clean shaven, and wore breastplates and small kilts. The soldiers carried small shields, and fought with straight swords and spears—all superior to their enemies as they were made of iron.
5. *The Philistine's had sophisticated artistic skills:* These talented artisans were part of the centuries old Greek culture and continued to create intricate pottery with red and black geometric designs on white backgrounds.
6. *The Philistine's had an evil and dark religion:* Two words sum up the religious traditions of these sea peoples—they were very sophisticated and very immoral. The Philistines engineered and built carefully planned temples. These temples and their gods show up all throughout the Biblical record. There were Philistine temples in the south in Gaza and Ashdod, and in the north at Beth Shean. The Philistine gods also are the constant nemesis of the people of the Living and True God. Dagon, their main god, was thought to be the god of grain. Believed to be his mistress, the goddess Ashtoreth was associated with war and fertility. Baal-Zebul, thought to be Dagon's son, was worshiped at Ekron.[1]

So as Israel emerged from the period of the Judges, and picked their first king—he faced these newcomers to the region that had all new weapons that were far stronger than Israel’s—unless they would rely upon their true source of power—the Lord God Almighty. Saul was chosen to lead the people to seek God’s help and find His victory! The same is true for us each day.

- *1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. NKJV*

If you want to waste your life—**neglect God’s Leadership of your life so that you underestimate the strength of your enemy—and get completely defeated.** 1st Samuel 13.1-7.

2. Get impatient and use your impatience as an excuse to do your own thing instead of obeying God. We can’t serve God by—Impatience. *“Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him” (1 Samuel 13:8).*

Saul was impatient with God’s plan. He sought the approval of man before he sought the approval of God.

If you want to waste your life—**get impatient and use your impatience as an excuse to do your own thing instead of obeying God. We can’t serve God by—Impatience.**

3. Neglect your primary responsibilities that God has entrusted to you by only taking care of your own needs. We can’t serve God by—Neglect. *“So it came about, on the day of battle, that **there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people** who were with Saul and Jonathan. But they were found with Saul and Jonathan his son” (1 Samuel 13:22).*

Saul neglected to provide for those entrusted to his care. He made sure he had what he needed to defend himself, but not that those he cared for were armed for the battle. In the New Testament, God says such a person is worse than an infidel:

- *“If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8).*

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4. Get so out of touch with the battle raging around you—that God can be doing mighty things, and you miss them completely. We can’t serve God by--Lazy indifference. *“AND SAUL was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men. Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod’s brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord’s priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone” (1 Samuel 14:2-3).*

Saul became lazy and indifferent; he was unaware of his son, the battle, and even the victory. He missed it all!

If you want to waste your life—**get so out of touch with the battle raging around you—that God can be doing mighty things, and you miss them completely. We can't serve God by--Lazy indifference.**

5. Allow your anger and pride to rule so that you say and do things that disable, wound, and harm those around you. We can't serve God by--Rash words. *And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food (1 Samuel 14:24).*

Saul spoke with no thought of what the implications were to his family or nation. Instead of his mouth being a fountain of blessing—he was a curse.

- *James 1:19-20 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (NKJV)*

Now look at James 3.

- *James 3:5-10 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See **how great a forest a little fire kindles!** 6 And **the tongue is a fire**, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 But **no man can tame the tongue**. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. **My brethren, these things ought not to be so.** (NKJV)*

If you want to waste your life—**allow your anger and pride to rule so that you say and do things that disable, wound, and harm those around you. We can't serve God by--Rash words.**

6. Ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do. 1 Samuel 15:1-3 Samuel also said to Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord. 2 Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’ ” (NKJV)

If you want to waste your life—**just ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do.**

7. Pick and choose from what God clearly tells you to do so that you offer God selective and partial obedience. 1 Samuel 15:8 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. (NKJV)

Remember that the clearest way to declare that you love the Lord is by obedience.

- *John 14:21 He who has My commandments **and keeps them**, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. NKJV*

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If you want to waste your life—**just do your own thing even when God's Word tells you explicitly not to.**

16. Argue with godly people God sends your way to point out ways that you are disobeying the Lord! 1 Samuel 15:20 And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites." (NKJV)

If you want to waste your life—**just argue with godly people God sends your way to point out ways that you are disobeying the Lord!**

- James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (NKJV)

17. Make sure you only half-repent by making excuses for why you sin, and fearing people more than God! 1 Samuel 15:24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice." (NKJV)

If you want to waste your life—**just make excuses for why you sin, and fear people more than God!**

18. Choose to save face instead of humbly, contritely repenting when confronted with your sin. 1 Samuel 15:30 Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord your God." NKJV

This is admitting not confessing. Here is what a confession looks like: 2 Samuel 12:13 So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die." (NKJV) And one who really confesses has also really repented and so they can unashamedly sing of God's forgiveness like David does in Psalm 51!

If you want to waste your life—**just choose to save face instead of humbly, contritely repenting when confronted with your sin.**

19. Forget the awesome power of God so that you begin to think that mere mortals (the Philistines) are greater than the Ancient of Days! We can't serve God by--Doubting the power of God. *"When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid" (1 Samuel 17:11)*

- 2 Timothy 3:5 ...*having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (NKJV)*

If you want to waste your life—**forget the awesome power of God so that you begin to think that mere mortals (the Philistines) are greater than the Ancient of Days! We can't serve God by--Doubting the power of God.**

20. Get so absorbed in your self image that you begin to constantly have to defend your reputation all the time. We can't serve God by--Self-focus.

"Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands' " (1 Samuel 18:8).

Saul measured the worth of his life by what others said, rather than by the Lord.

- 2 Corinthians 10:18 *For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends. (NKJV)*

If you want to waste your life—**get so absorbed in your self image that you begin to constantly have to defend your reputation all the time. We can't serve God by--Self-focus.**

21. Be so convinced that you are the master of your fate, that you live in constant fears and insecurities about your health, your job, your future. We can't serve God by—Insecurity.

"Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" (1 Samuel 18:8b).

Saul surrendered the care of his future security to himself and took it away from the Lord. Fear is always the realm of Satan.

If you want to waste your life—**be so convinced that you are the master of your fate, that you live in constant fears and insecurities about your health, your job, your future. We can't serve God by—Insecurity.**

- 2 Timothy 1:7 For **God has not given us a spirit of fear**, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (NKJV)
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and **you are not your own?** 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (NKJV)

22. Look upon others that God is blessing with suspicion and jealousy. We can't serve God by—Jealousy. “So Saul eyed David from that day forward” (1 Samuel 18:9). “Now Saul was afraid of David, **because the Lord was with him**, but had departed from Saul” (1 Samuel 18:12).

Saul was driven by the lust for self—desiring to keep others from having something he wanted for himself! This is the worst form of jealousy. Jealousy darkens our eyes to anything good about another; in Saul's mind, David was unable to ever measure up to Saul's expectations. Saul neither treasured nor sought God's blessing, favor, presence, or even involvement in his life. He valued himself, neglected God, and feared David because the Lord was with him. What a tragic, misdirected life!

If you want to waste your life—**look upon others that God is blessing with suspicion and jealousy. We can't serve God by—Jealousy.**

23. Tear down your wife and kids when they don't embrace your self driven agenda. We can't serve God by--neglecting our marriage. “Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, ‘**You son of a perverse, rebellious woman!** Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?’ ” (1 Samuel 20:30).

Saul confessed his failure to nurture and care for his wife. An undisciplined wife breeds many painful days.

If you want to waste your life— **Tear down your wife and kids when they don't embrace your self driven agenda. We can't serve God by--neglecting our marriage.**

24. Look at life as if it is only for the moment—live only for what you can grab and hold. We can't serve God by--Seeing things entirely from an earthly perspective. “For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, **nor your kingdom**. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die” (1 Samuel 20:31).

Saul wasn't able to see the eternal, the divine, and the spiritual parts of life. He looked on his family, his future, and their success as only a physical pursuit, not a spiritual heritage. God was always left out of the equation for security, prosperity, and happiness.

If you want to waste your life—**look at life as if it is only for the moment—live only for what you can grab and hold. We can't serve God by--Seeing things entirely from an earthly perspective.**

25. Get so calloused about the things of God that you lose all respect and honor for the servants of God. We can't serve God by--Having no fear of God. *"Then the king said to the guards who stood about him, 'Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not tell it to me.' But the servants of the king would not lift their hands to strike the priests of the Lord" (1 Samuel 22:17).*

Saul did not see God, so he did not fear God. Thus there was no limit to his actions because he saw no consequence in offending the Lord by his life.

If you want to waste your life—**get so calloused about the things of God that you lose all respect and honor for the servants of God. We can't serve God by--Having no fear of God.**

26. Trust in God's enemies and use them to advance your goals. We can't serve God by--supporting the enemies of the Lord. *"And the king said to Doeg, 'You turn and kill the priests!' So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod" (1 Samuel 22:18).*

If we love someone, we hurt when they are hurt. We are loyal and reverent of the name of those we cherish. Saul had none of these qualities because he failed to cherish God enough to carry out His fierce wrath against the Amalekites, He uses one of God's enemies (an Edomite) to kill God's choice servants (the Levites).

If you want to waste your life—**trust in God's enemies and use them to advance your goals. We can't serve God by--supporting the enemies of the Lord.**

The end of Saul was a catastrophe. He crashed against the rocks of his own disobedient life and sank into the dark waters of sin. He was a disgrace to himself by his ignominious death; to his family he failed to protect; to his country he betrayed and brought to defeat; and to his God he ignored and dishonored. What a colossal failure and a grim testimony of neglected warning signs that led to a shipwreck of a very promising life!

Saul's failures can serve to drive us to pray to live in such a way that these areas don't get solidified in the lives of those we love!

Life really does come down to servanthood—who we present ourselves as servants to obey as Paul said (Romans 6:13). Or as Jesus so clearly warns us "no one can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24).

Now look once more time at the amazingly stark contrast between chapter 15 and chapter 16. Remember—this contrast is intentional. God shows the failure of Saul and flows immediately into the integrity, humility, and obedience of David on purpose. This is one of the most amazing

lessons of contrast placed by God before our eyes as a sobering warning and lesson for any who ever claim to serve the Lord. May we see, heed, and respond to this lesson.

Serving the Lord Like David Did Means Making Godly Choices Like David Made

1. **David's unique life was designed by God.** *God uses the unchangeable features of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:1-11*
2. **David's life was disciplined.** *God uses the disciplined lives of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:12a*
3. **David's life was available for God to use.** *God uses the available lives of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:12b*
4. **David's life was empowered by the Lord.** *God uses His Spirit to empower servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:13*
5. **David's life was an example of godliness to others.** *God uses the actions of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:18*
6. **David's life displayed true humility.** *God uses humble servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:19*
7. **David's life ministered to others.** *God uses the ministry of servants for His Glory! 1 Samuel 16:23*
8. **David wanted to honor God with his work.** *God is glorified by diligent working servants. 1 Samuel 17:1; 34-35*
9. **David wanted to honor God with his habits.** *God is either honored or dishonored by the habits of His servants. 1 Samuel 17:20*
10. **David wanted to honor God with his life.** *God wants us as His servants to give our lives back to Him. 1 Samuel 17:25-26*
11. **David wanted to magnify God's hand in his life.** *God is honored when His servants remember His Hand in their lives. 1 Samuel 17:36-37*
12. **David wanted to honor God's Name with his mouth.** *God is glorified when we honor His Name. 1 Samuel 17:45-46*
13. **David wanted to dedicate his treasures and trophies to the Lord.** *God is glorified when His servants dedicate their trophies to Him. 1 Samuel 21:9*
14. **David poured his life out as an irrecoverable offering because he believed that God deserved the best.** 2 Samuel 23:15
15. **David wanted to make sacrifices for God because he knew God deserved that which was costly.** 2 Samuel 24:24

So David was God's servant. And his life is recorded as an example to us of how to serve the Lord. In similar fashion, Saul's life was recorded as a warning of how not to serve the Lord!

Let's prayerfully heed the important lessons learned from Saul's shipwrecked life! When we or members of my family face challenges, hardships, and unfair situations, we will live by 1 Peter 3:8-14.

- *1 Peter 3:8-14 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling*

for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For “He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” 13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.” (NKJV)

David had a lifetime of situations after Goliath, where he stood all alone for God. Did David ever quit these simple choices? Did he grow out of simply being God’s servant? No—he stayed that way to the end. That is why he is such a vivid example of serving God!

What does God do when we choose to stand for Him when all around us others do not? Join me as we see one other battle David had to face. Later in life David faces enemies fiercer than Philistines—some of his own family and friends turn against him. David’s response? Again, as God’s servant the battle is always the Lord’s. And again we have a pattern of what we as God’s servants should also do!

David portrays a life entrusted to God’s care. He gives each care to the Lord. Watch him as David allows the Lord to guide, direct, and take care of every details of his life.

God’s inspires others to come to our aid when we are His servants.

- *2 Samuel 15:19-21 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. 20 In fact, you came only yesterday. **Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where?** Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth be with you.” 21 But Ittai answered the king and said, “As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, **surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be.**” (NKJV)*

David did not take his own personal safety into his own hands—he trusts the Lord waits for His protection.

- *2 Samuel 15:25 Then the king said to Zadok, “Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, **He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place.**” (NKJV)*

David left his burdens with the Lord so he didn’t have to take matters into his own hands.

David bows and worshipped and offered up a Psalm of praise to God—even as he wept bitter tears of sorrow and grief.

- *2 Samuel 15:30, 32 So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and **wept as he went up**; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were*

*with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. 32 Now it happened when David **had come to the top of the mountain**, where **he worshiped God**—there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. (NKJV)*

God's servants can continue in worship even when life is tough, difficult, and almost looking like it is impossible to go on. Turn with me to the exact record of the worship that flowed from David. This is what can flow from us if we like David—bow in worship when the bitter tears of sorrow and grief fall across our lives.

- *Psalm 3:1-8 A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.*

1 Lord, how they have increased who trouble me! **Many** are they who rise up against me. 2 **Many** are they who say of me, “There is no help for him in God.” 3 But **You, O Lord, are a shield for me**, My glory and **the One who lifts up my head**. 4 **I cried** to the Lord with my voice, And **He heard** me from His holy hill. 5 **I lay down and slept**; I awoke, for **the Lord sustained me**. 6 **I will not be afraid** of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around. 7 Arise, O Lord; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. 8 **Salvation** belongs to the Lord. **Your blessing** is upon Your people. (NKJV)

David trusted God's control. He relied upon it and prayed for it. Instead of fear he had faith and gave worship.

David entrusts all the uncontrollable circumstances of his life to the Lord.

- *2 Samuel 15:31 Then someone told David, saying, “**Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.**” And David said, “**O Lord, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!**” (NKJV)*

People often share reports that can either lead us to fear or prompt us to prayer. David lifts his heart in prayer to the Lord at this evil report!

David realized that God allows adversaries to reveal what is really in our hearts. So he entrusts his personal adversaries to the Lord.

- *2 Samuel 16:9-11 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, “**Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!**” 10 But the king said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, **because the Lord has said to him, ‘Curse David.’** Who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’ ” 11 And David said to Abishai and all his servants, “See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? **Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the Lord has ordered him.** (NKJV)*

David knew that God raises up and puts down. He knew adversaries were allowed by God—and he wanted to respond correctly!

David fled to the Lord when suffering affliction. He always entrusted his personal sufferings to the Lord.

- 2 Samuel 16:12 *"It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing this day."* (NKJV)

David knew God cared, he knew God saw his troubles. He knew that the Lord can cause all things to work together for good.

David's situation was being managed by the Lord. When we let God take care of us, and when we entrust our personal vengeance to the Lord—the Lord can do what we never could to remedy the situation.

Second Samuel 17:14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite [is] better than the counsel of Ahithophel. **For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.** (KJV)

"Vengeance is mine saith the Lord" (Hebrews 10:30). Allow the Lord to recompense your enemies. David had many enemies and adversaries, but he let the Lord deal with them all.

David's needs are met by the Lord. God works behind the scenes in the hearts of people to provide just what David needed to continue on. So a servant of the Lord must always entrust his personal needs to the Lord.

- 2 Samuel 17:27-29 **Now it happened**, when David had come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the people of Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, 28 brought beds and basins, earthen vessels and wheat, barley and flour, parched grain and beans, lentils and parched seeds, 29 honey and curds, sheep and cheese of the herd, **for David and the people who were with him to eat.** For they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness." (NKJV)

So David was God's servant. And his life is recorded as an example to us of how to serve the Lord. In similar fashion, Saul's life was recorded as a warning of how not to serve the Lord which we will see next time!

Lessons of Agag

On this windswept hill, three thousand years ago the mightiest man of Israel fell wounded; King Saul with life agonizingly clinging within his tortured body -- called out to a passing man and had him end his earthly suffering. That man killed King Saul and took his crown. That man was an Amalekite.

After a fierce battle all day with the Philistines, arrows from the enemies he had fought gravely wounded King Saul. His sons and heirs to the throne lay dead around him, night was falling, the enemies had retreated - and Saul was alone.

The mightiest man of Israel, head and shoulders taller than anyone else now dragged himself along trying to reach his sword fallen on the battlefield. When he had it at last he pushed himself upon it to end his dreadful pain.

As the night passed and morning dawned life still clung to Saul. The sound of the victorious Philistine warriors echoed up the hillsides, they came to abuse the wounded and strip the dead. Saul wanted to die. Handing there, impaled on his own sword, Saul looked around through the mists of death and he heard a man coming. In the gray light of dawn he appeared scavenging what he could from the dead. Then Saul cried out to him and asked for him to kill him. The young man obliged, striking down the King of Israel. Then he took the crown off Saul's head. That man was an Amalekite.

Listen, this is the message I want to underline in your heart and mind.

- Any part of your old life that you spare will come back and slay you and take your crown.
- Any part of our flesh (like Agag) that we spare will come back with a vengeance and slay us.
- Amalekites (the flesh) always come to strike us down when we are weakest – and then rob us of our crown.

And so what? Why does God always leave those little details lying around? Turn there with me to 1 Samuel 31.1-6; and then 2 Samuel 1.1-16.

God chose Saul and gave him to Israel. He only asked him to do one thing – destroy all the Amalekites. Saul served as king and had a moderately successful reign holding back the Philistines, and defeating them some times in a spectacular way.

Finally the Lord gave the Amalekites into his hand. He severely routed them and could have finished them off once and for all. But he didn't. He spared their king named Agag and the best of the plunder. Look there with me in 1 Samuel 15.2-3.

Saul kept only the best – **of what God hated**. To God the Amalekites were toxic waste that had to be dealt with; they were emitting dangerous spiritual radiation that would contaminate all that came into contact with them. So when God gave them into Saul's hand he wasn't to even spare their livestock – every one and every thing was to be destroyed. But Saul and his men went through that which God hated and saved the best. They sorted the deadly contaminants and kept the prettiest. Just like in the recent Gulf War II when looters took the beautiful barrels from reactor sites in Iraq, ignoring the skull and cross bones painted in red on each one. Taking them home they used them to store drinking water – and within days were experiencing deadly radiation sickness.

God wanted to utterly destroy this nation and its ferocious, plundering, merciless culture of murder and wickedness. The Amalekites were the 1st nation to attack Israel when they came out of Egypt. They struck the rear and murdered the weak and frail and old who brought up the end of the line. They did so with desire – they preyed upon the helpless and God exposed them for what they were.

History of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

The grandson of Esau -- the grandson of Abraham, fathered the Amalekites.

Quick history lesson: Abraham was from the 22nd century before Jesus, his son Isaac was from the 21st century BC. Esau was the 1st born of Isaac in the 20th century BC, and as we all know from the stories we learned growing up – he despised his inheritance. What we don't catch is – it wasn't the wealth, the herds, the crops, and the Land that he despised or loathed or didn't want...it was the BLESSING. Esau as Hebrews 12 tells us was a profane man, an immoral man, and a man who would not and could not repent of his sin. He was proud and wicked and hated the God of his fathers. He was born 2006BC in Beersheba.

Genesis 36.12 tells us that the 1st born son of Esau had his first son and his name was Amalek. So over 500 years has passed from the birth of these nations[2]. In an unusual way as the Lord instructed Moses in the battle and the aftermath we see that something big is going on here. God only let Israel win when Moses' hands were raised, and after the battle the Lord calls Himself Yahweh-Nissi and says He will fight Amalek from generation to generation.

What is going on? Basically this. Esau despised the blessing. Esau was proud and self-sufficient, profane and immoral. Esau represents the flesh. His grandson Amalek becomes the Biblical illustration of the flesh and the life long battle each of us will have with our flesh.

Now back to the tragic end of Saul on Mount Gilboa. Why did that happen? In 1 Samuel 15.

- 1 Samuel 15:1-3 1 Samuel also said to Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord. 2 Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’ ”

These instructions may seem extreme to you if you are not familiar with the history of Amalek. Moses, who was there when it happened, rehearsed the episode for the younger generation in Deuteronomy 25:17–19: “Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.”

- 1 Samuel 15:4-7 So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. 6 Then Saul said to the Kenites, “Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. 7 And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt.

Now up to this point Saul is being obedient.

- 1 Samuel 15:8-9 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

He thought, what a shame to destroy everything! So he saved Agag, who was the ruler of the Amalekites. Saul had no right to spare him any more than he had the right to spare the humblest peasant among these people. This nation was wholly given to evil, and the king, above all others, should have been destroyed and judged at this time. Neither had Saul the right to save from destruction the best of the cattle. It would appear that he made his attack for the purpose of obtaining booty and spoil, and God had forbidden that. The Israelites were bringing judgment upon the Amalekites for Almighty God in this particular case.

- 1 Samuel 15:10-13 Now the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, 11 “I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.” And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the Lord all night. 12 So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, “Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal.” 13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord.”

Saul says that he had been obedient, but notice Samuel’s retort to this.

- 1 Samuel 15:14-15 But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” 15 And Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.”

When Saul’s disobedience was discovered, you will notice, he tried to blame the people for what happened. He said, “The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen.” However the record states that it was “Saul and the people.” He was the king and the one who was responsible.

- 1 Samuel 15:16-21 Then Samuel said to Saul, “Be quiet! And I will tell you what the Lord said to me last night.” And he said to him, “Speak on.” 17 So Samuel said, “When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel? 18 Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, ‘Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’ 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the Lord?” 20 And Saul said to Samuel, “But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.”

Saul says that he obeyed the voice of the Lord. Notice he does not say, “my God,” or “our God,” but “thy God.” He does not take any responsibility at all for sparing the animals, yet he is the one to blame

- 1 Samuel 15:22-23 So Samuel said: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.”

The Lord said, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14). Are you obedient unto Him? How dare any of us call Him friend if we are not obeying Him? To disobey Him is worse than witchcraft. It is rebellion against God. When you meet a person who is totally disobedient to the Lord, you almost have to conclude that he does not belong to the Lord at all. Now I am not saying that works enter into salvation. I am saying that if you are a child of God, if you come to the place where you know Him, you will obey him. He also said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

- *1 Samuel 15:24-29 Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord.” 26 But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.” 27 And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28 So Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. 29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent.”*

I do not believe Saul’s repentance is genuine. Look how he is covering up his sin. He says to Samuel, “Let us go through the forms of worship together and not let the people know that I have been rejected.” He wanted to repent, but not have to pay the penalty for his disobedience. He was a hypocrite right to the end.

- 1 Samuel 15:30-33 Then he said, “I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord your God.” 31 So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord. 32 Then Samuel said, “Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me.” So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” 33 But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.

Agag came “delicately” unto Samuel because he knew he was in trouble. And Samuel killed Agag. Now that may be strong medicine for some folk today, but my friend, our God is a God of Judgment and He is going to judge wrong and evil. I am glad that God is going to judge. I don’t know about you, but I thank God that no one is getting away with evil today. There may be those, even in high places, who think they are getting away with their sin, and dishonesty, and murder, and adultery, but they are not. God is going to judge them. No one is going to get away with sin, and we need to make that very clear today. So Samuel executed the judgment of God upon this vile, wicked ruler, Agag[3].

What is the Message You Should Underline in Your Heart and Mind?

- Any part of your old life that you spare will come back and slay you and take your crown.
- Any part of our flesh (like Agag) that we spare will come back with a vengeance and slay us.
- Amalekites (the flesh) always come to strike us down when we are weakest – and then rob us of our crown.

What would make a God of infinite love mete out such a severe judgment? The Amalekites were an ancient nomadic race, descendants of Esau (Gen. 36:12). They inhabited the southern part of Canaan and were perennial enemies of the Israelites. They were the same tribe that viciously attacked Israel at Rephidim shortly after the Exodus, in the famous battle when Aaron and Hur had to support Moses’ arms (Exod. 17:8–13). They ambushed Israel from behind, massacring the stragglers who were most weary (Deut. 25:18). It was a cowardly attack by the most powerful and savage tribe in the whole region. God supernaturally delivered Israel that day, and the Amalekites fled into hiding. At the conclusion of that skirmish, God swore to Moses, “I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven” (v. 14). He actually made it a point of the Mosaic law that Israel was to destroy Amalek:

“Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. Therefore it shall come about when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; *you must not forget*” (Deut. 25:17–19, emphasis added).

The Amalekites were fearful warriors. Their intimidating presence was one of the reasons the Israelites disobeyed God and balked at entering the Promised Land at Kadesh-barnea (Num. 13:29).

God's anger burned against the Amalekites for their wickedness. He constrained even the corrupt prophet Balaam to prophecy their doom: "Amalek was the first of the nations, but his end shall be destruction" (Num. 24:20). The Amalekites used to harass Israel by coming into the land after crops had been sown and moving through the farmland with their tents and livestock, razing everything in their path (Judg. 6:3–5). They hated God, detested Israel, and seemed to delight in wicked and destructive acts.

God's instructions to Saul, therefore, fulfilled the vow He swore to Moses. Saul was to wipe out the tribe forever. He and his armies were the instrument through which a righteous God would carry out His holy judgment on a sinister people.[4]

Finally, as Saul faced off with the Philistines in the Valley of Elah, it was so much more than just a battle—it was the war for control of the area.

Today Tel Azekah is a five-acre site that overlooks the Valley of Elah where David killed Goliath. Today Tel Azekah stands as a reminder that the defense of the Shephelah the foothills between the coastal plains where the Philistines lived and the mountains where the Israelites lived was critical to the Israelites' survival.

Azekah guarded an important gateway into the mountains. The Valley of Elah provided access to Bethlehem, which was a mere twelve miles away from Azekah, and to Jerusalem, which was a few miles north of Bethlehem. For that reason, the Philistines and other pagan cultures wanted to capture and hold Azekah. Even the great empires of the east, Babylon and Assyria, came down the coastal plain and used the Valley of Elah to enter the Shephelah. The Assyrian army of King Sennacherib destroyed Azekah. So did King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who destroyed Azekah in 587 B.C. on his way to destroy the temple in Jerusalem. The battle between the Philistines and the Israelites that took place in the Valley of Elah during reign of King Saul. [5]

Both armies faced one another. A hardened Philistine warrior more than nine feet tall named Goliath taunted the Israelite army every day for forty days and ridiculed their God. Then a young shepherd boy named David, who was perhaps ten or twelve years old, came from Bethlehem in the Judean Mountains to bring food to his brothers, who were Israelite soldiers. This young boy, appalled by the insults the giant hurled at the God of Israel, was compelled by the Spirit of God to fight him. David had no sword or spear. He couldn't even wear King Saul's armor as protection. He carried a simple sling into battle. Humanly speaking, the boy had little to offer. But he did have a powerful faith in the God of Israel. Goliath, the Philistine warrior, was equipped with the latest weapons. He carried a sword, a javelin, and an iron-tipped spear. He wore a suit of armor that weighed 125 pounds. His people were masters at making and using iron. It is likely that the Philistines introduced iron making to the Middle East. Because of their ability to work iron, the Philistines had become the predominant culture. They dominated not only in warfare but in material prosperity, commerce, and other areas of technology. The Israelites, on the other hand, didn't know how to work with iron and even had to go to the

Philistines to have their tools sharpened (1 Samuel 13:19-21). ON the day of battle, only two Israelite soldiers King Saul and his son, Jonathan possessed a sword or spears (1 Samuel 13:22). NO wonder the Israelites were afraid! [6]

Before 1400 BC, bronze a combination of copper and tin, was the metal used in the Middle East. Perhaps this was because the melting point of copper is 1,100 degrees Celsius and the melting point of iron is 1,550 degrees Celsius.

Although bronze was a significant step beyond stone and wood, it was soft and didn't hold an edge well. As the Bronze Age ended, many changes occurred. There were many invasions (both the Philistines and Israelites entered Canaan at this time), wars, and collapses of cultures. This resulted in a worldwide shortage of tin, which led to a scarcity of bronze.

During the fifteenth century B.C, an Aegean people the Philistines migrated to the Middle East. They may not have invented iron technology, but they used it effectively. In fact, they developed a process that included leaving iron in the fire long enough to absorb the carbon from firewood to form another more malleable form of iron called steel. This superior metal so revolutionized the world that it gave its name to the next 600 years the Iron Age. Iron, as a technological advancement during biblical times, could be compared to nuclear energy or computers today. It determined which cultures would dominate world events. It revolutionized how people lived how much land they could plow, how much stone they could shape, know much wood they could cut. And it changed warfare greatly, just as gunpowder did centuries later.

The pagan Philistine culture dominated the Middle East during the early Iron Age, much as Western nations shape the cultures of developing nations today. The Philistines kept their iron technology secret so others could not use it. Since they lived on the coastal plain along the international trade route, they could also influence the world (a mission God had intended the Israelites to fulfill). The Israelites, on the other hand, did not even own swords and spears and had to pay the Philistines to sharpen their tools (1 Samuel 13:19-22). Between the time David killed Goliath and when he became King of Israel (2 Samuel 5), the Israelites learned the secret of iron technology and became the dominant culture (until they were unfaithful to God). Some scholars believe that David, or one of his people, learned this secret while living with the Philistines (1 Samuel 27-29). Although iron technology enabled David to destroy the enemies of God's people, he could not have been a successful as he was without God's hand upon him. Iron technology was one of the means by which God blessed David and provided a people, nation, and kingly pattern for the coming Son of David.[7]

[1] Ray Vander Laan, with Stephen and Amanda Sorenson, *Faith Lessons on the Promised Land Leader's Guide*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, Pg. 136.

[2] Abraham was born 2166 BC; Isaac was born 2066 BC; Esau & Jacob were born 2006 BC. Esau married at age 40 in 1966 BC and had a son and then grandson named Amalek. The Exodus was 1446 BC and the attack of Amalek was soon after in Exodus 17.8. From Esau's marriage to that cowardly attack was about 550 years (1966 BC to 1446 BC = 550 years).

[3] All of this material on 1st Samuel quoted from McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

[4]John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Vanishing Conscience - Drawing the Line in a No-Fault, Guilt-Free World*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing) 1997.

[5] Ray Vander Laan, with Stephen and Amanda Sorenson, *Faith Lessons on the Promised Land Leader's Guide*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, Pg. 140-41.

[6] Ray Vander Laan, with Stephen and Amanda Sorenson, *Faith Lessons on the Promised Land Leader's Guide*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, Pg. 140-41.

[7] Ray Vander Laan, with Stephen and Amanda Sorenson, *Faith Lessons on the Promised Land Leader's Guide*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, Pg. 152.

Crash Site--Suffer Loss Like Saul

DSS: Message Nine (060226AM)

I have spent this week sifting through all the debris at the crash site of King Saul's life. Much like the NTSB goes to airplane crash sites and examines every twisted piece of metal and scrap of plastic in order to piece together the cause of the crash—so God's Word records every scrap of Saul's life that is important for us to know about why he crashed and wasted his life. Today in this morning's and again this evening's messages I want to share with you the conclusion of all my sifting.

I have sorted through and found no less than twenty-five recorded reasons that Saul's life crashed and burned; reasons why God rejected his life's work and said that his ministry was wasted.

But before we go into the Old Testament record and sift through Saul's life--let me start by tying all this together for us as New Testament believers in Tulsa today.

How did Paul and the other New Testament writers operate in ordinary life? How did those who were the most visible servants of the Lord in the Scriptures, operate in all the little things that fill life? What is fascinating is, they all seemed to keep track of life like a day trader—each knew their investment and sought a return on each day's "works".

If you read closely the half of the books that the Apostle Paul wrote in the New Testament, you find a common thread—God is going to examine us individually for our "works"—works being what we did with our time, and energy, and resources, and what we did with our bodies. Open with me to Galatians 6.

- *Galatians 6:4 But let each one examine **his own work**, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. (NKJV)*
- *Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (NKJV)*
- *Colossians 1:10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being **fruitful in every good work** and increasing in the knowledge of God; (NKJV)*
- *1 Timothy 6:18 Let them do good, that they **be rich in good works**, ready to give, willing to share, (NKJV)*

- *Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God **should be careful to maintain good works**. These things are good and profitable to men. (NKJV)*

Peter said the same, and strongly urged the saints to be careful what they did with their days and hours.

- *1 Peter 1:17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality **judges according to each one's work**, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; (NKJV)*

There is also another perspective that motivated them—it was the idea of the end of the race. Let's look at the finish line. Paul had a distinct impression that life was a daily race with an end of life prize, and the only way to get the prize was to finish the race.

- *2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, **I have finished the race**, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which **the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day**, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (NKJV)*

John the Apostle was also convinced that we would either welcome Christ's coming or wither in shame before Him.

- *1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and **not be ashamed before Him** at His coming. (NKJV)*

In fact, as John records the closing words of the Bible, they point to that very truth.

- *Revelation 22:12 And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to **give to every one according to his work**. NKJV*

So if God is going to analyze our lives and judge us by our works, what should we be doing? That takes us back to Paul and this picture Paul challenges us with—that life is the production of building materials that we present to God. Each day our time was either spent in what is merely earthly and temporal or some of our time was also given over to what is lasting, endless and eternal.

- *Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but **I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me**. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 **I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus**. NKJV*

Paul further expands upon that idea by saying that our works, deeds, actions are transformed into either "wood, hay, stubble" or "gold, silver, precious stones."

- 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 **each one's work** will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will **test each one's work**, of what sort it is. 14 If **anyone's work** which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If **anyone's work** is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (NKJV)

Gold, Silver, Precious Stones	Wood, Hay, Stubble
Permanent	Passing, temporary
Beautiful	Ordinary, even ugly
Valuable	Cheap
Hard to obtain	Easy to obtain.

We have often looked at Paul's record of that great moment in 2nd Corinthians 5, when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ. But this morning, turn instead to 1st Corinthians 3. It is amazing that Paul spoke more about this topic of being careful about not losing your life's work, to the Corinthians—than any other church. He seems to imply that their often out of control lives threatened them with irrecoverable loss.

Lets read 1st Corinthians 3:1-15 as we stand.

- *1 Corinthians 3:15 If anyone's work is burned, **he will suffer loss**; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (NKJV)*

What does suffering loss mean in relation to our lives as believers? The New Testament uses this word several times, but the clearest example of what it means is in Acts 27. Remember Paul on the ship that went through the terrible storm and then crashed on the rocks and was destroyed? In the midst of that event in Acts 27 we find a very good picture of what suffering loss is all about in our lives as believers.

Think of life as collecting the cargo in a ship. Everything important you carry down and stow in the hold. Now follow along in Acts 27.

- *Acts 27:10 saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with **disaster and much loss**, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives." (NKJV)*
- *Acts 27:21 But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and **incurred this disaster and loss**." (NKJV)*
- *Acts 27:44 and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land. (NKJV)*

At the judgment seat of Christ some believers Paul warns, are going to see everything they lived for thrown overboard (burned up in the fire) and they will float to shore on a board.

All that will be left of life will be that they were saved (they shall be saved, yet so as by fire). That is such a description of so many lives that fill God's Word; they began the race with great achievement, but failed at the end because they ignored God's rules. They did not lose their

salvation, but they did lose their rewards (1 Cor. 3:15). It happened to Lot (Gen. 19), and to Samson (Jude 16), and probably King Saul who is our focus these past weeks (1 Sam. 28; 31), and to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). And, as Paul warns--it can happen to us!

Paul wanted to avoid at all costs the disastrous loss that would come if He ignored God and His will for life. Over and over we hear him say things like:

- 1 Corinthians 9:27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, **I myself should become disqualified.** NKJV

DISQUALIFIED — the NKJV translation of the Greek word *adokimos* (1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Cor. 13:5-7; fail the test, NIV; Titus 1:16). In three others references, the NKJV translates the Greek word as debased (Rom. 1:28; depraved, NIV), disapproved (2 Tim. 3:8), and rejected (Heb. 6:8). The literal sense of the word is “tested and proved to be false or unacceptable.”

- Borrowed from the athletic games, the word describes a contestant who, because of some infraction of the rules, is disqualified from winning the prize (1 Cor. 9:27; castaway KJV).
- Another metaphor is possible: a “counterfeit faith” (2 Tim. 3:8, NRSV). This suggests a coin that has been tested, proven false, and disapproved as legal tender.[1]

The word disqualified shows up in Hebrews 6 and is translated as rejected.

- *Hebrews 6:7-8 For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; 8 but if it bears thorns and briers, it is **rejected** and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.* NKJV

“Rejected” is *adokimos*, the same word Paul used when writing to the Corinthian believers, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27). “Castaway” is the same word *adokimos*, meaning “not approved.” In effect, Paul is saying, “When I come into His presence I don’t want to be disapproved. I don’t want the Lord Jesus to say to me, ‘You have failed. Your life should have been a testimony, but it was not.’”

The chilling fact of God's Word is the individual life analysis that God Himself then performs—an autopsy not of the cause of death, but of the purpose of life. That is why the constant theme of Paul’s exhortations to us in the church revolve around the idea of finishing well at the finish line, a life that survived the fires of the judgment seat, and a "well done good and faithful servant" analysis of our race by the Lord Himself.

God's Word has some sobering portraits of those who suffered loss. One of the greatest of these lessons in how to waste your life is Saul. What a great start and what a terrible ending. In God’s race it is those who finish that get counted for reward—all the rest suffer loss. All the rest have their life’s work burned up before them, thrown overboard and sunk in the depths of the sea, irrecoverably lost.

If you want to not suffer loss, God has given us the tracks of one who walked before us, had the Spirit, knew God—and yet failed completely. The life of Saul stands today as an example to all of us on how not to live, how not to end, how not to invest these precious days we have on earth!

So what was God's summary of Saul's life? God only needs one word—rejected. God says five times in just three verses (1st Samuel 15:23, 26; 16:1) that Saul rejected God by disregarding His Word, so God rejected him.

So Paul said, don't load your ship with what God is going to throw overboard. Don't build with flammable materials if your house is going to go through a fire. Don't waste your life!

We could sum up the tragic shipwrecked life of King Saul by saying that you don't serve God by doing what he did. Why not re-examine his life and see what made Saul the man who wasn't after God's heart.

1. Neglect God's Leadership of your life so that you underestimate the strength of your enemy—and get completely defeated. 1st Samuel 13.1-7

King Saul faced a whole new type of enemy, he was the King—and he didn't even know how strong his enemies were! The times since Joshua's conquest had produced a whole new type of enemy. Fresh in from the islands of the Mediterranean, the sea peoples settled on the coasts and mixing with the ancient inhabitants became the Philistines. Saul needed God to defeat his enemies. So do we. Saul neglected God's leadership and failed. So will we if we also neglect to allow God to lead our lives.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. NKJV

If you want to waste your life—**neglect God's Leadership of your life so that you underestimate the strength of your enemy—and get completely defeated.** 1st Samuel 13.1-7.

2. Get impatient and use your impatience as an excuse to do your own thing instead of obeying God. We can't serve God by—Impatience. *"Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him" (1 Samuel 13:8).*

Saul was impatient with God's plan. He sought the approval of man before he sought the approval of God.

If you want to waste your life—**get impatient and use your impatience as an excuse to do your own thing instead of obeying God. We can't serve God by—Impatience.**

3. Neglect your primary responsibilities that God has entrusted to you by only taking care of your own needs. We can't serve God by—Neglect. *"So it came about, on the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of*

any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan. But they were found with Saul and Jonathan his son” (1 Samuel 13:22).

Saul neglected to provide for those entrusted to his care. He made sure he had what he needed to defend himself, but not that those he cared for were armed for the battle. In the New Testament, God says such a person is worse than an infidel:

“If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8).

If you want to waste your life—**neglect your primary responsibilities that God has entrusted to you by only taking care of your own needs. We can’t serve God by—Neglect.**

4. Get so out of touch with the battle raging around you—that God can be doing mighty things, and you miss them completely. We can’t serve God by--Lazy indifference. *“AND SAUL was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men. Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod’s brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord’s priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone” (1 Samuel 14:2-3).*

Saul became lazy and indifferent; he was unaware of his son, the battle, and even the victory. He missed it all!

If you want to waste your life—**get so out of touch with the battle raging around you—that God can be doing mighty things, and you miss them completely. We can’t serve God by--Lazy indifference.**

5. Allow your anger and pride to rule so that you say and do things that disable, wound, and harm those around you. We can’t serve God by--Rash words. *“And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, ‘Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies.’ So none of the people tasted food” (1 Samuel 14:24).*

Saul spoke with no thought of what the implications were to his family or nation. Instead of his mouth being a fountain of blessing—he was a curse.

- *James 1:19-20 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. NKJV*

Now look at James 3.

- *James 3:5-10 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See **how great a forest a little fire kindles!** 6 And **the tongue is a fire**, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the*

*course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 But **no man can tame the tongue**. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. **My brethren, these things ought not to be so.** NKJV*

If you want to waste your life—**allow your anger and pride to rule so that you say and do things that disable, wound, and harm those around you. We can't serve God by--Rash words.**

6. Ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do. 1

Samuel 15:1-3 Samuel also said to Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord. 2 Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’ ” NKJV

If you want to waste your life—**just ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do.**

7. Pick and choose from what God clearly tells you to do so that you offer God selective and partial obedience. 1 Samuel 15:8 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. NKJV

Remember that the clearest way to declare that you love the Lord is by obedience.

- *John 14:21 He who has My commandments **and keeps them**, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. NKJV*

If you want to waste your life—**just pick and choose from what God clearly tells you to do so that you offer God selective and partial obedience.**

[1]Youngblood, Ronald F., General Editor; F.F. Bruce and R.K. Harrison, Consulting Editors, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.

Ashamed at His Coming?

DSS: Message Ten (060226PM)

Tonight either we will love His appearing—or dread it. The choice is ours. Let's look at the finish line. Paul had a distinct impression that life was a daily race with an end of life prize, and the only way to get the prize was to finish the race.

- *2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, **I have finished the race**, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which **the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day**, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (NKJV)*

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In fact, as John records the closing words of the Bible, they point to that very truth.

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I have sorted through and found no less than twenty-five recorded reasons that Saul's life crashed and burned; reasons why God rejected his life's work and said that his ministry was wasted.

So if God is going to analyze our lives and judge us by our works, what should we be doing? That takes us back to Paul and this picture Paul challenges us with—that life is the production of building materials that we present to God. Each day our time was either spent in what is merely earthly and temporal or some of our time was also given over to what is lasting, endless and eternal.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15 ...**each one's work** will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will **test each one's work**, of what sort it is. 14 If **anyone's work** which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If **anyone's work** is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. NKJV

<i>Gold, Silver, Precious Stones</i>	<i>Wood, Hay, Stubble</i>
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All that will be left of life will be that they were saved (they shall be saved, yet so as by fire). That is such a description of so many lives that fill God's Word; they began the race with great achievement, but failed at the end because they ignored God's rules. They did not lose their salvation, but they did lose their rewards (1 Cor. 3:15). It happened to Lot (Gen. 19), and to Samson (Jude 16), and probably King Saul who is our focus these past weeks (1 Sam. 28; 31), and to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). And, as Paul warns--it can happen to us!

Paul wanted to avoid at all costs the disastrous loss that would come if He ignored God and His will for life. Over and over we hear him say things like:

- 1 Corinthians 9:27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, **I myself should become disqualified.** (NKJV)

DISQUALIFIED —The literal sense of the word is “tested and proved to be false or unacceptable.”

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If you want to not suffer loss, God has given us the tracks of one who walked before us, had the Spirit, knew God—and yet failed completely. The life of Saul stands today as an example to all of us of how not to live, how not to end, how not to invest these precious days we have on earth!

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We could sum up the tragic shipwrecked life of King Saul by saying that you don't serve God by doing what he did. Why not re-examine his life and see what made Saul the man who wasn't after God's heart. Or as I have come to look at Saul after sorting and sifting through all God left for us—25 ways to be sure that your life will amount to nothing!

1. Neglect God's Leadership of your life so that you underestimate the strength of your enemy—and get completely defeated. 1st Samuel 13.1-7

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (NKJV)

If you want to waste your life—**neglect God's Leadership of your life so that you underestimate the strength of your enemy—and get completely defeated.** 1st Samuel 13.1-7. Or walk in the Spirit and seek Christ's rule each day in your life!

2. Get impatient and use your impatience as an excuse to do your own thing instead of obeying God. We can't serve God by—Impatience. *"Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him" (1 Samuel 13:8).*

Saul was impatient with God's plan. He sought the approval of man before he sought the approval of God.

If you want to waste your life—**get impatient and use your impatience as an excuse to do your own thing instead of obeying God. We can't serve God by—Impatience.** Or walk in the Spirit and seek Christ's rule each day in your life!

3. Neglect your primary responsibilities that God has entrusted to you by only taking care of your own needs. We can't serve God by—Neglect. *"So it came about, on the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan. But they were found with Saul and Jonathan his son" (1 Samuel 13:22).*

Saul neglected to provide for those entrusted to his care. He made sure he had what he needed to defend himself, but not that those he cared for were armed for the battle. In the New Testament, God says such a person is worse than an infidel:

"If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8).

If you want to waste your life—**neglect your primary responsibilities that God has entrusted to you by only taking care of your own needs. We can't serve God by—Neglect.** Or walk in the Spirit and seek Christ's rule each day in your life!

4. Get so out of touch with the battle raging around you—that God can be doing mighty things, and you miss them completely. We can't serve God by--Lazy indifference. *“AND SAUL was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men. Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone” (1 Samuel 14:2-3).*

Saul became lazy and indifferent; he was unaware of his son, the battle, and even the victory. He missed it all!

If you want to waste your life—**get so out of touch with the battle raging around you—that God can be doing mighty things, and you miss them completely. We can't serve God by--Lazy indifference.** Or walk in the Spirit and seek Christ's rule each day in your life!

5. Allow your anger and pride to rule so that you say and do things that disable, wound, and harm those around you. We can't serve God by--Rash words. *“And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, ‘Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies.’ So none of the people tasted food” (1 Samuel 14:24).*

Saul spoke with no thought of what the implications were to his family or nation. Instead of his mouth being a fountain of blessing—he was a curse.

- *James 1:19-20 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (NKJV)*

Now look at James 3.

- *James 3:5-10 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See **how great a forest a little fire kindles!** 6 And **the tongue is a fire**, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 But **no man can tame the tongue**. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. **My brethren, these things ought not to be so.** (NKJV)*

If you want to waste your life—**allow your anger and pride to rule so that you say and do things that disable, wound, and harm those around you. We can't serve God by--Rash words.** Or walk in the Spirit and seek Christ's rule each day in your life!

6. Ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do. 1

Samuel 15:1-3 Samuel also said to Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord. 2 Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’ ” (NKJV)

If you want to waste your life—**just ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do.**

7. Pick and choose from what God clearly tells you to do so that you offer God selective and partial obedience. 1

Samuel 15:8 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. (NKJV)

Remember that the clearest way to declare that you love the Lord is by obedience.

- *John 14:21 He who has My commandments **and keeps them**, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” (NKJV)*

If you want to waste your life—**just pick and choose from what God clearly tells you to do so that you offer God selective and partial obedience.**

8. Hold on to the best and nicest parts of what God hates and has asked for you to destroy, and keep them for your own use. 1

Samuel 15:9a But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them...(NKJV)

Jesus told us what He thinks of loving what He hates—

- *James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (NKJV)*

If you want to waste your life—**just hold on to the best and nicest parts of what God hates and has asked for you to destroy, and keep them for your own use.**

9.Only give God what you don't want anyway and is worthless to you. 1

Samuel 15:9b ... But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. (NKJV)

Jesus told us how to live for eternal gain—

- *Matthew 16:24-27 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. (NKJV)*

God deserves the first, the best, the costliest of our time, treasures, and talents. If you want to waste your life—**just give God what you don’t want anyway and is worthless to you.**

10. Honor yourself before others and remind people of your accomplishments instead of honoring the Lord. 1 Samuel 15:12 So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, “Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal.” (NKJV)

Jesus’ harshest criticisms were for the proud religious leaders.

- *Matthew 23:1-12 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, **but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.** 4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ 8 But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (NKJV)*

If you want to waste your life—**just honor yourself before others and remind people of your accomplishments instead of honoring the Lord.**

11. Be deceptive about the true condition of your spiritual life by making false claims about your dedication to God. 1 Samuel 15:13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord.” (NKJV)

Jesus honored honesty and condemned hypocrisy.

- *Luke 18:9-14 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers,*

or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” NKJV

If you want to waste your life—**just be deceptive about the true condition of your spiritual life by making false claims about your dedication to God.**

12. Blame others for your own personal failures. 1 Samuel 15:15a And Saul said, “*They* have brought them from the Amalekites; *for the people spared* the best of the sheep and the oxen...” (NKJV)

If you want to waste your life—**just blame others for your own personal failures.**

13. Experience God second hand, only through others, and not first hand and personally. 1 Samuel 15:15b “to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.” NKJV

If you want to waste your life—**just experience God second hand, only through others, and not first hand and personally.**

14. Cultivate an exaggerated view of your own importance. 1 Samuel 15:17 So Samuel said, “When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel?” (NKJV)

If you want to waste your life—**just cultivate an exaggerated view of your own importance.**

15. Do your own thing even when God's Word tells you explicitly not to. 1 Samuel 15:18 Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, "Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed." (NKJV)

If you want to waste your life—**just do your own thing even when God's Word tells you explicitly not to.**

16. Argue with godly people God sends your way to point out ways that you are disobeying the Lord! 1 Samuel 15:20 And Saul said to Samuel, “But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.” (NKJV)

If you want to waste your life—**just argue with godly people God sends your way to point out ways that you are disobeying the Lord!**

- James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (NKJV)

17. Make sure you only half-repent by making excuses for why you sin, and fearing people more than God! 1 Samuel 15:24 Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 1 Samuel 15:30 Then he said, “I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord your God.” (NKJV)

This is admitting not confessing. Here is what a confession looks like: 2 Samuel 12:13 So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. NKJV And one who really confesses has also really repented and so they can unashamedly sing of God’s forgiveness like David does in Psalm 51!

If you want to waste your life—**just make excuses for why you sin, and fear people more than God instead of humbly, contritely repenting when confronted with your sin.**

18. Forget the awesome power of God so that you begin to think that mere mortals (the Philistines) are greater than the Ancient of Days! We can’t serve God by--Doubting the power of God. “When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid” (1 Samuel 17:11).

- 2 Timothy 3:5 ...having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (NKJV)

If you want to waste your life—**forget the awesome power of God so that you begin to think that mere mortals (the Philistines) are greater than the Ancient of Days! We can’t serve God by--Doubting the power of God.**

19. Get so absorbed in your self image that you begin to constantly have to defend your reputation all the time. We can’t serve God by--Self-focus.

“Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, ‘They have ascribed to David ten thousands, **and to me** they have ascribed only thousands’ ” (1 Samuel 18:8).

Saul measured the worth of his life by what others said, rather than by the Lord.

- 2 Corinthians 10:18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends. (NKJV)

If you want to waste your life—**get so absorbed in your self image that you begin to constantly have to defend your reputation all the time. We can’t serve God by--self-focus.**

20. Be so convinced that you are the master of your fate, that you live in constant fears and insecurities about your health, your job, your future. We can’t serve God by—insecurity.

“Now what more can he have **but the kingdom?**” (1 Samuel 18:8b).

Saul surrendered the care of his future security to himself and took it away from the Lord. Fear is always the realm of Satan.

If you want to waste your life—**be so convinced that you are the master of your fate, that you live in constant fears and insecurities about your health, your job, your future. We can't serve God by—insecurity.**

- *2 Timothy 1:7 For **God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.** NKJV*
- *1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and **you are not your own?** 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. NKJV*

21.Look upon others that God is blessing with suspicion and jealousy. We can't serve God by—jealousy. *“So Saul eyed David from that day forward” (1 Samuel 18:9). “Now Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, but had departed from Saul” (1 Samuel 18:12).*

Saul was driven by the lust for self—desiring to keep others from having something he wanted for himself! This is the worst form of jealousy. Jealousy darkens our eyes to anything good about another; in Saul's mind, David was unable to ever measure up to Saul's expectations. Saul neither treasured nor sought God's blessing, favor, presence, or even involvement in his life. He valued himself, neglected God, and feared David because the Lord was with him. What a tragic, misdirected life!

If you want to waste your life—**look upon others that God is blessing with suspicion and jealousy. We can't serve God by—Jealousy.**

22.Tear down your wife and kids when they don't embrace your self driven agenda. We can't serve God by--neglecting our marriage. *“Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, ‘**You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?**’ ” (1 Samuel 20:30).*

Saul confessed his failure to nurture and care for his wife. An undisciplined wife breeds many painful days.

If you want to waste your life— **Tear down your wife and kids when they don't embrace your self driven agenda. We can't serve God by--neglecting our marriage.**

23. Look at life as if it is only for the moment—live only for what you can grab and hold. We can't serve God by--Seeing things entirely from an earthly perspective. *“For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, **nor your kingdom.** Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die” (1 Samuel 20:31).*

Saul wasn't able to see the eternal, the divine, and the spiritual parts of life. He looked on his family, his future, and their success as only a physical pursuit, not a spiritual heritage. God was always left out of the equation for security, prosperity, and happiness.

If you want to waste your life—**look at life as if it is only for the moment—live only for what you can grab and hold. We can't serve God by--Seeing things entirely from an earthly erspective.**

24. Get so calloused about the things of God that you lose all respect and honor for the servants of God. We can't serve God by--Having no fear of God. *"Then the king said to the guards who stood about him, 'Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not tell it to me.' But the servants of the king would not lift their hands to strike the priests of the Lord" (1 Samuel 22:17).*

Saul did not see God, so he did not fear God. Thus there was no limit to his actions because he saw no consequence in offending the Lord by his life.

If you want to waste your life—**get so calloused about the things of God that you lose all respect and honor for the servants of God. We can't serve God by--Having no fear of God.**

25. Trust in God's enemies and use them to advance your goals. We can't serve God by--supporting the enemies of the Lord. *"And the king said to Doeg, 'You turn and kill the priests!' So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod" (1 Samuel 22:18).*

If we love someone, we hurt when they are hurt. We are loyal and reverent of the name of those we cherish. Saul had none of these qualities because he failed to cherish God enough to carry out His fierce wrath against the Amalekites. He uses one of God's enemies (an Edomite) to kill God's choice servants (the Levites).

If you want to waste your life—**trust in God's enemies and use them to advance your goals. We can't serve God by--supporting the enemies of the Lord.**

The end of Saul was a catastrophe. He crashed against the rocks of his own disobedient life and sank into the dark waters of sin. He was a disgrace to himself by his ignominious death; to his family he failed to protect; to his country he betrayed and brought to defeat; and to his God he ignored and dishonored. What a colossal failure and a grim testimony of neglected warning signs that led to a shipwreck of a very promising life!

Saul's failures can serve to drive us to pray to live in such a way that these areas don't get solidified in the lives of those we love!

Life really does come down to servanthood—who we present ourselves as servants to obey as Paul said (Romans 6:13). Or as Jesus so clearly warns us "no one can serve two masters". (Matthew 6:24)

Over and over in God's Word we see that God summarizes an entire life in a few words. The challenge of that summary is two fold. When God summarizes a life *He means it, and it is accurate.*

Do you remember God's summary of David's life? We can call that David's epitaph. God distills David's seventy-year life down to just 9 words in English.

- *Acts 13:36 For when **David had served God's purpose in his own generation**, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. (NIV)*

Let's prayerfully heed the important lessons learned from Saul's shipwrecked life! When we or members of my family face challenges, hardships, and unfair situations, we will live by 1 Peter 3:8-14.

- *1 Peter 3:8-14 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." 13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." (NKJV)*

[1]Youngblood, Ronald F., General Editor; F.F. Bruce and R.K. Harrison, Consulting Editors, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.

Esau - The Power of Little Choices

DSS: Message Eleven (060305AM)

Four thousand years ago one man made a series of little choices. He was rugged, handsome, hard working, honest, athletic, strong—and proud. From the perspective of those who lived around him he was a great guy—but from the One who sees the heart, he was pitiful.

A spiritual scan would have revealed that he fed his flesh, gave in to his passions, nursed his wounds until they festered into gangrenous abscesses that oozed bitterness. That bitterness infected his entire life and he ended up becoming an enemy of God.

Who was he? Esau, firstborn son of Isaac, grandson of God's friend Abraham, natural heir to all the promised blessings of the God of the Universe—and one who had everything that really matters in life, except the most important element.

Esau had everything but God, and what does it profit Jesus once asked, if someone gain the whole world and lose their own soul (Matthew 16:26).

How did the life of this man who seemed to have it all turn out? Hebrews 12 gives us this tragic flight recording in God's black box of another crashed life, another burned and wasted life.

Look back with me closely at the heart of Esau opened for view in v, 15-17. God does a biopsy and shows us the cancer growing, unseen and unchecked.

- Hebrews 12:15-17 See to it that no one **misses the grace of God** and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. 16 See that no one is **sexually immoral**, or is **godless** like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. 17 Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. **He could bring about no change of mind**, though he sought the blessing with tears. (NIV)
- Hebrews 12:15-17 looking carefully lest anyone **fall short of the grace of God**; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any **fornicator** or **profane** person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, **he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance**, though he sought it diligently with tears. (NKJV)
- Hebrews 12:15-17 See to it that no one **comes short of the grace of God**; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; 16 that there be no **immoral** or **godless** person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, **he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance**, though he sought for it with tears. (NASB)

Esau

Now turn back those 4000 years and see Esau in Genesis 25:24. As the firstborn son of Isaac, Esau began with every imaginable opportunity and blessing; he lived with every earthly success, he died surrounded by an abundance of everything but God in his life. Even though Esau was proud, even though he was profane, even though he was immoral as Hebrews explains—God allowed him to live, to have a large family, and many descendents. That is the goodness of God that waits.

But in Genesis 25:34 God records that Esau "despised" his birthright. As the first born son of Isaac, all the rights of the family contained in the birthright were his. Esau was to be in contact with God, he was to be the priest of his family, he was to be the man who had a covenant from God—Esau was given the place of continuing a relationship with God like his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac. But what did he do? He bartered that right, trading it for a momentary need. What Esau was really saying by this choice was, "I'd rather have a bowl of soup than have a relationship with God."

Without the insight we get from Hebrews we would not know all that was going on inside of Esau's heart. Esau not only was immoral, but he was godless. He had no ethics or faith, no scruples or reverence. He had no regard for the good, the truthful, the divine. He was totally worldly, totally secular, totally profane. Christians are to be vigilant that no persons such as Esau contaminate Christ's Body. That is why the writer of Hebrews warns us to see to it ... that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau.

That reminds me of a song from a generation ago, written about Esau and those like him warned by God here in Hebrews 12. God's Final Call (JWP)

- Some day you'll hear God's final call to you
To take His offer of salvation true
This could be it, my friend, if you but knew
God's final call, God's final call.
- How can you live another day in sin
Thinking some day with Christ you will begin?
O will you hear, above the world's loud din,
God's final call, God's final call?
- If you reject God's final call of grace,
You'll have no chance your footsteps to retrace
All hope will then be gone, and doom you'll face:
O hear His call! O hear His call!

Again I repeat—God is so patient. Esau was given every imaginable opportunity and blessing; he lived with every earthly success, he died surrounded by an abundance of everything but God in his life. Even though Esau was proud, even though he was profane, even though he was immoral—God allowed him to live, to have a large family, and many descendents. That is the goodness of God that waits.

In fact, godless and profane Esau's family line lived on to the time of Christ in unbroken generations. Esau had many famous descendants we see described in the Bible—**Edom** and **Amalek** as nations by the time of Moses, **Agag** in the time of Samuel and Saul, **Haman** in the time of Esther and Mordecai, and the most notable and famous of all Esau's descendants was the evil, godless, immoral, and murderous **King Herod the Great** in the time of Christ. All of those are descendants of Esau. And all of them reflected in increasingly visible ways the results of godless living.

Look with me at that first descendant that God wants us to know about. That grandson of Esau, who was the grandson of Abraham, fathered the nation we know from the Scriptures as the Amalekites.

Genesis 36:12 Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife. (NKJV)

So Esau's grandson was Amalek. Time continues to pass, and as we turn to Exodus 17:8-15 we are now looking at events that occurred 3500 years ago; as over 500 years have passed from the birth of these nations[1]. The Amalekites became a nomadic race that inhabited the southern part of Canaan and became perennial enemies of the Israelites. They were fearful warriors. Their intimidating presence was one of the reasons the Israelites disobeyed God and balked at entering the Promised Land at Kadesh-barnea (Num. 13:29). They viciously attacked Israel at Rephidim shortly after the Exodus. They ambushed Israel from behind, massacring the stragglers who were most weary (Deut. 25:18). It was a cowardly attack by the most powerful and savage tribe in the whole region.

The Amalekites hated God, detested Israel, and seemed to delight in wicked and destructive acts. So God supernaturally delivered Israel that day, and the Amalekites fled into hiding.

As we examine the famous battle when Aaron and Hur had to support Moses' arms (Exod. 17:8-13)—and the unusual way as the Lord instructed Moses in the battle and the aftermath, we see that something big is going on here. *God only let Israel win when Moses' hands were raised* (a picture of prayer in 1 Timothy 2:8), and after the battle the Lord calls Himself "Yahweh-Nissi" and says He will fight Amalek from generation to generation.

The truth from Exodus is that only God can give us victory.

- *Exodus 17:8-10, 14-16 Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. 9 So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose men for us, and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." 10 And Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial, and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." 15 And Moses built an altar, and named it The LORD is My Banner; 16 and he said, "The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation." (NASB)*

We need to believe that truth and by faith seek His intervention in the battles of life.

- *Exodus 17:11 So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. 13 So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.*

God wanted to utterly destroy this nation and its ferocious, plundering, merciless culture of murder and wickedness. The Amalekites were the 1st nation to attack Israel when they came out of Egypt. They struck the rear and murdered the weak and frail and old who brought up the end of the line. They did so with desire – they preyed upon the helpless and God exposed them for what they were[2].

What is going on? Basically this. We are seeing how sin left unchecked, like deadly cancer grows and grows. In Genesis Esau despised the blessing. Esau was proud and self-sufficient, profane and immoral. In a spiritual sense, Esau represents the flesh. His grandson Amalek becomes a Biblical illustration of the flesh and the life long battle each of us will have with our flesh.

Three Conclusions We Can Draw from Exodus 17:

- ❖ *First, God is going to get rid of Amalek. In other words, God is going to get rid of the old nature.*
- ❖ *Secondly, the Lord will never compromise with the old nature. He will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.*
- ❖ *The third important item is that this constant conflict will go on as long as we live in this life. The flesh and the spirit will always war against each other. Only the Holy Spirit of God can give us victory. We need to recognize this fact[3].*

The battle with Amalek was won by Moses with upraised hands. Joshua and the army could not win by physical means—they had to have God's intervention. If you read closely you can see that the real battle was waged on the mountaintop. Moses was fighting and winning as he sought the Lord through prayer. When Moses' hands dropped, the battle would turn against Israel. Without Moses and his upraised hands in prayer, Israel would have been defeated.

The critical lesson for us is that only the Spirit can defeat our flesh. We win daily battles with the temptations of our flesh by walking in the Spirit. When we go our own way we face Amalek (our flesh) and are defeated. As Paul said the defeat of our flesh comes only through the victory Christ already won for us on the cross, brought to us step by step as we walk believing that truth in the Spirit of God's power.

God's Word clearly warns us that we do not conquer our flesh by physical means—asceticism, religious activity, or human effort. It is only by the power of the cross worked out in our life by

the Holy Spirit. There is a war always brewing between our flesh and the Spirit of God within us.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal. 5:17).

Flesh can't defeat flesh. Resolves, promises, fighting and striving in our own power only leads to further defeats--it is only by yielding to the power of the cross

God commands them to destroy their enemies completely. As we are to also through Christ.

- ***Amalek was their foe.*** Deuteronomy 25:17-19 "Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, 18 how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. 19 "Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget. (NASB)
- ***The flesh is our foe.*** Colossians 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (NASB)

The Amalekites make an apt illustration of the sin that remains in the believer's life. That sin—already utterly defeated—must be dealt with ruthlessly and hacked to pieces, or it will revive and continue to plunder and pillage our hearts and sap our spiritual strength. We cannot be merciful with Amalek or Agag, or they will turn and try to devour us. In fact, the remaining sin in us often becomes more fiercely determined after it has been overthrown by the gospel.[4]

One final truth we need to see is in Galatians.

- *Galatians 2:20 I **have been** crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who **loved me**, and **delivered Himself up for me**. (NASB)*
- *Galatians 6:14 But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world **has been crucified** to me, and I to the world. (NASB)*

The battle is already won, the enemy defeated and we just need to believe that and act upon that truth! How do we do that more regularly?

This evening we are going to survey the war chapters of God's Word Romans 6, Ephesians 4-6, and Colossians 3—and there we find the tactics God left us to win. He has defeated our enemy, armed us with superior weapons, and offers to lead us into victory every time we follow Him!

- ❖ [1] Abraham was born 2166 BC; Isaac was born 2066 BC; Esau & Jacob were born 2006 BC. Esau married at age 40 in 1966 BC and had a son and then grandson named Amalek. The Exodus was 1446 BC and the attack of Amalek was soon after in Exodus 17.8. From Esau's marriage to that cowardly attack was about 550 years (1966 BC to 1446 BC = 550 years).
- ❖ [2] J. Vernon Magee, p. 268.
- ❖ [3] McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.
- ❖ [4] John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Vanishing Conscience - Drawing the Line in a No-Fault, Guilt-Free World*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing) 1997.

Hacking Agag to Pieces

DSS: Message Twelve (060305PM)

How bad is sin? Sin is so bad it took God killing His own Son to pay the price of wrath that sin deserved! That is an abstract thought until we see the price of sin in terms we can relate to.

Our first portion of Scripture this evening is just one of those places where we make a connection with the great wrath God has for sin and the high price that furious wrath demands. Please open with me to Psalm 51.

When we see that wrath upon sin it sometimes makes us uncomfortable—and it should. And in that discomfort we should then respond in gratitude for the gracious gift of Christ's redeeming love, atoning death, and endless life. To more fully appreciate what we have in Christ--we need to step back and consider the character of our God. God is always just, right, and blameless in all He does. That is exactly what He has consistently revealed about Himself[1].

- *Psalm 51:4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, **And blameless when You judge.** (NKJV)*

The Amalekites hated God, detested Israel, and seemed to delight in wicked and destructive acts. God's instructions to Saul, therefore, fulfilled the vow He swore to Moses. Saul was to wipe out the tribe forever. He and his armies were the instrument through which a righteous God would carry out His holy judgment on a sinister people.[2]

But sometimes when we first see Him execute judgment we pause and secretly wonder why He was so severe, don't we? Let me show you one such place is God's Word. It is 1st Samuel 15. Remember when we started our look at Saul the first king of Israel. I explained that God rejected him for disobeying a very clear command. Then I read the actual orders God gave him. Turn there again with me please.

- *1 Samuel 15:3 Now go and attack Amalek, and **utterly destroy** all that they have, and **do not spare** them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey. (NKJV)*

What is God's Attitude About Sin?

This verse shows God's attitude about sin. God is a God of wrath against sin. Here we see what lies ahead for all who do not flee to the shadow of the cross. But, why would God ever say to do such a thing? If we just look at the verse all by itself, it seems harsh and out of place. But once we back up and see what else God has said about these people—it all becomes much clearer. Christ's death spared us the fury of God's wrath upon sin that we rightly deserved.

So one thing we know for sure and that is that this event happened, God ordered it, recorded it and wanted it to happen—and all that is because of an immutable truth God has revealed about Himself—God blameless in His Justice, God is not mocked! You see God here responding, after centuries of patience, against sin.

The truth from Exodus is that only God can give us victory. We need to believe that truth and by faith seek His intervention in the battles of life.

- *Exodus 17:11 So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. 13 So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.*

God wanted to utterly destroy this nation and its ferocious, plundering, merciless culture of murder and wickedness. The Amalekites were the 1st nation to attack Israel when they came out of Egypt. They struck the rear and murdered the weak and frail and old who brought up the end of the line. They did so with desire - they preyed upon the helpless and God exposed them for what they were[3].

The critical lesson for us is that only the Spirit can defeat our flesh. We win daily battles with the temptations of our flesh by walking in the Spirit. When we go our own way we face Amalek (our flesh) and are defeated. As Paul said the defeat of our flesh comes only through the victory Christ already won for us on the cross, brought to us step by step as we walk believing that truth in the Spirit of God's power.

God's Word clearly warns us that we do not conquer our flesh by physical means—asceticism, religious activity, or human effort. It is only by the power of the cross worked out in our life by the Holy Spirit. There is a war always brewing between our flesh and the Spirit of God within us.

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God commands them to destroy their enemies completely. As we are to also through Christ.

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- ***The flesh is our foe.*** Colossians 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (NASB)

The Amalekites make an apt illustration of the sin that remains in the believer's life. That sin—already utterly defeated—must be dealt with ruthlessly and hacked to pieces, or it will revive and continue to plunder and pillage our hearts and sap our spiritual strength. We cannot be merciful with Amalek or Agag, or they will turn and try to devour us. In fact, the remaining sin in us often becomes more fiercely determined after it has been overthrown by the gospel.[4]

Now as we turn past another 500 years of sacred history we come to Saul's time three thousand years ago. The continuing hatred of God and evil against His people needs to be dealt with. So that is why God wanted Saul to destroy the Amalekites.

- *1 Samuel 15:8-9 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.*

He thought, what a shame to destroy everything! So he saved Agag, who was the ruler of the Amalekites. Saul had no right to spare him any more than he had the right to spare the humblest peasant among these people. This nation was wholly given to evil, and the king, above all others, should have been destroyed and judged at this time. Neither had Saul the right to save from destruction the best of the cattle. It would appear that he made his attack for the purpose of obtaining booty and spoil, and God had forbidden that. The Israelites were bringing judgment upon the Amalekites for Almighty God in this particular case.

What Did Saul Do Wrong?

Saul kept only the best – **of what God hated**. To God the Amalekites were toxic waste that had to be dealt with; they were emitting dangerous spiritual radiation that would contaminate all that came into contact with them. So when God gave them into Saul's hand he wasn't to even spare their livestock – every one and every thing was to be destroyed. But Saul and his men went through that which God hated and saved the best. They sorted the deadly contaminants and kept the prettiest. Just like in the recent Gulf War II when looters took the beautiful barrels from reactor sites in Iraq, ignoring the skull and cross bones painted in red on each one. Taking them home they used them to store drinking water – and within days were experiencing deadly radiation sickness.

- *1 Samuel 15:30-33 Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord your God." 31 So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord. 32 Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." 33 But Samuel said,*

“As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.

Agag came “delicately” unto Samuel because he knew he was in trouble. And Samuel killed Agag. Now that may be strong medicine for some folk today, but my friend, our God is a God of Judgment and He is going to judge wrong and evil. I am glad that God is going to judge. I don’t know about you, but I thank God that no one is getting away with evil today. There may be those, even in high places, who think they are getting away with their sin, and dishonesty, and murder, and adultery, but they are not. God is going to judge them. No one is going to get away with sin, and we need to make that very clear today. So Samuel executed the judgment of God upon this vile, wicked ruler, Agag[5].

Listen, this is the message I want to underline in your heart and mind. Any part of our old life that we spare will come back and slay us and rob us of God’s blessing, fruitfulness, and rewards.

- Any part of our flesh (like Agag) that we spare will come back with a vengeance and slay us.
- Amalekites (the flesh) always come to strike us down when we are weakest – and then rob us of our crown.

The end of Saul was a catastrophe. He crashed against the rocks of his own disobedient life and sank into the dark waters of sin. He was a disgrace to himself by his ignominious death; to his family he failed to protect; to his country he betrayed and brought to defeat; and to his God he ignored and dishonored. What a colossal failure and a grim testimony of neglected warning signs that led to a shipwreck of a very promising life!

And all of that was because he was unwilling to hate sin and obey God by turning away from that which causes sin. The battle is already won, the enemy defeated and we just need to believe that and act upon that truth! How do we do that more regularly?

This evening we are going to survey the war chapters of God's Word in Romans 6, Ephesians 4-6, and Colossians 3—and there we find the tactics God left us to win. He has defeated our enemy, armed us with superior weapons, and offers to lead us into victory every time we follow Him!

Colossians 2:6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, NKJV

How did I get saved? By trusting, believing, clinging to the truth that Jesus Christ took my sins, and stood in my place and bore the punishment of God’s wrath I deserved. The guiltless One took my guilt; the sinless One took my sin; the holy One took my wretchedness and on and on I could go.

But did I see Him there personally? No, it was by what? Yes, faith. I believed the truth of God's Word and God changed me forever. Now look at Colossians 2:6 again--As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, NKJV

The same way we were saved is the same way we live the rest of our lives. Was I saved because I completely understood the Gospel? No, I am still understanding more and shall until glory!

Was I saved because I felt that God saved me? No because sometimes I feel that He couldn't have because I am so unworthy and sinful—does that unsave me? NO.

So apply that faith that you and I have for the work of Christ on the cross in our place and apply it now to the rest of our walk. Join me in Romans 6.

- *Romans 6:11 Likewise you also, **reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin**, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NKJV)*
- *Romans 6:11 **In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (NIV)***
- *Romans 6:11 **Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin**, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (NASB)*

Now, in simple faith that saved you repeat that to yourself. (Just like my old pastor John MacArthur always used to tell us 'preach the Gospel to yourself!') Say something like this:

Even if I do not feel it, understand it, or even at times want it I WILL by faith, believing YOU consider myself dead to sin. Or in times of need, "Lord I operate on what I know is true, you have made me dead to sin."

When I truly prayed, asking in simple faith for Christ to save me—whether I felt a strong emotional feeling or not, God began His work within me. I started changing from the inside out. The same is true with these imperatives.

God never commands me to do what He hasn't already given me the grace to accomplish by faith through His Spirit!

Now go through the same process the rest of the way through Romans 6—

- I will not let sin reign...
- I will not present my members...
- I now by faith present myself to You God...
- I present myself to You Lord as your slave...
- I ask You to enslave my members (my mind, my emotions, my desires, my body, what ones are out of control? If they are out of control they aren't under Christ's control...)

• [1] See also Galatians 6.7; Romans 2.6; Genesis 18:25.
• [2] John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Vanishing Conscience - Drawing the Line in a No-Fault, Guilt-Free World*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing) 1997.
• [3] J. Vernon Magee, p. 268.
• [4] John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Vanishing Conscience - Drawing the Line in a No-Fault, Guilt-Free World*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing) 1997.
• [5] All of this material on 1st Samuel quoted from McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

Imperatives of the Crucified Life – I

DSS: Message Thirteen (060312AM)

Do you remember when God wrote David's epitaph He said one thing very clearly—David served the Lord. Turn there with me again to Acts 13:36.

- *Acts 13:36 For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. (NIV)*

As we saw when we studied this passage, serving God's purpose is all that really matters in eternity; life on earth comes down to one question—who we are going to serve?

Serving God is what we were called to do, and a servant is what we are called to be. Salvation starts the process as we are transferred from Satan's dominion and into God's. We receive a new heart (software for our operating system) and are empowered to serve the Lord.

But the challenge is that this new operating system, our new life in Christ, is carried on through our old vehicle (or hardware). This body of ours is supposed to carry out the wishes of God—but often doesn't want to. Our mind entertains doubts and questions. We listen to our flesh that pours out a constant stream of fears, cautions, anxieties, and rebellions. Often we are paralyzed by indecision and uncertainties of what exactly it is we are to do. That is everyday life on planet earth this side of Heaven.

God's Word clearly warns us that we do not conquer our flesh by physical means—human resolve, self-effort, religious activity, or sheer will power.

The flesh is only conquered by the power of the cross worked out in our life by the Holy Spirit. There is a war always brewing between our flesh and the Spirit of God within us. One of the clearest descriptions of that warfare is in Galatians 5, turn there next with me please.

- *Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. (NKJV)*

Flesh can't defeat flesh. Resolves, promises, fighting and striving in our own power only leads to further defeats--it is only by yielding to the power of the cross. And what is the power of the cross? It is the defeat of death, sin, and Satan that Jesus accomplished once for all time when He died on the cross.

What Did Saul Do Wrong?

Remember our study of the life of Saul these past few weeks? We saw repeatedly that the downfall of King Saul started with his selective obedience. But his undoing was when he spared Agag. We learned that if we want to waste our lives just be like Saul who kept only the best--**of what God hated.**

Remember when we started our look at Saul the first king of Israel. I explained that God rejected him for disobeying a very clear command. Then I read the actual orders God gave him. Turn their again with me please.

- *1 Samuel 15:3 Now go and attack Amalek, and **utterly destroy** all that they have, and **do not spare** them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey. (NKJV)*

To God the Amalekites were a deadly poison that had to be dealt with; they were emitting dangerous spiritual radiation that would contaminate all that came into contact with them. So when God gave them into Saul's hand he wasn't to even spare their livestock - every one and every thing was to be destroyed. But Saul and his men went through that which God hated and saved the best.

- *1 Samuel 15:32-33 Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." 33 But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.*

Samuel was God's man, His obedient instrument for that moment—and Samuel's harsh action towards Agag is an example of how we must deal with the flesh, that old sinful part of us that remains.

What Can We Learn from Saul's Failures

Let me repeat the message God has left us from the failed life of King Saul. Saul is a picture of one of God's servants who suffers loss. Let me underline in your heart and mind this sobering truth--any part of our old life that we spare will come back and slay us and rob us of God's blessing, fruitfulness, and rewards.

- Any part of our flesh (like Agag) that we exempt from mortification will come back with a vengeance and slay us.
- All of our flesh (like the Amalekites) always comes to strike us down when we are weakest - and then rob us of our crown.

The battle was already won by Christ. The world, my flesh and the Devil were all defeated at the cross--and we just need to believe and act upon that truth! How do we do that more regularly?

Two passages explain this truth. The first passage demonstrates the attitude we need, and the second the action we need to take. We need to repeat, reaffirm, and remember over and over again that the past work of Christ's death on the cross saved me and keeps me. Listen to Paul in Galatians 2 as he sets forth the attitude we are to have.

- *Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ (**past event--justification**); it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (**present event-sanctification**); and the life which*

I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God (present event-sanctification), who loved me and gave Himself for me (past event--justification). (NKJV)

Notice the sandwich type presentation. The past work of Christ on the cross secured my salvation in the present and offers my sanctification in the present, based on the past work of Christ's cross.

How did I get saved? By trusting, believing, clinging to the truth that Jesus Christ took my sins, and stood in my place and bore the punishment of God's wrath I deserved. The guiltless One took my guilt; the sinless One took my sin; the holy One took my wretchedness and on and on I could go.

But did I see Him there personally? No, it was by what? Yes, faith. I believed the truth of God's Word and God changed me forever. The same way we were saved is the same way we live the rest of our lives. Was I saved because I completely understood the Gospel? No, I am still understanding more and shall until glory! Was I saved because I felt that God saved me? No, because sometimes I feel that He couldn't have because I am so unworthy and sinful—does that un-save me? NO.

So apply that faith that you and I have for the work of Christ on the cross in our place and apply it now to the rest of our walk.

How Can I Mortify the Flesh?

Now join me in Colossians 3, as we see the action we must take to live the life of killing our flesh, mortifying our flesh—and living the crucified with Christ life!

Now, in simple faith that saved you repeat that to yourself. (Just like my old pastor John MacArthur always used to tell us 'preach the Gospel to yourself!') Say something like this:

Even if I do not feel it, understand it, or even at times want it I WILL by faith, believing YOU consider myself dead to sin. Or in times of need, "Lord I operate on what I know is true, you have made me dead to sin."

When I truly prayed, asking in simple faith for Christ to save me—whether I felt a strong emotional feeling or not, God began His work within me. I started changing from the inside out. The same is true with these imperatives.

- Jesus lived—that's history.
- Jesus died—that's theology.
- Jesus died for me and took my sins upon Himself on the Cross—that's salvation.
- Jesus died for me to live through Him—that's sanctification.

And Christ's work on Calvary forever gave us the power and authority so we can stop anything that enslaves us and so that we can start anything He asks us to do!

Just as there is nothing we can do before our salvation to make us accepted by God; and there is nothing we can do after our salvation that makes us acceptable to God.

As we were saved only by the accomplishment of Christ's sacrifice on the cross—so we live each day 'by faith' (the same faith by which we were saved). We are always dependent upon Christ's gracious death upon the cross that saves and keeps us!

Please stand with me to read Colossians 3:1-25, one of the greatest chapters in God's Word and one of the clearest presentations of crucified living--and pray.

This chapter is built around 14 imperative commands. Remember that **God never commands me to do what He hasn't already given me the grace to accomplish by faith through His Spirit!**

Let's walk back through this chapter, see what Paul relates to us from the Lord, and then pause and ASK the Lord to unleash these powerful spiritual qualities in our lives today.

Colossians 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. [*Because of Christ's death for my sins—I can now seek and do what pleases God. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus today I want You to help me seek things above!"*]

v. 2 **Set your mind** on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

[*Because of Christ's death for my sins—I can now turn my mind to the Lord's channel and really experience Him. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus right now I want You to set my mind on things above!"*]

What Should I Put to Death?

v. 5 Therefore **put to death your members** which are on the earth:

Paul is saying, "Put to death every part of your self which is against God and keeps you from fulfilling his will." He uses the same expression in Romans 8:13: "If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live." It is exactly the same line of thought as that of Jesus when he demanded that a man should cut off a hand or a foot, or tear out an eye when it was leading him into sin (Matthew 5:29, 30). The Christian must kill self-centeredness and regard as dead all private desires and ambitions. There must be in his life a radical transformation of the will and a radical shift of the centre. Anything which would keep him from fully obeying God and fully surrendering to Christ must be brought to the Great Physician to be surgically excised.

*[Because of Christ's death for my sins—I can now go to my Great Physician and He will surgically removed any tumor of sin that kills my walk with God. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I want You to kill these evil desires in my life.**]*

1. Fornication (NIV sexual immorality):

Fornication means “sexual immorality.” Is that your sin today? Let’s not kid ourselves—there are a great many folk who are covering up this sin, and yet they still talk about being dedicated Christians! Paul brings this right out into the open and tells us that we are to put our physical members in the place of death. Do your eyes cause you trouble? Do you look with the eye of covetousness, or the eye of lust? Put those eyes in the place of death, and now use them as the eyes of Christ to look upon Him. That will change things, will it not? Fornication and uncleanness must go. Chastity was the one completely new virtue which Christianity brought into the world. In the ancient world sexual relationships before marriage and outside marriage were the normal and accepted practice. The sexual appetite was regarded as a thing to be gratified, not to be controlled. The Christian ethic insists on chastity, regarding the physical relationship between the sexes as something so precious that indiscriminate use of it in the end spoils it.

*[Because of Christ's death for my sins—He can now defeat any form of fornication in my life.. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **"Lord Jesus right now I want You to kill every immoral desire in my life."**]*

2. Uncleanness (NIV impurity):

This includes thoughts, words, looks, gestures, and the jokes we tell.

*[Because of Christ's death for my sins—He can now defeat any form of impurity and uncleanness in my life.. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **"Lord Jesus right now I want You to remove all impurity and filthiness from my heart."**]*

3. Passion (NIV lust):

In KJV "inordinate affection" means “uncontrolled passion or lust.” This denotes a kind of person who is the slave of his passion (palkos)

*[Because you died for me—He can now defeat any form of impurity and uncleanness in my life.. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **"Lord Jesus right now I want You to remove all impurity and filthiness from my heart."**]*

4. Evil desire:

This in KJV is "evil concupiscence"—that means “evil desires.” This drives a person to have the desire for the wrong things (epithumia).

[Because of Christ's death for my sins—He can now defeat any form of enslaving passion in my life.. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now I want You to liberate me from uncontrolled lust in my life.**"]

5. Covetousness (NIV greed), which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

Pleonexia is one of the ugliest of sins but it is hard to find a single word to translate it. It comes from two Greek words; the first half of the word is from pleon which means more and the second half is from echein which means to have. Pleonexia is basically **the insatiable desire to have more**. It has been described as ruthless self-seeking. It is, therefore, a sin with a very wide range. If it is the desire for money, it leads to theft. If it is the desire for prestige, it leads to evil ambition. If it is the desire for power, it leads to sadistic tyranny. If it is the desire for a person, it leads to sexual sin. C. F. D. Moule well describes it as “the opposite of the desire to give.”

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What Should I Put Off?

v. 8 But now you yourselves are to **put off all these**:

Paul says that there are certain things of which the Colossians must strip themselves. The word he uses is the word for putting off clothes. There is here a picture from the life of the early Christian. When the Christian was baptized, he put off his old clothes when he went down into the water and when he emerged he put on a new and pure white robe. He divested himself of one kind of life and put on another.

[Because of Christ's death for my sins—He can now strip off of me anything that grieves or quenches His working in and through me. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I want You to trip off these areas of my life.**]

1. Anger:

There is a place for anger that is justified. You remember that the Lord Jesus was angry at the Pharisees because of the hardness of their hearts. That is not a sinful anger. The problem is that we become angry over the wrong things. Orge is anger which has become inveterate; it is long-lasting, slow-burning anger, which refuses to be pacified and nurses its wrath to keep it warm.

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Anger becomes “wrath” when we develop an unforgiving spirit. Thumos is a blaze of sudden anger which is quickly kindled and just as quickly dies. The Greeks likened it to a fire amongst straw, which quickly blazed and just as quickly burned itself out. For the Christian both the burst of temper and the long-lasting anger are alike forbidden.

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This word is blasphemeia insulting and slanderous speaking in general; when that insulting speech is directed against God, it becomes blasphemy. The first type of blasphemy is to defame the name of God. It is not just taking His name in vain, but it is to misrepresent Him, to hate Him. In this context it is much more likely that what is forbidden is slanderous talk against one's fellow-men.

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The word is aischrologia which means foul communication and includes both that which is abusive, filthy, and obscene language.

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- v. 9 **Do not lie to one another**, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all:

Salvation brought a complete change in our personality. We put off the old self and put on the new self, just as the candidate for baptism puts off his old clothes and puts on the new white robe.

Barbarians were those who were not Greeks, those whom we would call heathen today. The Scythian was the worst kind of barbarian. Scythia was north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in the area around the Caucasus Mountains. The people who lived there were probably the most barbaric the world has known. You talk about pagan, heathen, brutal, and mean! They would take their enemies and scalp them; then they would use the skull as a cup and drink the blood of their victims out of the skull! I cannot think of anything more heathen than that! Did you know that the ancestors of many of us who have white skin came from that territory? We are called Caucasians after the area where these barbarians lived.

What Should I Put On?

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me live the truth. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now live through me so that I do not live a lie by talking the talk but not living the truth.**"]

- v. 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on (NIV clothe yourselves with)**

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me wear the truth. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now clothe me with your personality—and what is that? The six areas that follow.**"]*

1. Tender mercies (NIV compassion):

The KJV "bowels of mercies" means "heart of compassion." How heartless this world is today. How indifferent and mechanical it has become! A heart of pity. If there was one thing the ancient world needed it was mercy. The sufferings of animals were nothing to it. The maimed and the sickly went to the wall. There was no provision for the aged. The treatment of the idiot and the simple-minded was unfeeling. Christianity brought mercy into this world. It is not too much to say that everything that has been done for the aged, the sick, the weak in body and in mind, the animal, the child, the woman has been done under the inspiration of Christianity.

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me feel His compassion. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now clothe me with your compassion.**"]

2. Kindness:

This kindness means gentleness (*chrestotes*). Trench calls this a lovely word for a lovely quality. The ancient writers defined *chrestotes* as the virtue of the man whose neighbor's good is as dear to him as his own. Josephus uses it as a description of Isaac, the man who dug wells and gave them to others, because he would not fight about them (Genesis 26:17–25). It is the word used when Jesus said, "My yoke is easy." (Matthew 11:30). Goodness by itself can be

stern, but *chrestoteus* is the goodness which is kind, that type of goodness which Jesus used to the sinning woman who anointed his feet (Luke 7:37–50).

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me have His kindness. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now I want Your kindness in my life.**"]

3. Humility:

Paul's emphasis is "humbleness of mind." (*tapeinophrosune*). It has often been said that humility was a virtue created by Christianity. In classical Greek there is no word for humility which has not some tinge of servility, but Christian humility is not a cringing thing. It is based on two things. First, on the divine side, it is based on the awareness of the creatureliness of humanity. God is the Creator, man the creature, and in the presence of the Creator the creature cannot feel anything else but humility. Second, on the human side, it is based on the belief that all men are the sons of God, and there is no room for arrogance when we are living among men and women who are all of royal lineage.

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me humble. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now I humble myself in your sight. Clothe me with humility.**"]

4. Meekness (NIV gentleness):

Here the emphasis is meekness of spirit. (*praotes*) Long ago Aristotle had defined *praotes* as the happy mean between too much and too little anger. The man who has *praotes* is the man who is so self-controlled, because he is God-controlled, that he is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time.

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now control me. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your meekness and gentleness to be mine.**"]*

5. Longsuffering (NIV patience):

Longsuffering is the Greek word *makrothumia*, which means "long-burning"—it burns a long time. We shouldn't have a short fuse with our friends and Christian brethren. We shouldn't make snap judgments. This is the spirit which never loses its patience with its fellow-men. Their foolishness and their unteachability never drive it to cynicism or despair; their insults and their ill-treatment never drive it to bitterness or wrath. Human patience is a reflection of the divine patience which bears with all our sinning and never casts us off.

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me patient. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your patience.**"]*

6. Forebearing (NIV forgiving)

v. 13 bearing with one another: and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

The Christian forbears and forgives; and he does so because a forgiven man must always be forgiving. As God forgave him, so he must forgive others, for only the forgiving can be forgiven.[1]

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me put on Christ's love. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your love to be mine so that I treat others as You treat me."]

v. 15 And **let the peace of God rule in your hearts**, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Rule means "to umpire." The peace of God should govern our hearts.[2]

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me peaceful. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your peace to rule my heart—not anxiety, not fear, not turmoil, but peace."]

v. 16 **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly** in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

- 18 **Wives, submit to your own husbands**, as is fitting in the Lord.
- 19 **Husbands, love your wives** and do not be bitter (NIV harsh) toward them.
- 20 **Children, obey your parents in all things**, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.
- 21 **Fathers, do not provoke (NIV embitter) your children**, lest they become discouraged.
- 22 **Bondservants, obey in all things your masters** according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.
- 23 And whatever you do, **do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men**, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. NKJV

[1] Many definitions above adapted from Barclay, William, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians (Revised Edition)*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press) 2000, c1975.

[2] Some definitions above adapted from McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

Imperatives of the Crucified Life – II

DSS: Message Fourteen (060312PM)

Paul's epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians and Colossians were to people living in Roman Asia which is the area of modern Turkey. In the time of Paul was incredibly Roman.

There are more Greek temples in Turkey than in Greece, and there are more Roman cities in Turkey than there are in all of Italy. This was the epicenter of Roman life in the first and second centuries.

Life in the Roman World of the 1st Century

Why the history lesson? As you turn to Galatians 2 this evening let me describe life in the Roman world of the 1st century.

In Roman Asia (Turkey) was also the city we know from Revelation called Thyatira. This city was renowned for its manufacturing and industry. Most workers in Thyatira were members of guilds, much like our labor unions of today. They set prices for labor and sales areas and so on: potters, dyers, tanners, bakers, metal workers, textile makers, bronze smiths, slave dealers, leather workers and the rest had their guilds in this town. History of this period notes three things.

- Trade guilds were compulsory; to be employed in a trade was only via the guild. It was a closed shop.
- Every guild in Thyatira had a patron God or Goddess. Thus, every guild function began with paying homage to that deity by offering--this was the obligatory opening to all meetings which were required to be an artisan/craftsman.
- Business followed and then the customary banquets known for their sexual freedom. The cost for the Christian was unmistakable.

Ramsay the famed 19th century archaeologist, writes "revelry, license and intoxication marked these pagan religious societies (trade guilds) lounging on dining couches, surrounded by troupes of unclothed, dancing and singing slaves...would be fatal to all self-restraining spirits". In short, a guild was no place for Christians and yet quitting the union was economic suicide.

So the battle with the flesh raged every day in Thyatira and all the other towns of Roman Asia. Add to this bath houses in every city where prostitution was normal and considered healthy. Athletic facilities where such emphasis was placed on the human body that many sports were practiced and competed in total nudity. These saints were vexed with the flesh, temptation, and sin.

Now listen to Paul's words to them in Galatians 2:20.

The battle was already won by Christ, the world, my flesh and the Devil were all defeated at the cross--and we just need to believe and act upon that truth! How do we do that more regularly?

Two passages explain this truth. The first passage portrays the attitude we need, and the second the action we need to take. We need to repeat, reaffirm, and remember over and over again that the past work of Christ's death on the cross saved me and keeps me. Listen to Paul in Galatians 2 as he sets forth the attitude we are to have.

*Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ (**past event--justification**); it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (**present event-sanctification**); and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God (**present event-sanctification**), who loved me and gave Himself for me (**past event--justification**). NKJV*

Notice the sandwich type presentation. The past work of Christ on the cross secured my salvation in the present and offers my sanctification in the present, based on the past work of Christ's cross.

Salvation

How did I get saved? By trusting, believing, clinging to the truth that Jesus Christ took my sins, and stood in my place and bore the punishment of God's wrath I deserved. The guiltless One took my guilt; the sinless One took my sin; the holy One took my wretchedness and on and on I could go.

But did I see Him there personally? No, it was by what? Yes, faith.

I believed the truth of God's Word and God changed me forever. The same way we were saved is the same way we live the rest of our lives.

So apply that faith that you and I have for the work of Christ on the cross in our place and apply it now to the rest of our walk.

Flesh can't defeat flesh. Resolves, promises, fighting and striving in our own power only leads to further defeats--it is only by yielding to the power of the cross. And what is the power of the cross? It is the defeat of death, sin, and Satan that Jesus accomplished once for all time when He died on the cross.

Remember our study of the life of Saul these past few weeks? We saw repeatedly that the downfall of King Saul started with his selective obedience. But his undoing was when he spared Agag. We learned that if we want to waste our lives just be like Saul who kept only the best--**of what God hated**.

To God the Amalekites were a deadly poison that had to be dealt with; they were emitting dangerous spiritual radiation that would contaminate all that came into contact with them. So when God gave them into Saul's hand he wasn't to even spare their livestock - every one and every thing was to be destroyed. But Saul and his men went through that which God hated and saved the best.

1 Samuel 15:32-33 Then Samuel said, “Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me.” So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” 33 But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.

Samuel was God’s man, His obedient instrument for that moment—and Samuel’s harsh action towards Agag is an example of how we must deal with the flesh, that old sinful part of us that remains.

Let me repeat the message God has left us from the failed life of King Saul. Saul is a picture of one of God’s servants who suffers loss. Let me underline in your heart and mind this sobering truth--any part of our old life that we spare will come back and slay us and rob us of God’s blessing, fruitfulness, and rewards.

- Any part of our flesh (like Agag) that we exempt from mortification will come back with a vengeance and slay us.
- All of our flesh (like the Amalekites) always comes to strike us down when we are weakest – and then rob us of our crown.

Now join me in Colossians 3, as we see the action we must take to live the life of killing our flesh, mortifying our flesh—and living the crucified with Christ life!

Now, in simple faith that saved you repeat that to yourself. (Just like my old pastor John MacArthur always used to tell us ‘preach the Gospel to yourself!’) Say something like this:

"Even if I do not feel it, understand it, or even at times want it I WILL by faith, believing YOU consider myself dead to sin. Or in times of need, “Lord I operate on what I know is true, you have made me dead to sin.”

When I truly prayed, asking in simple faith for Christ to save me—whether I felt a strong emotional feeling or not, God began His work within me. I started changing from the inside out. The same is true with these imperatives.

- Jesus lived—that’s history.
- Jesus died—that’s theology.
- Jesus died for me and took my sins upon Himself on the Cross—that’s salvation.
- Jesus died for me to live through Him—that’s sanctification.

And Christ’s work on Calvary forever gave us the power and authority so we can stop anything that enslaves us and so that we can start anything He asks us to do!

Just as there is nothing we can do before our salvation to make us accepted by God; and there is nothing we can do after our salvation that makes us acceptable to God.

As we were saved only by the accomplishment of Christ's sacrifice on the cross—so we live each day ‘by faith’ (the same faith by which we were saved). We are always dependent upon Christ's gracious death upon the cross that saves and keeps us!

Colossians 3 is built around 14 imperative commands. Remember that **God never commands me to do what He hasn't already given me the grace to accomplish by faith through His Spirit!**

Let's walk back through this chapter, see what Paul relates to us from the Lord, and then pause and ASK the Lord to unleash these powerful spiritual qualities in our lives today.

Seek Those Things Which Are Above

If then you were raised with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

[Because of Christ's death for my sins—I can now seek and do what pleases God. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus today I want You to help me seek things above!"]

v. 2 **Set your mind** on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

[Because of Christ's death for my sins—I can now turn my mind to the Lord's channel and really experience Him. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus right now I want You to set my mind on things above!"]

Put to Death Your Members

v. 5 Therefore **put to death your members** which are on the earth:

Paul is saying, “Put to death every part of your self which is against God and keeps you from fulfilling his will.” He uses the same expression in Romans 8:13: “If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.” It is exactly the same line of thought as that of Jesus when he demanded that a man should cut off a hand or a foot, or tear out an eye when it was leading him into sin (Matthew 5:29, 30). The Christian must kill self-centeredness and regard as dead all private desires and ambitions. There must be in his life a radical transformation of the will and a radical shift of the centre. Anything which would keep him from fully obeying God and fully surrendering to Christ must be brought to the Great Physician to be surgically excised.

[Because of Christ's death for my sins—I can now go to my Great Physician and He will surgically removed any tumor of sin that kills my walk with God. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus right now I want You to kill these evil desires in my life."]

1. Fornication (NIV sexual immorality):

Fornication and uncleanness must go. Chastity was the one completely new virtue which Christianity brought into the world. In the ancient world sexual relationships before marriage and outside marriage were the normal and accepted practice. The sexual appetite was regarded as a thing to be gratified, not to be controlled. The Christian ethic insists on chastity, regarding the physical relationship between the sexes as something so precious that indiscriminate use of it in the end spoils it.

Fornication means “sexual immorality.” Is that your sin today? Let’s not kid ourselves—there are a great many folk who are covering up this sin in their thoughts, or in their secret life, and yet they still talk about being dedicated Christians! Paul brings this right out into the open and tells us that we are to put our physical members in the place of death. Do your eyes cause you trouble? Do you look with the eye of lust? Put those eyes in the place of death, and now use them as the eyes of Christ to look upon Him. That will change things, will it not?

*[Because of Christ's death for my sins—He can now defeat any form of fornication in my life.. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now I want You to kill every immoral desire in my life.**"]*

2. Uncleanness (NIV impurity):

This includes thoughts, words, looks, gestures, and the jokes we tell.

*[Because of Christ's death for my sins—He can now defeat any form of impurity and uncleanness in my life.. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now I want You to remove all impurity and filthiness from my heart.**"]*

3. Passion (NIV lust):

In the KJV "inordinate affection" means “uncontrolled passion or lust.” This denotes a kind of person who is the slave of his passion (palkos)

*[Because you died for me—He can now defeat any form of impurity and uncleanness in my life.. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now I want You to remove all impurity and filthiness from my heart.**"]*

4. Evil desire:

This is KJV evil concupiscence—that means “evil desires.” This denotes a person who is driven by the desire for the wrong things (epithumia).

*[Because of Christ's death for my sins—He can now defeat any form of enslaving passion in my life.. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I want You to liberate me from uncontrolled lust in my life.**]*

5. **Covetousness (NIV greed):**

This which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

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v. 8 But now you yourselves are to **put off all these**:

Paul says that there are certain things of which the Colossians must strip themselves. The word he uses is the word for putting off clothes. There is here a picture from the life of the early Christian. When the Christian was baptized, he put off his old clothes when he went down into the water and when he emerged he put on a new and pure white robe. He divested himself of one kind of life and put on another.

*[Because of Christ's death for my sins—He can now strip off of me anything that grieves or quenches His working in and through me. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now I want You to strip off these areas of my life.**"]*

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5. Filthy language out of your mouth:

The word is aischrologia which means foul communication and includes both that which is abusive, filthy, and obscene language.

*[Because of Christ's death for my sins—He can now defeat any form of filthiness in my talk.. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "**Lord Jesus right now cleanse my mouth, and my heart so that nothing inside me is filthy so that nothing filthy comes out.**"]*

Do Not Lie to One Another

v. 9 **Do not lie to one another**, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created

him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all:

Salvation brought a complete change in our personality. We put off the old self and put on the new self, just as the candidate for baptism puts off his old clothes and puts on the new white robe.

Barbarians were those who were not Greeks, those whom we would call heathen today. The Scythian was the worst kind of barbarian. Scythia was north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in the area around the Caucasus Mountains. The people who lived there were probably the most barbaric the world has known. You talk about pagan, heathen, brutal, and mean! They would take their enemies and scalp them; then they would use the skull as a cup and drink the blood of their victims out of the skull! I cannot think of anything more heathen than that! Did you know that the ancestors of many of us who have white skin came from that territory? We are called Caucasians after the area where these barbarians lived.

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me live the truth. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus right now live through me so that I do not live a lie by talking the talk but not living the truth."]

Put On—Clothe Yourself With...

- v. 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on (NIV clothe yourselves with)**

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me wear the truth. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus right now clothe me with your personality—and what is that? The six areas that follow."]

1. Tender mercies (NIV compassion):

The KJV "bowels of mercies" means "heart of compassion." How heartless this world is today. How indifferent and mechanical it has become! A heart of pity. If there was one thing the ancient world needed it was mercy. The sufferings of animals were nothing to it. The maimed and the sickly went to the wall. There was no provision for the aged. The treatment of the idiot and the simple-minded was unfeeling. Christianity brought mercy into this world. It is not too much to say that everything that has been done for the aged, the sick, the weak in body and in mind, the animal, the child, the woman has been done under the inspiration of Christianity.

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me feel His compassion. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus right now clothe me with your compassion."]

2. Kindness:

This kindness means gentleness (chrestoteus). Trench calls this a lovely word for a lovely quality. The ancient writers defined chrestoteus as the virtue of the man whose neighbor's good

is as dear to him as his own. Josephus uses it as a description of Isaac, the man who dug wells and gave them to others because he would not fight about them (Genesis 26:17–25). It is the word used when Jesus said, “My yoke is easy.” (Matthew 11:30). Goodness by itself can be stern; but *chrestoteus* is the goodness which is kind, that type of goodness which Jesus used to the sinning woman who anointed his feet (Luke 7:37–50).

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me have His kindness. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **"Lord Jesus right now I want Your kindness in my life."**]

3. Humility:

Paul's emphasis is “humbleness of mind.” (*tapeinophrosune*). It has often been said that humility was a virtue created by Christianity. In classical Greek there is no word for humility which has not some tinge of servility; but Christian humility is not a cringing thing. It is based on two things. First, on the divine side, it is based on the awareness of the creatureliness of humanity. God is the Creator, man the creature, and in the presence of the Creator the creature cannot feel anything else but humility. Second, on the human side, it is based on the belief that all men are the sons of God; and there is no room for arrogance when we are living among men and women who are all of royal lineage.

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me humble. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **"Lord Jesus right now I humble myself in your sight. Clothe me with humility."**]

4. Meekness (NIV gentleness):

Here the emphasis is meekness of spirit. (*praotes*) Long ago Aristotle had defined *praotes* as the happy mean between too much and too little anger. The man who has *praotes* is the man who is so self-controlled, because he is God-controlled, that he is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time.

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now control me. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **"Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your meekness and gentleness to be mine."**]

5. Longsuffering (NIV patience):

Longsuffering is the Greek word *makrothumia*, which means “long-burning”—it burns a long time. We shouldn't have a short fuse with our friends and Christian brethren. We shouldn't make snap judgments. This is the spirit which never loses its patience with its fellow-men. Their foolishness and their unteachability never drive it to cynicism or despair; their insults and their ill-treatment never drive it to bitterness or wrath. Human patience is a reflection of the divine patience which bears with all our sinning and never casts us off.

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me patient. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **"Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your patience."**]

6. Forebearance (NIV forgiving)

v. 13 bearing with one another: and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

The Christian forbears and forgives; and he does so because a forgiven man must always be forgiving. As God forgave him, so he must forgive others, for only the forgiving can be forgiven.[1]

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me put on Christ's love. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your love to be mine so that I treat others as You treat me."]

v. 15 And **let the peace of God rule in your hearts**, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Rule means "to umpire." The peace of God should govern our hearts.[2]

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me peaceful. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, "Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your peace to rule my heart—not anxiety, not fear, not turmoil, but peace."]

v. 16 **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly** in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

18 **Wives, submit to your own husbands**, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 **Husbands, love your wives** and do not be bitter (NIV harsh) toward them.

20 **Children, obey your parents in all things**, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

21 **Fathers, do not provoke (NIV embitter) your children**, lest they become discouraged.

22 **Bondservants, obey in all things your masters** according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

23 And whatever you do, **do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men**, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. NKJV

[1] Many definitions above adapted from Barclay, William, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians (Revised Edition)*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press) 2000, c1975.

[2] Some definitions above adapted from McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

Imperatives of the Crucified Life – III

DSS: Message Fifteen (060319AM)

As Paul sat to write to the Colossians, he was writing to a group of saints swimming each day against the strongest imaginable currents of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Colosse in Roman Asia was at the cross flow of every type of sin. What was Paul's answer to their needs for growing in that environment? He challenged them to make daily choices to sanctify their attitudes and behavior.

As we read this passionate letter to the Colossian saints, we hear Paul plead with them to allow Christ's work to be unleashed into their lives. It would be wise to ask ourselves the same questions.

What Are You Putting to Death in Your Life?

Do you have a habit of crucified living? Do you know what it means? Have you started a hit list? Do you have targets that you want to give to Christ to put to death so they stop their growth in your life? Colossians lists target areas we must bring to the Great Physician like pockets of pride, lust, selfishness, anger, untruthfulness, and uncleanness.

- What are we consciously putting to death of our old life today?
- Can we name the area we are holding out to Christ our "oncologist"; an area affected by sin that we want Him to remove it's deadly work from our life.
- Have we examined our lives against this Scripture and agreed with God about surrendering specific areas of our life to Him?
- What comes to your mind as I say those words? If nothing springs to your mind—you are probably not living a crucified life. Paul said that every day I live, I live by faith that Christ is crucifying my old life.

This morning we are examining the heart of Biblical sanctification. Sanctification requires our participation, our obedience, our responses—and that is what Paul lays down before us in Colossians 3.

Just before we read what Paul wrote, may I again remind you of the two sides of the coin of salvation. We could call the two sides faith and works as James does. Another way would be to use Paul's words from Romans—justification and sanctification. To best understand what Paul is asking us to do in Colossians let me contrast and explain justification and sanctification.

- **Justification** is what Christ did for me on the cross--**sanctification** is what Christ is doing in me because of the cross.
- **Justification** is immediate and was completely finished in me the instant I was saved—**sanctification** is an ongoing process never completed on earth until I meet Jesus face to face at death or His coming.

- **Justification** is activated the moment I trust in the Person of Christ Jesus and His finished sacrifice of the cross—**sanctification** grows with each obedient choice I make empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- **Justification** is my position declared right in God's sight—**sanctification** is my practice made right by becoming more conformed to His image.

Listen to Paul say that because you are saved (justified) this is how you should live (sanctified), as we stand and read Colossians 3:5-17 and then pray.

Be careful what you read as a teen! I was given several books as a teenager about the lives of Hudson Taylor, C.T. Studd, and George Mueller—and they have become life long heroes in my life.

I have often shared with you my amazement at the ministry of the pioneering, church planting evangelist by the name of CT Studd. This morning I'd like to share his story again only emphasize something you may not have heard before—what happened after CT Studd's death in 1931.

Did the incredible life changes go on in those jungles? What was the long term effect of those simple Bible Truths he taught, believed and disciplined those thousands of savages to believe? To find out, I read the volume this week that chronicles the next 20 years of ministry carried on with those very people C.T. won to Christ. The lesson—they stayed true, kept growing and sent out hundreds of missionaries, evangelists, pastors and teachers in those two decades from 1931-1951.

Missionary: C.T. Studd

CT Studd was born in 1858 to an incredible successful English family with vast real estate and business interests all over the British Colonial Empire. Saved while in college, C.T. was disciplined in the truth of crucified (sanctified) living. This truth impacted him deeply to the point of profound choices.

When his father died in the 1880's, he inherited a substantial amount of money—several hundred thousand dollars in his day, tens of millions in ours.

On January 13th, 1887, he wrote nine checks and gave away his fortune as carefully as a business man invests in some 'gilt-edged' securities. He chose safe and high yielding securities in the Bank of Heaven. This was no fool's plunge on his part. It was his public testimony before God and man that he believed God's Word to be the surest thing on earth. God promises a hundredfold interest in this life, not to speak of the next.

Think about what came out of the gift of his life to Christ: through the fortune C.T. Studd gave to Christ, Hudson Taylor was helped in the founding of the China Inland Mission, George Mueller's orphanages were expanded in London, great Salvation Army extensions were made, and the founding of the Moody Bible Institute was carried along.

When he had given all his money away, he packed up his new bride, they went to China as missionaries for the rest of their days. His ambition[1] and prayer had always been to die a soldier's death on the field of battle, and not be a drag on his fellow-workers through months or years as an invalid. C.T. was a museum of diseases when he left China, and was afterwards hardly ever free. He had a life long battle with asthma, recurring malaria and dysentery as well as the chills and pains of gallstones ever with him in varying combination. Yet God enabled him to go on working not 8 but 18 hours a day, addressing, often for hours, thousands of his fellow-creatures in the heart of Africa's darkest jungles, telling them of Jesus Christ and the wonders of His Love-and this to the very end of his days.

C.T.'s end came in the hot, steamy summer days of July 1931. There in front of him sit 5,000 former headhunters. Now their oiled bodies, formerly the habitation of dark, foul fiends from the pit are temples of the Living God. Once naked and grossly immoral lovers of darkness, now not only clothed in Christ but also modestly clothed in banana leaves. Before their beloved father in the faith they sit in an immense sea of white-toothed smiles. With faces turned heavenward they sing of the sweet by and by and that beautiful shore they will someday see.

Passed now are the years of darkness and savagery. The former enemies sit shoulder to shoulder. No weapons of war are left, only the bond of love. This would be the last sight of his dear saintly converts Studd would see. After his message uttered between gasps for air, with every ear strained to catch each word, he is carried back to his hut. Exhausted, he rests; though only his Savior knew it was his last.

In the night the Faithful Shepherd who had led him to China, then India and finally to the very heart of Africa - took CT home. In the morning only the shriveled earthly tent was left. But around that hut and to the furthest reaches of the jungles and on mission stations around the world, the footprints of this giant can be found today.

In Africa at his death there were 30,000 born again, baptized and discipled pygmies whom C.T. found in 1910 as naked, murderous, grossly immoral cannibals butchering each other in the darkest jungles of Africa. Today they sing around the Throne of the Lamb, clothed in white raiment and worshipping Jesus--those C.T. won to Christ, discipled and served.

C.T. Studd lived a crucified life, surrendering every thing to Christ. And in return he lost nothing. This morning join me in Colossians 3, as we see the action we must take to live the life of killing our flesh, mortifying our flesh—and living the crucified with Christ life!

As we were saved only by the accomplishment of Christ's sacrifice on the cross—so we live each day 'by faith' (the same faith by which we were saved). We are always dependent upon Christ's gracious death upon the cross that saves and keeps us!

“Sanctification is a process-the process of becoming more like Christ, of growing in holiness. This process begins the **instant you** are converted and will not end until **you** meet Jesus face-to-face. Through the work of His Spirit, through the power of His word and fellowship with other believers, God peels away **our** desires for sin, renews **our** minds, and changes **our** lives. Sanctification is **about our own choices and behavior** . It involves work. Empowered by God's

*Spirit, we strive. **We fight sin. We study Scripture and pray, even when we don't feel like it. We flee temptation. We press on; we run hard in the pursuit of holiness.***[2]

Colossians 3 is built around 14 imperative commands. Remember that **God never commands me to do what He hasn't already given me the grace to accomplish by faith through His Spirit!**

*“Our participation in the process of **sanctification** comes only after we've been totally accepted and made right before God through faith in Jesus. **So yes, we work hard at obeying God's word. We read our Bibles. We pray. We meditate on Scripture. We memorize Scripture. We share the gospel. We serve in our church. We fast. God commands us in His Word to do many things, and our obedience is both pleasing to Him and brings His blessing to our lives. But not one adds to our justification, our standing before God, our eternal life. Only grace sustains lasting change and sanctification** . Through the cross we overcome not only the guilt of sin, but the power of sin as well*[3].

Let's walk back through this chapter, see what Paul relates to us from the Lord, and then pause and ASK the Lord to unleash these powerful spiritual qualities in our lives today.

If then you were raised with Christ (justified),

Seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

- v. 2 **Set your mind** on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.
- v. 5 Therefore **put to death your members** which are on the earth: **fornication (NIV sexual immorality), uncleanness (NIV impurity), passion (NIV lust), evil desire, and covetousness (NIV greed)**, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.
- v. 8 But now you yourselves are to **put off all these: anger, wrath (NIV rage), malice, blasphemy (NIV slander), filthy language** out of your mouth:

Paul says that there are certain things of which the Colossians must strip themselves. The word he uses is the word for putting off clothes. There is here a picture from the life of the early Christian. When the Christian was baptized, he put off his old clothes when he went down into the water and when he emerged he put on a new and pure white robe. He divested himself of one kind of life and put on another.

- v. 9 **Do not lie to one another**, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all:

Salvation brought a complete change in our personality. We put off the old self and put on the new self, just as the candidate for baptism puts off his old clothes and puts on the new white robe.

Barbarians were those who were not Greeks, those whom we would call heathen today. The Scythian was the worst kind of barbarian. Scythia was north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in the area around the Caucasus Mountains. The people who lived there were probably the most barbaric the world has known. You talk about pagan, heathen, brutal, and mean! They would take their enemies and scalp them; then they would use the skull as a cup and drink the blood of their victims out of the skull! I cannot think of anything more heathen than that! Did you know that the ancestors of many of us who have white skin came from that territory? We are called Caucasians after the area where these barbarians lived.

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me live the truth. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now live through me so that I do not live a lie by talking the talk but not living the truth.**]*

- v. 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on (NIV clothe yourselves with)**

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me wear the truth. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now clothe me with your personality—and what is that? The areas that follow.**]*

- **Tender mercies (NIV compassion):**

The KJV bowels of mercies means “heart of compassion.” How heartless this world is today. How indifferent and mechanical it has become! a heart of pity. If there was one thing the ancient world needed it was mercy. The sufferings of animals were nothing to it. The maimed and the sickly went to the wall. There was no provision for the aged. The treatment of the handicapped was unfeeling. Christianity brought mercy into this world. It is not too much to say that everything that has been done for the aged, the sick, the weak in body and in mind, the animal, the child, the woman has been done under the inspiration of Christianity.

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me feel His compassion. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now clothe me with your compassion.**]*

- **Kindness:**

This kindness means gentleness (chrestoteus). Trench calls this a lovely word for a lovely quality. The ancient writers defined chrestoteus as the virtue of the man whose neighbor's good is as dear to him as his own. Josephus uses it as a description of Isaac, the man who dug wells and gave them to others because he would not fight about them (Genesis 26:17-25). It is the word used when Jesus said, “My yoke is easy.” (Matthew 11:30). Goodness by itself can be stern; but chrestoteus is the goodness which is kind, that type of goodness which Jesus used to the sinning woman who anointed his feet (Luke 7:37-50).

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- **Humility:**

Paul's emphasis is "humbleness of mind." (tapeinophrosune). It has often been said that humility was a virtue created by Christianity. In classical Greek there is no word for humility which has not some tinge of servility; but Christian humility is not a cringing thing. It is based on two things. First, on the divine side, it is based on the awareness of the creatureliness of humanity. God is the Creator, man the creature, and in the presence of the Creator the creature cannot feel anything else but humility. Second, on the human side, it is based on the belief that all men are the sons of God; and there is no room for arrogance when we are living among men and women who are all of royal lineage.

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me humble. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I humble myself in your sight. Clothe me with humility.**]*

- **Meekness (NIV gentleness):**

Here the emphasis is meekness of spirit (praotes) The man who has praoteus is the man who is so self-controlled, because he is God-controlled, that he is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time.

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now control me. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your meekness and gentleness to be mine.**]*

- **Longsuffering (NIV patience):**

Longsuffering is the Greek word makrothumia, which means "long-burning"—it burns a long time. We shouldn't have a short fuse with our friends and Christian brethren. We shouldn't make snap judgments. This is the spirit which never loses its patience with its fellow-men. Their foolishness and their unteachability never drive it to cynicism or despair; their insults and their ill-treatment never drive it to bitterness or wrath. Human patience is a reflection of the divine patience which bears with all our sinning and never casts us off.

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- v. 13 **bearing** with one another: and **forgiving** one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

The Christian forbears and forgives; and he does so because a forgiven man must always be forgiving. As God forgave him, so he must forgive others, for only the forgiving can be forgiven.[4]

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me put on Christ's love. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your love to be mine so that I treat others as You treat me.**]*

v. 15 And **let the peace of God rule in your hearts**, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Rule means “to umpire.” The peace of God should govern our hearts.[5]

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me peaceful. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your peace to rule my heart—not anxiety, not fear, not turmoil, but peace.**]*

- v. 16 **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly** in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
- “Let” means “allow, invite, welcome, give yourself over to.”
- “The Word of Christ” can be a word, a verse, a chapter, or a Book.
- “Dwell in you richly” so beautifully means “to overflow like a bathtub; to spill forth like a fountain; to drench and soak like a heavy rain; to permeate like water into a soft absorbent cloth.”
- “In you” means in your mind, in your thoughts, in your life, in your plans, in your world—your marriage, your family, your home, and your job.

When we “allow, invite, welcome, and give ourselves over to” a verse, a chapter, or a Book, a portion of the very Word of Christ spills forth into our lives, drenching us—absorbing into our souls and changing every aspect of our lives—our marriage, home, life, and all! **That is the Word-filled life!** (It is also the Spirit-filled life, as Ephesians 5:18 affirms.)

When we have a Word-filled life it means that we are: inviting God to speak; seeking His guidance; seeking divine help, godly wisdom, supernatural involvement; and cooperating with the Holy Spirit. This amounts to plugging in the power for life, using the map God has provided, following the directions in His Book, and listening to the instructions He has left us for daily living.

A Word-filled life is inviting God to speak; welcoming His help; seeking His input; wanting His advice; getting His help; showing we honor Him; partnering with God in parenting; and **unleashing Him into every corner of our lives.** We must start each day seeking to be emptied of self, with His Word read, our God sought, and His Spirit invited—to work in us so that Christ is honored.

When we walk in the Spirit every dimension of life is transformed. When we allow the Great Physician to amputate any sinful manifestation in our hearts, minds, and actions at home and work everything is touched by the power of the Spirit and the blessing of God! Note each area Paul points to.

- 18 **Wives, submit to your own husbands**, as is fitting in the Lord.

This was “a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden”.

- 19 **Husbands, love your wives** and do not be bitter (NIV harsh) toward them.
- 20 **Children, obey your parents in all things**, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.
- 21 **Fathers, do not provoke (NIV embitter) your children**, lest they become discouraged.
- 22 **Bondservants, obey in all things your masters** according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.
- 23 And whatever you do, **do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men**, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. NKJV

How do we all take a big step forward in our spiritual lives? Systematically work on what we’ve learned with someone else.

From Colossians this morning, find something in God's Word that you have been able to take hold of and see God use in your life, then share with someone close to you.

- If you are ***married to a believer***, pick one put off or put on as Paul calls them and share with them what you have asked the Lord to do—and ask them to pray for you and ask you how you are doing.
- If you ***live at home with believing parents***, pick one put off or put on as Paul calls them and share with them what you have asked the Lord to do—and ask them to pray for you and ask you how you are doing.
- If you ***aren’t living with a believing husband or wife, or parents***—then you need a godly accountability partner. If you can’t think of one, your elder or your flock would prayerfully help you find one. Then pick one put off or put on as Paul calls them and share with them what you have asked the Lord to do—and ask them to pray for you and ask you how you are doing.
- For practice, try prayerfully working through one area this afternoon and then tonight at communion think about how you would share that truth that God is at work in your life!

[1] Norman Grubb, CT Studd, p. 216-217.

[2] C. J. Mahaney, *The Cross Centered Life*, Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2002, p. 31-34.

[3] C. J. Mahaney, *The Cross Centered Life*, Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2002, p. 31-34.

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Imperatives of the Crucified Life – IV

DSS: Message Sixteen (060319PM)

Christ's work on Calvary forever gave us the power and authority so we can stop anything that enslaves us and so that we can start anything He asks us to do!

First open your Bible to a Scripture that God is using to help you mortify your old life, something He is stripping away from your life or clothing you with!

Second, find someone that you can ask about one burden they bear, and in the spirit of Galatians 6:2, bear it with them.

Two Sides of the Coin of Salvation

May I again remind you of the two sides of the coin of salvation. We could use Paul's words from Romans—justification and sanctification. To best understand what Paul is asking us to do in Colossians let me contrast and explain justification and sanctification.

- At communion we remember our **justification**, what Christ did for me on the cross--**sanctification** is what Christ is doing in me because of the cross.
- At communion we remember our **justification** that was completely finished in me the instant I was saved—**sanctification** is an ongoing process never completed on earth until I meet Jesus face to face at death or His coming.
- At communion we remember our **justification** that was activated the moment I trusted in the Person of Christ Jesus and His finished sacrifice of the cross—**sanctification** grows with each obedient choice I make empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- At communion we remember our **justification** which is my position declared right in God's sight—**sanctification** is my practice made right by becoming more conformed to his image.

Just as there is nothing we can do before our salvation to make us accepted by God; and there is nothing we can do after our salvation that makes us acceptable to God.

As we were saved only by the accomplishment of Christ's sacrifice on the cross—so we live each day 'by faith' (the same faith by which we were saved). We are always dependent upon Christ's gracious death upon the cross that saves and keeps us!

*"Our participation in the process of **sanctification** comes only after we've been totally accepted and made right before God through faith in Jesus. **So yes, we work hard at obeying God's word. We read our Bibles. We pray. We meditate on Scripture. We memorize Scripture. We share the gospel. We serve in our church. We fast. God commands us in His Word to do many things, and our obedience is both pleasing to Him and brings His blessing to our lives. But not one adds to our justification, our standing before God, our eternal life. Only grace sustains lasting change and sanctification . Through the cross we overcome not only the guilt of sin, but the power of sin as well***[1].

Colossians 3 is built around 14 imperative commands. Remember that **God never commands me to do what He hasn't already given me the grace to accomplish by faith through His Spirit!**

Let's walk back through this chapter, see what Paul relates to us from the Lord, and then pause and ASK the Lord to unleash these powerful spiritual qualities in our lives today.

If then you were raised with Christ:

- **seek those things which are above**, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.
- v. 2 **Set your mind** on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.
- v. 5 Therefore **put to death your members** which are on the earth: **fornication (NIV sexual immorality), uncleanness (NIV impurity), passion (NIV lust), evil desire, and covetousness (NIV greed)**, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.
- v. 8 But now you yourselves are to **put off all these: anger, wrath (NIV rage), malice, blasphemy (NIV slander), filthy language** out of your mouth:
- v. 9 **Do not lie to one another**, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all:
- v. 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on (NIV clothe yourselves with) tender mercies (NIV compassion); kindness; humility; meekness (NIV gentleness); longsuffering (NIV patience);** 13 bearing with one another: and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.
- v. 15 And **let the peace of God rule in your hearts**, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.
- v. 16 **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly** in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
- 18 **Wives, submit to your own husbands**, as is fitting in the Lord.
- 19 **Husbands, love your wives** and do not be bitter (NIV harsh) toward them.
- 20 **Children, obey your parents in all things**, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.
- 21 **Fathers, do not provoke (NIV embitter) your children**, lest they become discouraged.
- 22 **Bondservants, obey in all things your masters** according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.
- 23 And whatever you do, **do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men**, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord

Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. NKJV

You and I are to live by the same simple faith that saved us. Paul tells us this truth in Colossians 2:6.

- *Colossians 2:6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, NKJV*

Now join me in Romans 6, as we see how to live the life of killing our flesh, mortifying our flesh—and living the crucified life with Christ!

- *Romans 6:11 Likewise you also, **reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin**, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. NKJV*
- *Romans 6:11 **In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin**, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. NIV*
- *Romans 6:11 **Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin**, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. NASB*

Now, in simple faith that saved you repeat that to yourself. (Just like my old pastor John MacArthur always used to tell us "preach the Gospel to yourself!") Say something like this:

"Even if I do not feel it, understand it, or even at times want it I WILL by faith, believing YOU consider myself dead to sin." Or in times of need, "Lord I operate on what I know is true, you have made me dead to sin."

When I truly prayed, asking in simple faith for Christ to save me—whether I felt a strong emotional feeling or not, God began His work within me. I started changing from the inside out. The same is true with these imperatives.

God never commands me to do what He hasn't already given me the grace to accomplish by faith through His Spirit!

Now go through the same process the rest of the way through Romans 6—

- I will not let sin reign...
- I will not present my members...
- I now by faith present myself to You God...
- I present myself to You Lord as you slave...
- I ask You to enslave my members (my mind, my emotions, my desires, my body, what ones are out of control? If they are out of control they aren't under Christ's control...)

David's Unguarded Moments

DSS: Message Seventeen (060423AM)

This morning think about *the unguarded moments of your life* as we examine again the life of David. We will see that in David's life--unguarded moments led to sin; sin had inevitable consequences that led to pain; painful godly sorrow brought repentance, and humble obedience led to joy!

All that is what David learned in the most horrible time of his life. As we open to 1st Kings 15 we are looking at David, the most commemorated man in God's Word. We are returning to **the life that God wrote the most about** in the book He left us called the Bible.

We have already seen over these past weeks, that God gave His Divine record for us to see how David lived as a young boy and then as a man. We have seen him struggle, run, hide and become totally depressed and discouraged. Then we saw the Lord bring him out of all his troubles.

David's Life

May I remind you that we know more from the perspective of God through His inspired Word about David's life (by the sheer mass of 141+ chapters devoted to his life in God's Word) than any other human that has ever lived. That means—

- We know more about David's boyhood, youth and growing up years than any other Biblical character.
- We know more about David's struggles, pains, emotional turbulences, and depressions than any other Biblical character.
- We know more about David's career choices and successes than any other Biblical character.
- We know more about David's finances and treasured possessions than any other Biblical character.
- We know more about David's family struggles than any other Biblical character.

We begin this morning the next phase of this series which I am calling "David's Spiritual Secret: Overcoming Life's Unending Struggles". As we do so we sadly enter into another area of David's life we know more about.

- We know more about the sin of David's unguarded moments than we do about anyone else;
- We know more about the pain of the consequences that followed for years to follow. But most of all—
- We know more about David's humble obedience prompting the marvelous grace of our loving Lord—grace that exceeded David's sin and his shame. We see David's joy in his last days as he returns to joy, peace, fulfillment and blessings from God.

As we enter into this final phase of David's life, where we meet him this morning--he is at the top of his career. He is a successful king, powerful ruler, undefeated general, wealthy businessman, and surrounded on every side by God's blessing. David is writing worship music, serving the Lord in public worship, practicing personal worship and loving the Lord.

But, there is an incredible postscript to an incredible life that should stop each of us dead in our tracks. Look with me at 1st Kings 15:5 and listen as I read and emphasize that one word God emphasizes for us.

1 Kings 15:5 because David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. NKJV

God forgives the sins, and God forgets the iniquities. But the consequences and loss are recorded in the Bible, God's forever settled in Heaven Word.

We on this side of the cross have many advantages, one of them the finished revelation of God in this book called the Bible. Two of the greatest New Testament writers simplify our daily lives. Peter says that every day of our lives we are stalked by a ravenous lion called the Devil. Paul adds that we will get devoured if we don't take heed. Here are their words.

[1 Peter 5:8] *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* [1 Corinthians 10:12] *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.* (NKJV)

Beware of Unguarded Moments

Beware of allowing any unguarded moments in your life, thinking that you are safe from sin's reach, and that it won't bother you anymore; it is at that moment the ravenous devourer himself is crouching and preparing to spring. That is what David discovered, only it was too late!

We begin with a careful look at the three final eras of David's life. They need to be studied and heeded by all of us.

- Unguarded Moments lead to SIN—Uriah and Bathsheba. First is the saddest chapter, the darkest and the one we all wince at—his sin with Bathsheba. 2 Samuel 11
- **Inevitable Consequences lead to PAIN—Absolom and Shimei.** These are the chapters that record the many years of painful consequences because of David's sin. 2 Samuel 12-21, 24
- **Humble Obedience lead to JOY—Solomon, Psalms and the Temple.** And last, the final days of David's life. When we see that despite the failures of Bathsheba incident—David truly was after God's own heart. We see him end well, using his final days for God's glory. 2 Samuel 22-23

There are lessons to be learned from David that are very difficult but so necessary. For any and all of us today ring Paul's words across the twisted wreckage of so many lives that litter the highway of the redeemed—

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. NKJV

Why would David ever drop his guard and have these dangerous and unguarded moments in his life? Well, think of how far he came.

1. From his youth we have Psalms 19, 23... The bottom line of life is—who do you want to please? There are only two possible choices at the deepest level. Either we please God or we in one way or another are seeking to please ourselves. David wanted God to be pleased. It started way back in his youth as we saw in Psalm 19.

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

David broke with the crowd, stopped getting and seeking approval from his peers and went straight to the top. He wanted God and God alone to be his goal. And that was still his desire.

2. From his fugitive years we have Psalms 56, 142...in these days we find him trusting and following the Lord against all odds.

3. From his greatest days of his career we have Psalms 15, 24, 68, 101, 132... Next we find David's testimony of God's closeness during life as David was in his peak or his strong years/career.

- *Psalm 101* was David's pact for purity. He fled to the Lord as his refuge from sins of his youth. *David feels the loneliness of those struggling years of unending work in his career.* David writes of his desires to serve the lord as he enters his career as King David over Israel.
- *Psalm 132* may be David's confession after being anointed king by Samuel and looking back and remembering God's hand on his life.

Unguarded Moments Lead to Sin

Did you know that one of the greatest events in history was the climactic moment when a little boy—a teenaged shepherd boy met the greatest warrior of his day alone? With no sophisticated weaponry David plus God defeated the mighty giant Goliath.

What's amazing when you think about Scripture is that one of the greatest events in history has an equally tragic sequel. You know in our world books have sequels and movies have sequels. Well, there's a sequel to "David and Goliath" and it's almost more tragic than the glory of the initial run of David and Goliath. Because after David and Goliath, there is a horrible sequel, "David and Bathsheba". This is when David was killed by a giant.

Wait, didn't David kill Goliath? Yes, wonderfully by God's power this humble teenaged David slew God's enemy Goliath. But 25+ years later a proud David ignored God's Word and allowed another giant to come right into God's city Jerusalem. David welcomed God's enemy into the presence of this man after God's own heart, and David in midlife- perhaps in his early 40's- was slain by the giant named LUST! And that story is forever contained in the Scriptures.

Far more dangerous than the Goliath that he faced as a teenager, the Giant of Lust had crept slowly into David's own inner chambers. In a moment blinded by his own selfish desires--David was slain. Look at Paul's command to all of us in 2 Timothy 2:22.

*2 Timothy 2:22 **Flee** [P A Impv. 'I command you to always flee'] also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (NKJV)*

Note he doesn't merely say when you are a youth to flee. No, he says 'youthful lusts' the lusts that we nurture and feed as young people--are going to chase us through life. So we must all decide to flee lust, no matter what our age.

The command is so clear--FLEE, run at all costs, leave the presence of lust when you see it start to smolder and come to flame of passion. When you see it start to raise its wicked head in your life, run from it. The Lord will always make an escape route for us.

Six Dreadful Steps Downward:

David the giant killer, killed by the giant of lust, took six dreadful steps downward. He was enticed, baited, hooked and reeled in by lust. Then lust destroyed David's life and testimony. It's very insightful how this occurred, note his downward steps.

1. David Desensitized his conscience by incomplete obedience (2 Sam 5:13).
2. David Relaxed his grip on personal purity (2 Sam 11:1).
3. David Fixated his heart on physical desires (2 Sam 11:2).
4. David Rationalized his mind about wrong decisions (2 Sam 11:3).
5. David Plunged his life into lustful sin (2 Sam 11:4).
6. David Destroyed his testimony by the sin of a moment of stolen pleasure. Death, deceit, murder, immorality and spiritual oppression, poverty and famine of the soul are only a few offspring of this act of momentary pleasure.

❖ First, David Desensitized His Conscience by Incomplete Obedience

Turn with me to 2 Sam 5:13. This verse reminds me of a warning signal, or message on the control panel of David's life. But David disabled it so he wouldn't notice the warnings flashing at him. He ignored God's Word that protects us from disaster when we obey.

I remember in the early days when seatbelt buzzers first encouraged us to buckle up. If we ignored that buzzer, it would annoy us the whole time we didn't have our seatbelt on. I remember finally finding the part of the car that made that noise and I pulled it out. Soon after I discovered it was attached to something else, and my car wouldn't start, so I had to put it back in. David wasn't so fortunate.

When we disable God's warnings in life like David, we desensitize our conscience by incomplete obedience. David was a great guy. He loved the Lord, he was writing the Scriptures. He was writing songs to worship God, but he didn't obey God completely in his life. He was involved in socially acceptable things that were unacceptable to God. We have the same conflict in our lives.

David desensitized his conscience by incomplete obedience. This is the first sign of what was going to happen. This was just carelessness, a slight wandering, just a tiny *loosening* in a socially acceptable area. I actually believe that the entire horrible mess of the sin of David's unguarded moments with Bathsheba was sparked by small disobediences back in the earlier days.

David Relaxed His Grip On the Way God Asked Him to Live

Watch the unfolding of the story of these deadly little things David allowed into his life. Here is the record of his early days as king:

2 Samuel 5:13 And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem,

[Remember David has already been king for seven years. This verse sounds like you're just reading the news—nothing major, nothing bad, it's kind of neutral-- after he had come from Hebron.]

Also more sons and daughters were born to David.

[So you ask, was it really wrong? Didn't all the men back then do it? Didn't Abraham have multiple wives? You know Jacob had several wives. Why they're all God's people; is it really so bad? But if God says it is wrong, it is wrong even if everybody does it! Yes, but 600 years after Abraham God told Moses to **write down** His rules for future kings.]

Now turn back with me to Deuteronomy 17. This was the only instructions for the King of Israel given by God. David was the second king, following one who crashed and burned because of his disobedience. So I am sure David would have carefully listened to these words from the God he so loved. Follow along as I read God's instructions for His leaders in Deuteronomy 17:15-20.

Deuteronomy 17:15-17 you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over

you, who is not your brother. 16 But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, "You shall not return that way again." 17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. NKJV

[Have you seen the sign in Missouri along I-44 that says, **"What part of Thou Shalt Not is unclear?"** This is the code that the kings were supposed to live by. It's very powerful. This contains God's instructions for His leaders—very powerful words: But David personally disobeyed God because he multiplied for himself wives and possibly multiplied for himself wealth. God says don't do that—]

18 Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.

[The Pentateuch or first five books of the Bible has 5,852 verses and just under 160,000 Hebrew words. At normal speed, it would take a minimum of 900 hours to hand copy the Hebrew letters with ink and quill onto an animal skin or parchment; that is 6 months of work, non-stop at 8 hours a day! To be God's man you had to give up most of your first year as king doing this Bible Study!]

19 And it shall be with him, [He has to carry it around with him] and he shall read it all the days of his life,

[Some people might say where does it say in the Bible that we're supposed to read the Bible all the time? RIGHT HERE- it says you're supposed to have a personal copy, you're supposed to keep it with you all the time--- you're supposed to be in it meditating on it, reading it all the days of your life. For what reason?]

That he may learn to fear the Lord his God

[A continued exposure to this Book causes us to learn about God and to live a life that acknowledges our fear of Him]

and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 "that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren.

[So that he doesn't think that he can look over the rooftop of his house and look at anybody's wife that he wants and take them. That's exactly what happened! His heart was lifted up and he said boy I'm the #1 warrior, I'm the giant killer, I'm the wealthiest guy in the land—I'm the greatest—I'm the king of God's people and I can have whoever and whatever I want, whenever I want it. God says don't let your heart be lifted up.]

That he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

So, because of ignoring that little warning from God, David's life moves on without God's protection.

1. David Desensitized his conscience by incomplete obedience 2 Sam 5:13
2. David Relaxed his grip on personal purity 2 Sam 11:1
3. David Fixated his heart on physical desires v. 2
4. David Rationalized his mind about wrong decisions v. 3
5. David Plunged his life into lustful sin v. 4
6. David Destroyed his testimony by the sin of a moment of stolen pleasure. Death, deceit, murder, immorality and spiritual oppression, poverty and famine of the soul are only a few offspring of this act of momentary pleasure.

❖ **Second, David relaxed his grip on personal purity (2 Sam 11:1)**

David had let little things slide in his life—things went so well he forgot to be on guard. David relaxed his grip on personal purity. Think of what we sometimes see in T-ball and Little League. Those early ball players at the beginning of the game are in their positions. They're ready for anything that comes, especially if they're an infielder. They've got that glove on and they're looking like pros. Then by about the second inning they've turned around, they aren't watching the game, and they're throwing dandelions. *They've lost their grip on their position.*

David at the height of his life *lost his grip on purity* and he was playing with dandelions in the presence of the ravenous lion of lust.

We need to be doing what it takes to maintain purity in our lives.

Jesus told us once how serious we must be about sexual sin. Most people dismiss His words as hyperbole, overkill or something. But at this moment in David's life—maybe we should read Christ's words again and ponder them personally?

Please turn back to the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew 5, and listen with new ears to His Christ's words:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell” (Matthew 5:27-30).

Now, let me share part of an article from someone I really respect, that I read in a magazine once that was written about this verse.

Jesus, the Radical[1]

“Why does Jesus paint this shocking picture? I believe He wants us to take radical steps, to do whatever is necessary to deal with sexual temptation.

Now, the hand and eye are not the causes of sin. A blind man can still lust and a man without a hand can still steal. But the eye is a means of access for both godly and ungodly input. And the hand is a means of performing righteous or sinful acts. We must therefore govern what the eye looks at and the hand does.

If we take Jesus seriously, we need to think far more radically about sexual purity. The battle is too intense, and the stakes are too high to approach purity casually or gradually."

So ... if you can't keep your eyes away from those explicit images, don't ever go to a video rental store. *Come on. Everybody goes into those stores.*

No. If it causes you to sin, you shouldn't. Period.

Do your thoughts trip you up when you're with certain persons? Stop hanging out with them. Does a certain kind of music charge you up erotically? Stop listening to it.

- If these things seem like crutches, fine. Use whatever crutches you need to help you walk.

[1] <http://afajournal.org/2003/september/903purity.asp>

The Dangers of Unguarded Moments

DSS: Message Eighteen (060423PM)

Remember that incredible postscript to an incredible life? Has it stopped you yet and made you soberly think about where your life, habits, and secret thoughts are headed?

Listen as I read and emphasize that one word God emphasizes for us.

1 Kings 15:5 because David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. NKJV

God forgives the sins, and God forgets the iniquities. But the consequences and loss are recorded in the Bible, God's forever settled in Heaven Word.

We on this side of the cross have many advantages, one of them the finished revelation of God in this book called the Bible. Two of the greatest New Testament writers simplify our daily lives. Peter says that every day of our lives we are stalked by a ravenous lion called the Devil. Paul adds that we will get devoured if we don't take heed. Here are their words.

[1 Peter 5:8] ***"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. [1 Corinthians 10:12] Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."*** NKJV

Beware of allowing any unguarded moments in your life, thinking that you are safe from sin's reach, and that it won't bother you anymore; it is at that moment the ravenous devourer himself is crouching and preparing to spring. That is what David discovered, only it was too late!

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Unguarded Moments Lead to Sin

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Remember Deuteronomy 17 was the only instructions for the King of Israel given by God? Remember that David was the second king, following one who crashed and burned because of his disobedience? So I am sure David would have carefully listened to these words from the God he so loved for His leaders in Deuteronomy 17:15-20. But as time went on David chose to ignore those instructions.

So, because of ignoring that little warning from God, David's life moves on without God's protection.

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If we take Jesus seriously, we need to think far more radically about sexual purity. The battle is too intense, and the stakes are too high to approach purity casually or gradually.

Some men fall into mental adultery through lingerie ads, billboards, women joggers in tight pants, women with low cut blouses or short skirts, cheerleaders or dancers, movies, TV shows, and commercials of the beer-and-bikini variety. Some men’s weakness is the Sunday newspaper’s ad inserts or nearly any magazine.

So, ***stop looking***. And then ***stop putting yourself in the position to look!***

If you have to get rid of your TV to guard your purity, do it.

If it means you can’t go to games because of how dancers or cheerleaders dress and perform, so be it. If it means you have to lower your head and close your eyes, so be it. If you’re embarrassed to do that, stay home.

Tell your wife about your struggles. Or if you’re single, tell a godly friend. If you need to drop the newspaper because of those ads, fine. If you need your wife to go through it first and pull out the offending inserts, ask her.

Romans 13:14 instructs us to “make no provision for the flesh” (NASB).

It’s a sin to deliberately put ourselves in a position where we’ll likely commit sin. Whether it’s the lingerie department, the swimming pool, or the workout room at an athletic club--if it trips you up, stay away from it.

Proverbs describes the loose woman meeting up with the foolish man after dark (see Proverbs 7:8-9). We must stay away from people, places, and contexts that make sin more likely.

If it’s certain bookstores or hangouts, ***stay away from them***.

If cable or satellite TV or network TV, old friends from high school, the Internet, or computers are your problem, ***get rid of them***.

Just say no to whatever is pulling you away from Jesus. Remember, if you want a different outcome, you must make different choices.

If you can't be around women wearing swimsuits without looking and lusting, then don't go on vacation where women wear swimsuits. If that means not going water-skiing or to a favorite resort, fine. If it means being unable to go on a church-sponsored retreat, don't go.

Sound drastic? Compare it to gouging out an eye or cutting off a hand!

“But...”

But there are hardly any decent TV shows anymore. Then stop watching TV. Read books. Have conversations.

But all the newer novels have sex scenes. Then read the old novels. Read fiction from Christian publishers.

But I've subscribed to Sports Illustrated for thirty years, back before they had the swimsuit issue. They have it now. So drop your subscription. And tell them why.

But it's almost impossible to rent a movie without sex and offensive language. There are Christian movie review sites that can help you make good selections for family viewing. There are also services which offer edited movies, television adaptors which edit profanity, and DVD software that cuts offensive scenes from movies.

But suppose there were no decent movies - what then? I enjoy good movies, but the Bible never commands us, “Watch movies.” It does command us, “Guard your heart.”

It's a battle--battles get bloody. Do whatever it takes to walk in purity!

A friend wrote a daily contract that asks these questions:

“Are you willing to do whatever's necessary to protect your sexual sobriety? Ask God for help? Call on others? Go to meetings? Read literature? Set boundaries and not cross them? Be brutally honest?”

Too Radical?

But you're talking about withdrawing from the culture. What you're saying is too radical.

No, what I'm saying is nothing. Jesus said, “If it would keep you from sexual temptation, you'd be better off poking out your eye and cutting off your hand.” Now that's radical.

Many claim they're serious about purity, but then they say, “No way; I'm not going to give up cable TV,” or “I'm not going to have my wife hold the computer password.”

Followers of Jesus have endured torture and given their lives in obedience to Him. And we're whining about giving up cable?

When Jesus called us to take up our crosses and follow Him (see Matthew 10:38), didn't that imply sacrifices greater than forgoing Internet access?

How sold out are you to the battle for purity?

How desperate are you to have victory over sin?

How radical are you willing to get for your Lord?

How much do you want the joy and peace that can be found only in Him?"

Purity comes only to those who truly want it. For David that desire came too late; will it come to late for you also?

1. David Desensitized his conscience by incomplete obedience 2 Sam 5:13

2. David Relaxed his grip on personal purity 2 Sam 11:1

3. David Fixated his heart on physical desires v. 2

4. David Rationalized his mind about wrong decisions v. 3

5. David Plunged his life into lustful sin v. 4

6. David Destroyed his testimony by the sin of a moment of stolen pleasure. Death, deceit, murder, immorality and spiritual oppression, poverty and famine of the soul are only a few offsprings of this act of momentary pleasure.

❖ **David Fixated His Heart on Physical Desires (2 Sam 11:2)**

David started thinking about his sexual desire and that's all he thought about. In the ancient world the king always built on a hill because then the enemies were at a disadvantage. So here David is in the biggest house and the highest house in the whole city of Jerusalem, and he's wandering around at night on the roof of his house looking down around the barriers that others would have in their way. David could see over walls, fences, and screens—he sees past all of that because of his position in the highest house. But, he didn't look away from the temptation, rather he engaged in watching, this became lust-filled staring.

In this period of restlessness, with time on his hands, moments of listlessness, boredom, and wandering the palace he uses the highest spot in the city to take an innocent peek at his neighbors wife. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold.

And so as he took a quick peek over the wall at his neighbor's wife. Jerusalem at this time was not that big and so it wouldn't be he didn't know who lived down there. The king knew his subjects. That was one of his mightiest warrior's homes--- he knew whose house that was, he knew whose wife lived there, he knew who she was.

But what I want to underline for you is there is no such thing as an innocent peek at another man's wife; there is no such thing as an innocent peek at an off-color TV show; there is no such thing as an innocent peek at pornographic materials.

There is no innocent trying out of intoxicating alcohol; There is no innocent trying out of enslaving cigarettes. There is no innocent trying out of debilitating drugs. There is no innocent trying out of premarital sexual relations.

These are steps to life-crippling habits that can destroy your testimony and usefulness for Christ! There's no innocent peak at lust! David fixed his heart on his physical desires so immediately his mind starts clicking.

Temptations around us all abound. Because temptation to sin is so powerful, we need help. This morning the best, and the only real help is Christ--the Refuge for the tempted.

Now before any of us check out because this message isn't for us, open with me to James 1.13-14.

*James 1:13-15 Let no one say **when he is tempted**, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, **when desire has conceived**, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (NKJV)*

*James 1:13-15 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted **when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust**. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (NAS)*

Note that James, the very first New Testament pastor, of the first New Testament church, the first leader of the Church of Jerusalem, and our Lord's earthly brother—*doesn't say "if" but he says "when."*

God's Word says temptation is inevitable, temptation is inescapable, temptation is going to follow us all through our earthly lives.

Temptation is inevitable. So listen up, this message is for ALL of us. But this message hinges on one word—lust.

Lust (*epithumia* "super desires") is dreadful, dangerous, and deadly. Lust is surrounding us and in various forms, planted within us—and is either pursued for pleasure or fled from for righteousness. Listen carefully to Paul—

*2 Timothy 2:22 **Flee** [P A Impv. "I command you to always flee"] also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (NKJV)*

Note he doesn't merely say when you are a youth to flee. No, he says "youthful lusts" the lusts that we nurture and feed as young people--are going to chase us through life. So we must all decide to flee lust, no matter what our age.

However large we grow those ravenous wolves of lust in our youth—that is how large they will be as they chase us through life. Why should we flee these lusts that tempt us to sin against God? Because they cost us far more than we could ever imagine. And that is what we will see in David's life.

Our God is jealous this morning.

He loved us, bought us, found us, drew us, cleaned us and now lives within us by His Holy Spirit. Have you thought deeply about what it means to have a Jealous God living in you? Have you thought about what would offend someone who loved us so much that He wants us to be utterly loyal to Him?

- The Lust of the Flesh is to chase pleasures or the Cravings of the Body
- The Lust of the Eyes to chase Stuff or the Lustings of the Eyes
- The Pride of Life is to chase status or the Boastings of the Mouth

1. David Desensitized his conscience by incomplete obedience 2 Sam 5:13

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❖ **David Rationalized His Mind About Wrong Decisions**

v. 3 he started saying—well it's not that bad—only once--- nobody will know. We have infinite capacity for rationalization.

David learned what a horrible thing sin is. It deceives with all those glittering promises. It destroys with the precision of a surgeon.

Over the years countless men who have descended into sexual sins have been asked the same question--"What could have been done to prevent this?" Most answer nearly the same thing with haunting pain and precision, "If only I had really known, really thought through and weighed what it would cost me and my family and my Lord, I honestly believe I would never have done it."

I keep in the back of my Bible[2] (the one that is always with me at work, at home, and whenever I travel) a very pointed reminder of the *consequences* of sexual sin. I use this list as an encouragement to refocus on the Lord and take any steps of wisdom and purity necessary at the moment temptation, in any form strikes! We must always remember to put the focus where Scripture does--on the love of God *and* the fear of God, both of which should act in concert to motivate us to holy obedience.

My Personalized List of Anticipated Consequences of Immorality Towards My God—

- **Grieving my Lord**; displeasing the One whose opinion most matters.
- **Dragging Christ's sacred reputation** into the mud.
- **Losing my reward** and commendation from God.
- **Dreading the day** that I will have to look Jesus in the face at His judgment seat and give an account of why I did it.
- **Forcing God's chastening** upon my life in various ways.
- **Prompting laughter, rejoicing and blasphemous smugness** by those who disrespect God and the church (2 Samuel 12:14).
- **Bringing great pleasure to Satan**, the Enemy of God.

Towards My Wife and Family—

- **Heaping untold hurt on Bonnie**, my best friend and loyal wife.
- **Forfeiting Bonnie's respect** and trust.
- **Giving up my credibility** with my beloved sons and daughters, John II, Estelle, James, Julia-Grace, Joseph, Jeremiah, Elisha, and Elisabeth. ("Why listen to a man who betrayed Mom and us?")
- **Realizing that if my blindness should continue** or my family be unable to forgive, I could lose my wife and my children forever.
- **Bringing years of shame** to my family. ("Why isn't Daddy a pastor anymore?" Plus all the cruel comments of others who would invariably find out.)
- **Plaguing memories and flashbacks** that could taint future intimacy with my wife.

Towards My Church and Ministry—

- **Bringing years of shame** to my church families I have served all these years.
- **Bringing years of shame** and hurt to my fellow pastors and elders. Royce, Steve, Gerry, Elmer, Tim, Stan, Jim, Ted, Allen, Travis,
- **Bringing years of shame** and hurt to my friends, and especially those I've led to Christ and discipled. List of names: Paul, Douglas, Kurt,

- **Realizing that guilt is awfully hard to shake**-even though God would forgive me, would I forgive myself?
- **Following in the shameful footsteps** of men I know of whose immorality forfeited their ministry and caused me to shudder. List of these names: Roy, David , etc.
- **Causing innocent people to suffer** around me when they get hit by my shrapnel (a la Achan).

Towards Myself—

- **Disqualifying myself** after having preached to others.
- **Giving up** the things I am called to and love to do-teach and preach and write and minister to others. Forfeiting forever certain opportunities to serve God. Years of training and experience in ministry wasted for a long period of time, maybe permanently.
- **Being haunted by my sin** as I look in the eyes of others, and having it all dredged up again wherever I go and whatever I do.
- **Undermining the hard work and prayers of others** by saying to our community "this is a hypocrite-who can take seriously anything he and his church have said and done?"
- **Heaping judgment and endless problems** on the person I would have committed adultery with.
- **Catching possible diseases:** gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, herpes, and AIDS (pain, constant reminder to me and my wife, possible infection of Bonnie, or in the case of AIDS, even causing her death, as well as mine.)
- **Causing possible pregnancy**, with its personal and financial implications, including a lifelong reminder of sin to me and my family.
- **Loss of self-respect, discrediting my own name, and invoking shame and lifelong embarrassment upon myself.**

[1] <http://afajournal.org/2003/september/903purity.asp>

[2] This list was adapted for my use from Randy Alcorn's message called: "Deterring Immorality by Counting Its Cost--The exorbitant price of sexual sin" found at this website: <http://afajournal.org/2003/september/903purity.asp>

Bathsheba and the God of the Second Chance

DSS: Message Nineteen (060514AM)

In our study of the lessons God has given us from the life of David His servant, we have come to a woman named Bathsheba. Bathsheba is only mentioned by name in the Old Testament (11 times). But for a very special purpose she is also found in the New Testament.

In America we celebrate moms in many different ways; but there is a list of mothers that God has honored in a most unusual way.

Women in the Bible

God has singled out and highlighted five mothers out of all those hundreds described in His Word. And He placed them in a special place—in the pathway through which Christ came. Please open with me to Matthew 1.

Have you ever studied the women with whom God chose to surround Christ's coming to earth? I am talking about the highly unusual presence of five special women included in His genealogy in Matthew 1. It is interesting that no women are listed in any of the genealogical records of the Old and New Testaments except for Matthew's. Matthew 1:1-16 lists five special mothers in the line awaiting the coming of the Promised One.

Women weren't highly regarded in ancient times; they lived in a man's world. This fact made life very difficult for them. God profiles these five courageous and gifted women because they were a part of God's team. Their lives were part of God's plan to bring a ray of light to herald the sunrise on the night of sin that had come into our world. Through their line, the promised Savior was going to be supernaturally born!

Five women in a long list of genealogical records, all of whom have something in common. Each of them, during their lifetime, were the subject of moral scandal. Each of them would be what we may call—stained by sin.

*Matthew 1:1-6, 16 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: 2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. 3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah **by Tamar**, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. 4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. 5 Salmon begot Boaz **by Rahab**, Boaz begot Obed **by Ruth**, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon **by her who had been the wife of Uriah**. 16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of **Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ**. NKJV*

Bathsheba

Bathsheba is a Hebrew name that means 'daughter of an oath, promise, or covenant'. What is so

interesting about that name is, that it belonged to a woman who didn't keep her oath, promise, and covenant.

What comes to your mind when you hear that name Bathsheba? Most often it is the sin of adultery that David and Bathsheba together committed against God and their marriage covenant, oath, and promises.

- But do you also think of Bathsheba's loyal and faithful husband Uriah, betrayed by the king he served--as he was left to die under a barrage of arrows? *Because Bathsheba failed to keep her promises...*
- Do you think of what it must have been like as Bathsheba watched the army of Israel bringing Uriah's body into Jerusalem after carrying him back the 44 miles from where he fell in battle? *Because Bathsheba failed to keep her promises...*
- Do you think of what it must have been like for her to have stood at the funeral for a fallen war hero and know that deep within her womb was the growing life whose conception prompted the murder of her own husband? *Because Bathsheba failed to keep her promises...*
- Do you think of a tiny grave that held the infant son that died by God's judgment? *Because Bathsheba failed to keep her promises...*
- Do you think of how many times in the years that followed, when a place or person reminded Bathsheba of her youthful days of meeting and marrying her husband Uriah--and wouldn't Bathsheba again remember why he died? *Because Bathsheba failed to keep her promises...*

So when Bathsheba (daughter of a promise) married Uriah (the Lord is my light) they became a wonderful picture of all the best that God offers us in this life. But after one very bad choice Bathsheba made, when ever we think of her we are reminded that when we fail to keep our oaths, promises, and covenants—God does not.

Bathsheba will always remind us that there are dire and inescapable consequences for sin.

So Bathsheba is forever associated with David and their sin. And that is because she failed to keep her promises. And because of the consequences that come from sin, Bathsheba was stained and her life marred.

But is that the end of the story? No, as we open to the New Testament we find one last mention of Bathsheba in a whole new light—the light of grace. Bathsheba's name in the opening paragraph of the New Testament reminds us of the One who came as Paul says in Romans 5:20:

“... But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” NKJV

Bathsheba on this side of the cross is a forgiven sinner and a portrait of God's grace.

Matthew 1 is the final mention of Bathsheba, the woman that became the stain on David's record. Remember last time we saw that incredible postscript to an incredible life? Has God's

Word stopped you yet and made you soberly think about where your life, habits, and secret thoughts are headed?

Listen as I read and emphasize again that one word God emphasizes for us.

1 Kings 15:5 because David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. NKJV

God forgives the sins, and God forgets the iniquities. But the consequences and loss are recorded in the Bible, God's forever settled in Heaven Word. Even here in Matthew 1 notice what God says and let it be a warning to flee sin and avoid lust all costs. If you and I don't—it will cost us dearly.

None of the women—of all the women of the Bible—are more special than the five who actually open the pages of the New Testament. Who are they? They are the five precious wives and mothers tucked away in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Why would God place them there in that usually “men only” genealogical section? You will see, as you read this chapter, encouraging applications these women offer as a testimony from their lives:

- Their lives give **hope** to those who have failed, and feel that it is impossible to ever go on and please God.
- Their lives give **comfort** to those who ache with pain from wounds, sorrows, and hurts that God has allowed to invade their lives.
- Their lives are an incredible source of **strength** to those who have a long struggle ahead. Knowing that God helped them, sustained them, and kept them going fosters confidence that no struggle will ever exceed His grace and power to uphold.

Each of these women was stained either by her own sin, the sins of another, or the scandalous plots of others. Only one word can adequately describe what God did in their cases—**grace!**

First, we will consider the fourth woman in that list who is alluded to in Matthew 1:6. The reason Bathsheba is here in this chapter is to remind us of the doctrine of God's forgiving grace. That doctrine reminds us all that we are like...

Bathsheba—No Stain Is Too Deep for God's Grace

The story of this fourth woman we have already seen in 2 Samuel 11 and 12. Bathsheba was in the wrong place at the wrong time—in all these areas we could call her “*defeated*”:

- She was unwise at best, to have washed herself, unclothed outside of her home.
- She was immodest in her display.
- She responded to David's interest in her, even though she was another man's wife, and he was another woman's husband.
- She muffled her heart's warning as God's conviction was upon her conscience.
- She stifled the virtuous vows that she had made of lifelong loyalty to Uriah.
- She ignored the fact that God had given her a wonderful, courageous, loyal warrior

husband.

- She yielded herself to passion, and the sin that would follow.

What did Bathsheba reap from all that defeat? Her husband, Uriah, was murderously slain, and the baby she had conceived by David choked out his life in death. Bathsheba and David—the grieving, sorrowing mother and the murderous, adulterous father—faced great sadness. And, after Nathan spoke to David about his sin, the world would forever know that Bathsheba was a defeated woman.

Her sin became monumental for all time. Numerous movies have even been made about her illicit romance, which was both public and shameful. Some people may think: *Oh, I can do that, and no one will ever find out. We can cover our tracks!* But the Scriptures say that whatever you sow, you will reap; and whatever you whisper in secret will be shouted from the rooftops (Matthew 10:27; Galatians 6:7-8).

What did God’s placing Bathsheba in Christ’s genealogy do? He graciously lifted her out of her pit of defeat. In doing so, God was saying, “Here’s a woman who is unworthy, who is a sinner. Though she’s done many things wrong, I’m going to let her be one through whom I will bring Christ into this world.” God also poured out His grace upon David and Solomon, from whom we’ve received a great deal of our Scripture. Through them, we learn about what it means to live wisely—to be someone after God’s own heart. And, according to His perfect plan, Bathsheba became a beautiful portrait of His grace, as we find in Matthew 1:6: *“David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.”*

Jesus loves to forgive and cleanse. He is waiting today, as He was in Revelation 2-3, for us to hear His voice, repent of our sin, and let Him wash us clean. Revelation 1:5 says that Jesus wants us to know Him as the One who *“loved us, and washed us [kjb] and freed us [niv] from our sins.”* No stain of the past, no sin of our youth, no failure in our home or marriage is too deep for the God of the Second Chance.

No Failures are Permanent with God

- **Take your burdens** to the Lord right now, and start over. You may be estranged from your mother, father, or children, or grandchildren—Jesus can help. Bring that deep pain and sorrow to Him right where you sit and place it at His feet. The Christian life is a continual offer from God—new beginnings.
- **Bow before Jesus and start over** as a mother or father for God, as man or woman of God, as a husband or wife for God, or as a godly boy or girl—right now.

When we look at the rest these women in the remainder of this chapter, we will be looking at women who were His beautiful portraits of grace—women who were defrauded, defiled, despised, defeated, or determined—yet, all were given a part in God’s grand and glorious plan!

If you are like most mothers, there have probably been times in your parenting when you have felt ready to quit!

Whenever that type of emotional tidal wave happens to sweep over you, remember these five incredible mothers who overcame great obstacles to shine through the centuries like the rare and precious jewels they are in God's sight!

Now then, let's meet the rest of these special women individually. Remember the reason these women are here in this chapter is to remind us of the doctrine of God's forgiving grace. That doctrine reminds us all that we are like...

Tamar—No Pain Is Too Great for God's Grace

Thirty-eight centuries ago, in Genesis 38, we are introduced to Tamar. Whenever you think of her, think of a woman "*defrauded*." One of Judah's sons had married her, but was personally struck dead by God because he was a wicked sinner, a rebellious man. Judah promised, as was the custom, that he would get her a new husband.

Tamar put on her widow's raiment and waited, and waited, but she was forgotten. Judah had taken care of everything else except for her. Tamar was lied to and overlooked, and she finally took the law into her own hands. Posing as a harlot, she had an incestuous affair with her own father-in-law. A child born out of wedlock resulted. God never condoned what she did; He just described it. Tamar was defrauded of many things:

- She was defrauded of a normal life.
- She was defrauded of a happy marriage.
- She was defrauded of a good name.
- She was defrauded of a sterling reputation.

Tamar was robbed of all these normal expectations by one thing— sin. She was a woman who was deprived by losing her husband. She was overlooked by her husband's father. She then allowed sin to cause her to take matters into her own hands through an illicit union. But, in spite of all that, God compassionately looked down at her and said, "I have a plan for Tamar! She is a woman who portrays My plan—a wicked sinner, forgiven!" She was allowed to be part of the line that would bring the Redeemer to humanity— Christ, the One who perfectly portrays God's grace! God graciously placed Tamar in Christ's family tree, as recorded in Matthew 1:3: "*Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar*"

Do you have the pain of being wronged or defrauded by someone who promised love, took all you had, and then deserted you?

- Then through your pain **listen to the voice** of Jesus as He whispers to you, like He did to Paul, "*My grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in [your] weakness*" (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- **Believe the truth and go on**; let God fill you with the comfort and strength of His Word!

Remember the reason these women are here in this chapter is to remind us of the doctrine of God's forgiving grace. That doctrine reminds us all that we are like...

Rahab—No Past Is Too Bad for God's Grace

If we were to identify Rahab with one word, the word that best describes her is “*defiled*.” Her life story is introduced in the second chapter of Joshua. In 1406 b.c., fifteen centuries before Christ, the children of Israel faced the walls of Jericho. A woman was on those walls—a very smart businesswoman. She was in two ancient businesses that were often interchanged: (1) inn keeping, and (2) harlotry. She not only provided lodging, but also gave men a sinful substitute for what God ordained in marriage. In every sense, Rahab was defiled:

- She was a sexual sinner.
- She was a member of the cursed Canaanite race.
- She was a city-dweller doomed because Jericho was about to be annihilated.
- She was literally sitting on a “time bomb” because God’s judgment was about to cause the walls to fall.

However, in His mercy, God said, “I’m going to destroy everyone and everything in Jericho except for that tiny section of the wall—and that little family huddled together at the inn there.”

Can you imagine what it must have been like on that day of destruction? To see the 60-foot-high walls crumble and fall around you while your portion of the wall stood firm? To witness the Hebrew army march in, slice and demolish every living thing in its path? To watch the city in which you’ve lived and worked all of your life suddenly go up in flames?

Nevertheless, Rahab, through faith, heeded God’s warning through the spies: “Stay inside of your house; hang a red cord out your *window* and you will be saved!” So that day, in Joshua 2, God reached down and plucked Rahab with her family out of the inferno of His destruction on Jericho.

Have you ever met anyone like Rahab? She was terminally defiled; in every sense her destruction was looming. Her story is one of the most beautiful pictures of how God saves lost people. You see, Rahab was part of a doomed race, and so are we.

Did you know that the human race itself is doomed? Every one of us has a terminal illness. Some people know the name of it; the rest of us just don’t know what is going to “get us” yet. But one thing is for certain: death will happen sooner or later.

We are all going to die, and the germ that will kill us is called sin. No one gave it to us; we received it by inheritance from our forefather, Adam, who had fallen into sin. Every one of us is guilty of sin; each of us faces His judgment (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

We are all in a world that God is going to destroy (Revelation 21:1-8); but, by God’s grace, we can be eternally saved (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Rahab’s life is quite a portrait of salvation by God’s grace. The Lord needed no spy report; He graciously wanted Rahab; and put this defiled woman in His plan. She was in the line of special mothers who would bring Christ to portray God’s marvelous grace to the world, as recorded in Matthew 1:5: “*Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab.*”

If your past is less than sterling (and whose isn't?), always remember that this too is God's offer of grace. What do I mean? Listen to the voice of Jesus as He spoke to another woman so much like Rahab in the New Testament, who wept about her sinful past, at His feet: *"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, [the same] loves little."* (Luke 7:47) A stained past "forgiven" is the opportunity to "love much"—a wonderful, loving Savior who forgives much!

If you have never received Christ's forgiveness you can have it today. One greatly defiled man came once to Jesus and said to Him, "If You are willing, You can cleanse me." To which come Christ's sweetest words, I am willing—be cleansed"!

- To receive His cleansing forgiveness today all you need to do is to come to Him and say I need Your touch, I want to turn away from my sins (that is called repentance) and I believe You are my only hope (that is called faith). He does the rest.
- Jesus said that all who come to Him—He will never cast out! Come to Him today.

None of these five special women deserved to be a woman of grace. None of them deserved for God to use them. All of them were women with a mark against them, and most were unqualified to serve in such a manner. Yet, God lifted up each of these special ladies as an example of His fathomless grace! Through their life experiences, women for all time can learn that:

- No pain is too great to be healed.
- No past is too bad to be forgiven.
- No problem is too big to be solved through Christ.
- No stain is too deep to be cleansed through Christ's blood.
- No task is too great for God's enablement.

As we look at the fourth woman and mother in this chapter, remember the reason these women are here in this chapter is to remind us of the doctrine of God's forgiving grace. That doctrine reminds us all that we are like...

Ruth—No Problem Is Too Big for God's Grace

It is in the second part of Matthew 1:5 that we see another special mother in Christ's lineage. Ruth—could be described as having been *"despised."* Yet, her life represents such a beautiful portrait of grace that God devoted a full Book to tell about it.

Ruth's story began way back in Genesis 19. Ruth's distant forefather—Abraham's nephew, Lot—in the midst of a drunken orgy with his two unscrupulous daughters, sired Ruth's race. It is noteworthy that in Scripture God doesn't cut out any of the facts because they capture lessons He wants us to learn. He has always condemned drunkenness, and the various evils that accompany it. It should come as no surprise that the sins, which produced the tribe of Moabites, would lead to a people under God's judgment.

These people whom God had cursed because of their wickedness were protected until Deuteronomy 23. Because the Moabites were from such a defiled and despised race, God

announced that no Moabite could enter God's assembly for ten generations. Therefore, though Ruth had done nothing personally to deserve it, she was despised by the Jewish people. Remember all the strikes against her?

- She was of the wrong race.
- She was out of the wrong family.
- She was tainted by a bad past.
- She was hounded by someone else's sin.
- She was scarred by a family scandal.
- She was plagued by the darkness of a stain.

Additionally, after a short marriage, Ruth's husband died; and a famine was all around them. God tells, in the Book of Ruth, one of the sweetest Old Testament stories of grace that has ever been written! What did He write? He reported how He graciously reached down and took a woman from a cursed race, a despised people, and said, "You come into My family!" Thus a man named Boaz took Ruth to be his wife, and she then, upon that marriage, became a woman of hope. Like Tamar and Rahab, Ruth was one through whom Christ would come—one through whom God gloriously portrayed His grace, as recorded in Matthew 1:5: "*Boaz begot Obed by Ruth*"

Adversity reveals who we really are. Its fires burn away only what is temporary, and leave behind what is permanent. What are your trials revealing? Peter said that God's grace accepted in trials purifies us, and we become precious like costly gold. Give those big problems to the Lord; allow Him to refine you and do something you could never plan or imagine—and then He will get all the glory!

Finally, we remember the reason these women are here in this chapter is to remind us of the doctrine of God's forgiving grace. That doctrine reminds us all that we are like...

Mary—No Task Is Too Great for God's Grace

The word that best describes the final woman of Matthew 1 is "*determined.*" What is interesting about Mary is that we have heard a lot about her that is not true, and we know very little about her from what the Bible records. In fact, books and books have been written about Mary, none of which contain facts from the Bible. What is in the Bible?

We know this to be truth: Mary was born a sinner. There is nothing in Scripture which says Mary was anything else other than a very normal sinner. She came to faith in the true God by acknowledging that she was lost without Him (Luke 1:47)

She quoted from the Old Testament, talking about the fact that God lifted her up out of the ash heap, out of the dung hill (I Samuel 2:7-8; Luke 1:52).

Mary, who wanted to know God's Word and obey it, even as a young woman became quiet and determined. She kept on following and obeying the Lord—even through all this:

- She fell in love, and was engaged.

- She was visited by an angel.
- She received an unusual commission.
- She supernaturally conceived a child.
- She faced possible stoning because that was the penalty for fornication.
- She was scorned by others and falsely accused.
- After Christ's birth, Mary patiently endured public shame for one third of a century—through the entire life and ministry of Christ.
- She was even “put in her place” by Jesus.
- She was continually saddened by her unbelieving sons.
- She never gave up; she determinedly pressed on in faith for God's glory!

All that Mary was experiencing fit perfectly with God's gracious plan: He had chosen her to be the “Mother of the Promise.” She bore Christ. She partook of grace. She rejoiced and said, “Oh, God, my Savior!” (Luke 1:47)

She ultimately became the one through whom “The Promise” arrived: *“And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.”* (Matthew 1:16)

The lesson for us today is to decide *now* that we are in this for the duration. We see our husband and children not just as they are, but how they will be by God's grace. We do what we are called to do, staying in close personal touch with the Lord—and persist.

Mary is never mentioned again after Acts 1, yet she was so used of the Lord. Keep on keeping on—whether you are noticed or ignored, loved or rejected, needed or abused—and determine by God's grace to persist no matter how great and overwhelming the challenge may seem.

Experiencing God's Fathomless Grace

None of these five special women deserved to be a woman of grace. None of them deserved for God to use them. All of them were women with a mark against them, and most were unqualified to serve in such a manner. Yet, God lifted up each of these special ladies as an example of His fathomless grace! Through their life experiences, women for all time can learn that:

- No pain is too great to be healed.
- No past is too bad to be forgiven.
- No problem is too big to be solved through Christ.
- No stain is too deep to be cleansed through Christ's blood.
- No task is too great for God's enablement.

Have you personally ever been defiled by sin? Defeated? Defrauded? Despised? The good news is that *“God [is] able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all [things], may have abundance for every good work.”*^a Regardless of your present circumstances, there is hope in Christ for the future! By God's grace, you can partake of “The Promise.” You can trust Him, your Savior, to wash away whatever sin has been dragging you down—as far as the east is from the west^b—so that He can look upon you in the righteousness of Christ!

Will you, then, as each of these five special mothers did, determine that by His grace you too will be energized by hope? What do I mean by that? Every child you bear, Mother, is marked by sin. All of them are already defiled. All of them, because they are sinners, are already defrauded out of the inheritance God wanted to give them. Every one of them is despised. Every one is defeated at birth by sin. But today, like the “Mothers of the Promise,” you can point your children to Christ; your life can be a portrait of God’s grace to them—a portrait of hope!

Will it be easy? No. Will it be worth it? Absolutely! And as long as you trust Christ to be your strength, you will never walk alone, for:

“He Giveth More Grace”

*He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.
When [you] have exhausted [your] store of endurance,
When [your] strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When [you] reach the end of [your] hoarded resources,
[Your] Father’s full giving is only begun.
His love has no limit; His grace has no measure,
His power has no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!
— Annie Johnson Flint*

David Forgot--God is There

DSS: Message Twenty (060514PM)

David's Fifth Consequence of His Unguarded Moments

The temptation and fall of David are presented by God for each of us to ponder. Remember those consequences?

1. David Desensitized his conscience by incomplete obedience (II Sam 5:13).
2. David Relaxed his grip on personal purity (II Sam 11:1).
3. David Fixated his heart on physical desires (II Sam 11:2).
4. David Rationalized his mind about wrong decisions (II Sam 11:3).
5. **David Plunged his life into lustful sin (II Sam 11:4).**
6. David Destroyed his testimony by the sin of a moment of stolen pleasure. Death, deceit, murder, immorality and spiritual oppression, poverty and famine of the soul are only a few offspring of this act of momentary pleasure.

There are lessons to be learned from David that are very difficult but so necessary. For any and all of us today ring Paul's words across the twisted wreckage of so many lives that litter the highway of the redeemed—flee lust and look for God when tempted.

Let's begin this evening asking the Lord to make His incredibly comforting promise of 1st Corinthians 10:1-13 clear to each of us.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. 6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. NKJV

I have enjoyed over the years, reading that rich devotional book entitled Morning and Evening by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. To begin our look at David this evening—listen to some of Spurgeon's words from the section entitled *Evening, January 17*

“And it came to pass in an evening tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king’s house.”

— 2 Samuel 11:2

At that hour David saw Bathsheba. We are never out of the reach of temptation. Both at home and abroad we are liable to meet with allurements to evil; the morning opens with peril, and the shades of evening find us still in jeopardy. They are well kept whom God keeps, but woe unto those who go forth into the world, or even dare to walk their own house unarmed. Those who think themselves secure are more exposed to danger than any others. The armor-bearer of Sin is Self-confidence.

David should have been engaged in fighting the Lord’s battles, instead of which he tarried at Jerusalem, and gave himself up to luxurious repose, for he arose from his bed at eventide. Idleness and luxury are the devil’s jackals, and find him abundant prey. In stagnant waters noxious creatures swarm, and neglected soil soon yields a dense tangle of weeds and briars. Oh for the constraining love of Jesus to keep us active and useful! When I see the King of Israel sluggishly leaving his couch at the close of the day, and falling at once into temptation, let me take warning, and set holy watchfulness to guard the door.

Is it possible that the king had mounted his housetop for retirement and devotion? If so, what a caution is given us to count no place, however secret, a sanctuary from sin! While our hearts are so like a tinder-box, and sparks so plentiful, we had need use all diligence in all places to prevent a blaze. Satan can climb housetops, and enter closets, and even if we could shut out that foul fiend, our own corruptions are enough to work our ruin unless grace prevent. Reader, beware of evening temptations. Be not secure. The sun is down but sin is up. We need a watchman for the night as well as a guardian for the day. O blessed Spirit, keep us from all evil this night. Amen. 1[1]

Beware of allowing any unguarded moments in your life, thinking that you are safe from sin’s reach, and that it won’t bother you anymore; it is at that moment the ravenous devourer himself is crouching and preparing to spring. That is what David discovered, only it was too late!

We are in the midst of a careful study of the three final eras of David’s life. We continue this evening because they need to be studied and heeded by all of us.

- ❖ **Unguarded Moments lead to SIN—Uriah and Bathsheba.** First is the saddest chapter, the darkest and the one we all wince at—his sin with Bathsheba. 2nd Samuel 11
- ❖ **Inevitable Consequences lead to PAIN—Absolom and Shimei.** These are the chapters that record the many years of painful consequences because of David’s sin. 2nd Samuel 12-21, 24

1[1] Spurgeon, Charles H., *Morning and Evening*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995.

❖ **Humble Obedience lead to JOY—Solomon, Psalms and the Temple.**

And last, the final days of David's life. When we see that despite the failures of Bathsheba incident—David truly was after God's own heart. We see him end well, using his final days for God's glory. 2nd Samuel 22-23

Unguarded Moments Lead to Sin

Turn back with me to 2nd Samuel 11 as we review how David the giant killer, killed by the giant of lust, took six dreadful steps downward.

He was enticed, baited, hooked and reeled in by lust. Then lust destroyed David's life and testimony. It's very insightful how this occurred, note his downward steps.

1. David Desensitized his conscience by incomplete obedience (II Sam 5:13).
2. David Relaxed his grip on personal purity (II Sam 11:1).
3. David Fixated his heart on physical desires (II Sam 11:2).
4. David Rationalized his mind about wrong decisions (II Sam 11:3).
5. **David Plunged his life into lustful sin (II Sam 11:4).**
6. David Destroyed his testimony by the sin of a moment of stolen pleasure. Death, deceit, murder, immorality and spiritual oppression, poverty and famine of the soul are only a few offspring of this act of momentary pleasure.

David Plunged his life into lustful sin v. 4

When David plunged his life into lustful sin he forgot to do what he had done in the past, wrote of in the past and rejoiced over in the past.

What Did David Forget to Do?

1. David Forgot to Look for God.

Turn with me to David's own testimony in Psalm 139:7-11:

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
9 If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me,"
Even the night shall be light about me; NKJV

This side of the Cross the truth is even plainer to us. Look at Paul's wonderful promise of 1st Corinthians 10:12-13:

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; **but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape**, that you may be able to bear it. NKJV

I Corinthians 10:13 is a call to all of us who know and love the Lord to *Look for God in times of temptation*, He's always there!

First, the apostle Paul gives us hope in this verse of Scripture—"such as is common to man". No temptation will ever overtake us or spring upon us *except the ones that God has already prepared us for in His Word*. There are no new strains of sin viruses. But the question is—if the medicine or vaccines are in the medicine chest and we don't use them, what good are they when we need them?

Jesus said we need to live by "every Word..." (Matthew 4:4).

- Are you immersing yourself daily in God's Word?
- If not and you have kind of started to slip, why not pause right now and renew your vows to get in the Word until the Word gets in you DAILY!

Second, which ever of the old temptation we get attacked by we can be sure that "God is faithful". *God Himself has promised us that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what you are able to take without falling into sin.* Our God knows our limits and always stands right by us protecting us and holding open the way of escape so that we do not succumb to the snare of the Devil.

Thirdly, the huge truth we need to stop and really lay hold of this evening is that "God is there all the time". The longer we meditate on this verse, the bigger the shadow looming over it becomes. That shadow is none other than the shadow of the One who made us this promise. In order to do everything this verse says, God has to actually manage onsite this project. He is not distant; He is never closer than when we are tempted!

It is God who towers over this passage: *God is there all the time.*

Have you allowed that truth to sink into your soul and become a part of your operating system? God has told us that He is faithful. Whenever we think we are alone, we are not alone. We never face the adversary, the prowling lion called the Devil—alone.

God has already measured and limited the attack upon us. He has already provided an escape route if we will only look for it and take it. If we were alone and facing temptation, we would be hopelessly defeated.

But God knows that already and so He is there. All the time. All the way. Every time. And He has the best way out marked for us. What a Mighty God we serve!

Pause and do something before you lose that truth.

- Why not bow your head with me. Now say in your heart, “I believe You Lord that You never leave me”. Then tell Him thank you for being there with you right now.
- Okay, here is the hard part. With your heart opened before Him, tell Him that the next time you are tempted (you may even want to whisper in your heart to Him the temptation you most fear and often get defeated by)—that you will look for Him.
- Now, look up and say out loud with me—I WILL LOOK FOR GOD WHEN I AM TEMPTED!

Warren Wiersbe tells the story of a father who once told of his son’s first serious conflict at school. His boy was being picked on by two or three bullies. They punched the youngster a time or two, pushed him over when he was riding his bike home from school, and generally made life miserable for the lad. They told him they would meet him the next morning and beat him up.

That evening the dad really worked with the boy at home. He showed him how to defend himself, passed along a few helpful techniques, and even gave him some tips on how he might try to win them over as friends. The next morning the lad and dad prayed together knowing that the inevitable was sure to happen. With a reassuring embrace and a firm handshake, the father smiled confidently and said, “You can do it, Son. I know you’ll make out all right.”

Choking back the tears, the boy got on his bike and began the lonely, long ride to school. What the boy did not know was that every block he rode he was under the watchful eye of his dad...who drove his car a safe distance from his son, out of sight but ever ready to speed up and assist if the scene became too threatening. The boy thought he was alone, but he wasn’t at all. The father was there all the time.

Now fast forward to the next instant that you and I face a surge of temptation to fear, to lust, to be embittered or to lie—at that instant *in even greater measure*, the God of the Universe is near.

He is with us though often unseen.

He has gone ahead. He has been tempted in every way like us and triumphed.

He has joined us in every temptation and makes the way of victory marked and open for us.

Look for God! He is always faithful!

Where should we look for God? We look when we face all of the various temptations that are never new, but always so unexpected and powerful. Think of the blessing of the following testimonies God's Word has captured for us.

- **Abraham looked for God** and found Him when he was on *the Mountain of Despair*.

Abraham saw all that ever mattered to him being lost, and though he could not understand—he trusted God. Abraham looked and found God Faithful. When we do the same we also find like Abraham did ***that God Supplies all my needs***. Genesis 22:1-14.

- **Joseph looked for God** when he unexpectedly found himself in ***the Den of Passion***. Accosted, blatantly faced with strong physical temptation Joseph cried out to the God he could not see but knew was there! When we do the same we also find like Joseph ***that God Sees and rescues me***. Genesis 39:1-9
- **David looked for God** as we have studied when he was ***in that lonely Cave of Fear***. Surrounded by complainers, by rebels, by runaways with all their struggles and violent tempers David looked up and found that God is always faithful and was there all the time! When we do the same we will find ***that God is always there making a way of escape for us***. Psalm 142; 56
- **Daniel looked for God** when he was in ***the Spotlight of Pride***. He was the man of the moment, all eyes were on him; he could have stolen the moment, taken the prize and walked away with the accolades of the world—but not God's! When we look for God and give Him the glory for anything we ever accomplish then we will also find as Daniel did ***that God sends us forth for times like that to put the spotlight and the glory back upon Him*** who holds our lives in His Hand. Daniel 2:24-28
- **Peter looked for God** when was sinking ***in the Fury of the Storm***. When we do we find as Peter did ***that God hand is stretched out to save us*** at the very instant we cry to Him. Matthew 14:24-31

We need to look for God when we are in the grip of pain like Paul. When we do we find God is sufficient for me. II Corinthians 12:7-1

We need to look for God when we are in the gloom of failure like Jeremiah. When we do we find God is shaping me. Jeremiah 16.1-13

So first, decide that you will learn from David's failure that you will look for God when temptations come.

2. What did David forget to do? Use the Word

David knew so much of God's Word, much of it he had written down for God. But gripped by his lust David suffered spiritual amnesia. The only hope we have for purity and obedience through temptation is to quote Scripture like Jesus! Remember what Christ's method was in Matthew 4:1-11? Jesus used the Word to combat the Devil. He planned and prepared.

Note the very first word that Christ spoke in His temptation, you know it already, "Man shall not . . .". This is an insight into the most powerful truth in this passage: JESUS MET AND MASTERED SATAN AS A MAN! He did not face him as God's Son, that would not have been a match. Jesus met Satan with the same two, and the only two, resources we have--the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

If the Word of God is hidden in our hearts:

- **we will say with Ezra the Psalmist** (119:9-11) How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You! (NKJV)
- **we will say with Paul** in Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. NKJV
- **we will say with John** (1 John 5:18) We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. NKJV
- **we listen to Jesus** who said (Revelation 1:5) and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, NKJV

So Jesus did not zap Satan with His deity, He flattened him with totally obedient humanity. Now we know Jesus had no evil desires Satan could attach to (John 14:30)

“I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. NKJV.

But the real battleground of the devil is our will. Jesus had already proclaimed His life’s direction as DOING THE WILL OF God and not his own (Hebrews 10:7-9)

Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.’ ” 8 Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law),⁹ then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. NKJV.

Doing God's will is another way of saying Walk in the Spirit.

3. What did David forget to do? Run from lust

Remember Paul’s clear command we saw last week? It was at that easy to find address in God's Word 2 Timothy 2:22

II Tim. 2:22 Run from Lust Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. NKJV

Sensuality is easily the biggest obstacle to godliness among men today and is wreaking havoc in the Church. Godliness and sensuality are mutually exclusive, and those in the grasp of sensuality can never rise to godliness The mind controlled by lust has an infinite capacity for rationalization.

As the New Testament scholar Leon Morris has written:

“The man who carries on an act of impurity is not simply breaking a human code, not even sinning against the God who at some time in the past gave him the gift of the Spirit. He is sinning against the God who is present at that moment, against One who continually gives the Spirit. The impure act is an act of despite against God’s good gift at the very moment it is being proffered.... This sin is seen in its true light only when it is seen as a preference for impurity rather than a Spirit who is holy.”^{2[2]}

Satan baits his traps with pleasures that appeal to the old nature, the flesh. But none of his bait appeals to the new divine nature within a Christian. If a believer yields to his old nature, he will hanker for the bait, take it, and sin. But if he follows the leanings of his new nature, he will refuse the bait and obey God. ^{3[3]}

“This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16).

Beware of allowing any unguarded moments in your life, thinking that you are safe from sin’s reach, and that it won’t bother you anymore; it is at that moment the ravenous devourer himself is crouching and preparing to spring. That is what David discovered, only it was too late!

1. David Desensitized his conscience by incomplete obedience II Sam 5:13
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David destroyed his testimony by the sin of a moment of stolen pleasure. Death, deceit, murder, immorality and spiritual oppression, poverty and famine of the soul are only a few offspring of this act of momentary pleasure. DAVID Destroyed his testimony BY A sin for the moment LYING v. 4. (See thin NASB Psalm 51 notes).

If David had only known what his sin would do to Bathsheba as she watched their child die; as she was reminded every day about the horrible death her husband suffered as he fell under a rain of arrows and lay their in agony dying; as she looked into the faces of her friends and saw behind their smiles the disbelief that she would ever do such a thing.

If David would only have thought about his loyal soldier Uriah’s lifeless body as it was brought back by a military detachment who carried him the 44 miles from Amman to Jerusalem. As Bathsheba watched his body was washed, anointed and wrapped for burial in the family tomb. If she was nearby she would have seen the arrow’s deadly marks that spoke of the agony of his

^{2[2]} R. Kent Hughes, *The Disciplines of a Godly Man*, pp.

^{3[3]} Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

final hours helpless as his life ebbed in anguish from his body. She would have thought that he was thinking of her as he died...thinking he died nobly. But instead he was murdered in the deceit of adultery's sinful grip!

- If David had known what his sin would do to Ahithophel Bathsheba's grandfather...
- If David had only known what his sin would do to Absalom, Amnon, Tamar..
- And Sheba and on and on we could go. Sin has consequences and they are painful!

If David had only known The Consequences of Immorality

Towards His God--

- **Grieving my Lord**; displeasing the One whose opinion most matters.
- **Dragging Christ's sacred reputation** into the mud.
- **Losing my reward** and commendation from God.
- **Dreading the day** that I will have to look Jesus in the face at His judgment seat and give an account of why I did it.
- **Forcing God's chastening** upon my life in various ways—for years to come..
- **Prompting laughter, rejoicing and blasphemous smugness** by those who disrespect God and the church (2 Samuel 12:14).
- **Bringing great pleasure to Satan**, the Enemy of God.

Towards His Wives and Family--

- **Heaping untold hurt on Abigail his loyal wives.**
- **Giving up his credibility** with his sons and daughters, ("Why listen to a man who betrayed Mom and us?")
 1. Amnon raped Tamar—but didn't dad kind of do that?
 2. Absalom killed Amnon—but didn't dad kill Uriah?
 3. Adonijah took the throne without asking—but didn't dad do something like that?
 4. Joab betrayed David and took the side of his enemy—but didn't David do that?

*These are only some of the consequences. **If only we would rehearse in advance the ugly and overwhelming consequences of immorality, we would be far more prone to avoid it. May we live each day in the love and fear of God.***

I Corinthians 10:13 is a call to all of us who know and love the Lord to LOOK FOR GOD IN TIMES OF TEMPTATION, He's always there!

The apostle Paul gives us hope in this verse of Scripture. No temptation will ever overtake us or spring upon us except the ones that God has already prepared us for in His Word. There are no new strains of sin viruses.

And what ever old temptation we get attacked by we can be sure that God is faithful. God Himself has promised us that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what you are able to take without falling into sin. Our God knows our limits and always stands right by us protecting us and holding open the way of escape so that we do not succumb to the snare of the Devil.

The longer we meditate on this verse, the bigger the shadow looming over it becomes. That

shadow is none other than the shadow of the One who made us this promise.

It is God who towers over this passage: *God is there all the time.*

Have you allowed that truth to sink into your soul and become a part of your operating system? God has told us that He is faithful. Whenever we think we are alone, we are not alone. We never face the adversary, the prowling lion called the Devil—alone.

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But God knows that already and so He is there. All the time. All the way. Every time. And He has the best way out marked for us. What a Mighty God we serve!

I. David and Bathsheba (11:1–4)

It was not a passionate youth who deliberately walked into this sin, but a man of God who had now reached middle age. It is easy to see how David got into this sin: (1) he was self-confident, after enjoying victories and prosperity; (2) he was disobedient, staying home when he should have been on the battlefield; (3) he was idle, lying in bed in the evening; (4) he was self-indulgent, giving freedom to his desires when he should have been disciplining himself; and (5) he was careless, allowing his eyes to wander and yielding to the “lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes” (1 John 2:16). The Christian soldier must never lay aside the armor (Eph. 6:10ff).

James 1:13–15 perfectly describes David’s case: (1) his desires were activated by the sight, and he failed to curb them; (2) desire conceived the sin in his imagination; (3) his will surrendered and this led to sin; (4) his actions led to death. He did not “watch and pray” as Matt. 26:41 commands; nor did he deal decisively with his “wandering eye” (Matt. 5:29 and 18:9).

David could have defeated this temptation (for it is not a sin to be tempted) by recalling God’s Word (Ex. 20:14), or by considering that Bathsheba was a man’s daughter and a man’s wife (v. 3). In fact, she was married to one of the bravest soldiers in David’s army (23:39), and she was also the granddaughter of Ahithophel, who later rebelled against David and sided with Absalom (23:34 and chaps. 16–17). David had many wives already, and God would have given him more (12:8). It is too bad that the record of this godly man was marred forever by “the matter of Uriah the Hittite” (1 Kings 15:5). Of course, we must admit that the woman shared in the guilt, but David, being the king, surely is more to blame.

II. David and Uriah (11:5–27)

“When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin!” warns James 1:15 (NKJV). How true these words are in David’s experience. Instead of calling on the Lord and confessing his sin, the king sent for the husband and tried to trick him into going home. This, of course, might have covered the sin. But Uriah was a better man than his king, and he refused to go home! Compare David’s self-indulgence in vv. 1–2 with Uriah’s discipline in v. 11. Then, his first plan having failed,

David tried a new scheme and made the man drunk. But even under the influence of wine, Uriah was a more disciplined man than sober David!

Sin was still growing: David decided to have the man murdered and then to take his wife. Joab was more than willing to cooperate, since this would give him opportunity later to take advantage of the king. Uriah carried his own death warrant to the battlefield that day. The plan worked and the brave soldier was killed in battle. David “put on a front” and waited until the week of mourning was over; then he married the widow. Some in the court may have thought highly of David for comforting Bathsheba in this way, but the Lord thought otherwise.

III. David and the Lord (12)

A. David’s confession (vv. 1–14).

At least a year passed, during which time David covered his sins. Read Ps. 32 and 51 for descriptions of David’s feelings during that difficult period. He became weak and sick physically; he lost his joy; he lost his witness; he lost his power. God gave David plenty of time to make things right, but he persisted in hiding his sins. Had he come to the Lord on his own, in sincere repentance, things might have been different later on. Finally, God sent Nathan, not with a message of blessing as in chapter 7, but with a message of conviction. How easy it is to be convicted about other people’s sins! But Nathan fearlessly told David, “You are the man!”

We must commend David for bowing to the authority of the Word of God and confessing his sin. He could have slain Nathan. (Note that David even named a son after Nathan, 1 Chron. 3:5; Luke 3:31). God was ready to forgive David’s sins, but He could not prevent those sins from “bringing forth death” (James 1:15). God’s grace forgives, but God’s government must allow sinners to reap what they sow. See Ps. 99:8. “He shall restore fourfold!” David had declared punishment concerning the man in Nathan’s story, so God accepted his sentence. The sword never did depart from David’s household: the baby died; Absalom killed Amnon, who had ruined Tamar (chap. 13); then Joab killed Absalom (18:9–17); and Adonijah was slain by Benaiah (1 Kings 2:24–25). Fourfold! Add to these trials the awful ruin of Tamar, the shameful treatment of David’s wives by Absalom (12:11; 16:20–23), plus the rebellion of Absalom, and you can see that David paid dearly for a few moments of lustful pleasure. He sowed lust and reaped the same; he sowed murder and reaped murders, for “whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

B. David’s contrition (vv. 15–25).

Immediately the chastening hand of God moved, and the baby became ill. Nathan had said it would die (v. 14), but David still fasted and prayed for the life of the child. He would not even listen to his servants, but at the end of a week, the child died. David’s fasting and prayers could not alter the counsel of God. He had committed a sin unto death, and it was wrong to pray about it (1 John 5:14–16). However, we appreciate David’s concern for the child and mother, and his faith in the goodness of God. We appreciate too his confidence in God’s Word, for he knew the child had gone to heaven (v. 23). While we abhor David’s sin and all the trouble it brought, we thank God for this wonderful verse of assurance to sorrowing parents who have lost children in death. (As Vance Havner said, “When you know where something is, you haven’t lost it.”)

“Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds!” Note too that it is wrong to pray for the dead. David stopped praying for the child.

C. David’s conquests (vv. 26–31).

This tragic episode began with David pampering himself at home, but it ends with him taking his rightful place on the battlefield and leading the nation to an important victory. It is encouraging to see that God was willing to use David again in spite of his sins. He had confessed his sins; God had forgiven him; now he could fight for the Lord again. It is bad for believers to sin; it is also bad for them to live in the past and think themselves useless even after they have confessed their sins. Satan loves to shackle God’s people with memories of sins that God has already forgiven and forgotten. Satan is the accuser (Rev. 12:10; Zech. 3), but Jesus is the Advocate (1 John 2:1–2).

How the grace of God shines in vv. 24–25, for God chose Bathsheba to be the mother of the next king! “Solomon” means “Peaceable”; “Jedidiah” means “beloved of the Lord.” God turned the curse into a blessing, for Solomon was the fulfillment of the promise given to David in 1 Chron. 22:9.

This event in David’s life ought to be a warning to all Christians to “take heed lest we fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). First Corinthians 10:13 promises a way of escape when we face temptation. However, as in David’s case, we cannot overcome temptation if we allow our desires to take over. We need to beware of the beginnings of sin and take care to keep our imaginations clean. The Apostle Paul commands us to “put to death” (mortify) the members of the body that can lead us into sin (Col. 3; Rom. 6). It is necessary for all believers to watch and pray and not make provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:14).^{4[4]}

God has another perspective for us to consider tonight as we open His Word. David took the wife (completer) of Uriah to be his completer. That is a dangerous thing to do. To complete your life with anything but what God has designed and planned for you is to make an idol out of something God has made—and that always brings God’s displeasure.

2 Samuel 12:9 Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. NKJV

Who is completing you? Physically it **MUST** be your wife—not another woman, not a habit, not videos, pictures, chats, or work.

The sword shall not depart.

2 Samuel 12:10 Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ NKJV

^{4[4]} Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*, (InterVarsity Press: IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament) Downer’s Grove, IL.

The pain, the cutting that would tear his family would relentlessly be the consequence of his sin!

David: The Consequence Years

DSS: Message Twenty-One (060625AM)

All that really matters in life may be reduced to one simple reality--*what does God think of what you are doing or have done.*

As we open in our Bibles to the last sentence of 2 Samuel 11:27, and read those words—that is exactly the perspective God presents of David's life at that moment. All that mattered at that moment and for eternity--is what God thought of what David had done. And David did not please the Lord!

2 Samuel 11:27b "...But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." NKJV

Think about the moments, hours, days, and weeks that followed this statement. The ornate halls of Jerusalem's royal palace became strangely silent those days. It seemed as if David had lost his voice.

David, the most written about person in God's Word, has changed.

He has slowly withdrawn from what had most characterized him for all the years since his boyhood on the hills of Judah. David's song had stopped.

In days past, sweet songs of God's power were often heard coming from the throne room of this victorious warrior. The shepherd boy become king had carried his stringed instrument, a harp or lyre, into the daily life of leading God's people. This man, who was a living and talking expression of God's heart, was always refreshing those he touched with his praises to the Lord.

It was a daily treat, for the myriads of aides and clerks and military attaches to hear their king rapturously sing great hymns of worship.

Down the halls had flowed rivers of praise to the Lord--passing the conquered treasures taken from fallen kingdoms, over the storehouses of consecrated gold and silver heaped for the future temple to God. These songs poured out of David's mouth from a heart filled with the goodness of God. Each song (or Psalm) sent from God to David was such a treasure from heaven.

Did you know that God carved the life of David into the bedrock of His Word? Most amazingly, the Lord recorded many of the Psalms directly from the daily life of David. There are Psalms that flow from the most wonderful and the most wrenching hours of David's life. Our lives can find great encouragement in these Psalms out of the hard times in the life of David.

These Psalms have been preserved for three thousand years. Pillaging armies have swept across the Middle East like hordes of locust, fires have burned for weeks behind them, blood has flowed

like rivers, earthquakes have leveled cities and towns, floods and storms without number have raced down the hillsides.

But God has preserved His songs. Not one has been lost. We have them this morning; and David's life makes up nearly half the Book of Psalms that most of us hold a copy of in the middle of our Bibles.

David's Songs

Let's look at a few of them, as a reminder of what was going up and down the halls of Jerusalem's royal palace for so long--that now was extinct from David's life. David had for years been singing songs like Psalm 8, written after he had slain Goliath:

Psalm 8: "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who has set thy glory above the heavens?"

Those words of humility and victory once rolled down from the throne room of David. Look at Psalm 9.

Psalm 9: "I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvelous works."

David used to praise God with all his heart--but he wasn't now.

As we turn to Psalm 18, we find the Psalm about when David returned at the head of his armies. In the superscription, it says:

"For the choir director, a Psalm of David, a servant of the Lord who spoke to the Lord the words of this Psalm in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hands of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul, and he said: "I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The Lord is my Rock, my fortress, my Deliverer, my God, my Rock in Whom I take refuge"

Only he didn't just say that, as the leader of God's people he sang that.

And with a heart of abandon, a heart welling up and overflowing with praise, a heart unashamed of coming into God's presence--David led all who were around him into God's presence. David's life just overflowed with God and people were so blessed just to see him, just to hear him, just to feel the warmth and the glow. Look at Psalm 21.

Psalm 21: "The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!"

And so he did and for year after year after year the invincible armies of Israel extended the borders of Israel to the very limits.

But things changed. No more was Psalm 21 heard in the palace; neither was that old favorite from David's youth, as we turn to Psalm 23...

Psalm 23: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want"

Yes something was missing, something was greatly wanting in David's life! No more was David heard to sing of following his Shepherd. Turn to Psalm 25.

Psalm 25: "Unto Thee oh Lord do I lift up my soul; O my God I trust in Thee."

No, David's soul was cast down, trampled, empty, defiled and infected with guilt and sin. Turn to Psalm 27.

Psalm 27: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear"

David was no longer walking in the light; no longer was he enjoying the joy of his salvation. No longer did he know the fearlessness that the righteous have. The righteous are as bold as a lion (Proverbs 28:1) but wicked people run even when nobody is chasing them.

What David had done displeased the Lord—***and all that really matters in life is what God thinks of you.***

David fell silent. He had lost his song. No more did the daily business of the Kingdom of Israel flow to the songs of heaven. No more did the good shepherd's peace and joy touch each worker, aide and courier. The palace was slowly becoming a wasteland.

David was quiet, pensive and moody. His face was dark, no longer aglow with the joy of the Lord. His words that used to seem like honey were now more like his sword at his belt - sharp, cutting and bringing death to those around him.

Gone was God from his daily work. Extinct were the life giving expressions of joyful delight that nourished the government of God's people. What a blessing those songs had been.

But David was hiding his sin. Look at Proverbs 28:13. God said that if we hide our sin instead of confessing and forsaking it (which is repentance) God will resist us. David needed to repent. That was the only solution for his dreadful condition.

Would you just pause with me for a moment and turn your attention from David and look at your own heart? To help focus on what God wants from each of us, please quietly bow your head and answer these questions silently in your heart.

- Have you lost your song like David?
- Did you used to be closer to the Lord?
- Are you holding onto some sin that displeases the Lord?
- Is your heart growing restless and cold?

What is the Remedy?

If so, the only remedy is to confess and forsake the sin that has caused God's displeasure right now. Don't wait like David did and suffer the consequences that inevitably came.

Proverbs 28:13 He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. NKJV

We are in the midst of a journey through the Scriptures, mining the treasures God has recorded from the life of David. The lessons David learned are by God's Spirit also intended for us!

We have come to the saddest era of David's life—the months and years of consequences that followed his sin with Bathsheba.

Beware of allowing any unguarded moments in your life, thinking that you are safe from sin's reach; it is at that moment the ravenous devourer himself is crouching and preparing to spring. That is what David discovered, only it was too late!

We continue this morning a careful look at the three final eras of David's life. They need to be studied and heeded by all of us. First we saw last time in 2 Samuel 11 that--

1. Unguarded Moments lead to SIN—David, Uriah and Bathsheba. We examined the saddest chapter of David's life, the darkest and the one we all wince at—his sin with Bathsheba. In 2nd Samuel 11 we saw David's horrible and disobedient choices that prompted David's worst days of his recorded life.

Why not turn there and be sure you have traced these warning signs into the pages of your Bibles. Just a few days ago, as we were driven around the Golan Heights in Israel, the guide kept pointing out bright red triangular signs that marked out old but deadly, mine fields left over from the Syrian military.

The pages of Scripture record an even more deadly mine field that David unwisely stepped into. Ignoring the warning signs—David paid dearly for that walk.

David the giant killer, was killed by the giant of lust; he took six dreadful steps downward. He was enticed, baited, hooked and reeled in by lust. Then lust destroyed David's life and testimony.

David's Downward Steps

We are warned as we watch how this occurred; note his downward steps.

1. **David desensitized his conscience** by incomplete obedience (II Sam 5:13).
2. **David relaxed his grip** on personal purity (II Sam 11:1).

3. **David fixated his heart** on physical desires (II Sam 11:2).
4. **David rationalized his mind** about wrong decisions (II Sam 11:3).
5. **David plunged his life** into lustful sin (II Sam 11:4).
6. **David destroyed his testimony** by the sin of a moment of stolen pleasure. Death, deceit, murder, immorality, spiritual oppression, poverty and famine of the soul are only a few offspring of this act of momentary pleasure.

Those unguarded moments led to what I call **The Inevitable Consequences**. Remember the consequence engine we studied last October in the Christ our Refuge series?

And those inevitable consequences **lead to the PAIN of—David’s chastisement, Absalom’s rebellion, and Shimei’s slander**. There are 11 chapters that record the years of painful consequences from David’s sin (II Samuel 12-21, 24).

This morning we will start several weeks examining truths that God has for us from this tragic part of David’s life that I call the—

The Consequence Years

There are lessons to be learned from David that are very difficult but so necessary. For any and all of us today ring Paul’s words across the twisted wreckage of so many lives that litter the highway of the redeemed. To avoid the mine field that David blundered into we need to heed Paul’s warning. Please turn to the clearest warning in Scripture.

*1 Corinthians 10:12-14 therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; **but God is faithful**, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.*
NKJV

David’s years of consequences, so painful, all lead back to one simple reality—David forgot something. This morning we need to learn from asking and answering this question—

What did David forget?

David Forgot to Look for God. Listen to David’s own testimony, he wrote it down, but on that fateful evening—he forgot to look for the God who is always faithfully there when we need Him!

Psalms 139:7-11 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall

*lead me and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me,"
Even the night shall be light about me; NKJV*

This side of the Cross the truth is even plainer to us. Look back again at Paul's warning; after v.12 he gives the wonderful promise of v. 13:

*I Corinthians 10:12b-13 "...Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; **but God is faithful, who will not allow** you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation **will also make the way of escape**, that you may be able to bear it." NKJV*

Don't let an old familiar verse escape without holding on to this truth. I Corinthians 10:13 is a call to all of us who know and love the Lord to *Look for God in times of temptation*. Whenever we are tempted--*He's always there!*

The apostle Paul gives us extreme hope in this one short verse of Scripture. Let me just amplify this verse to help you capture what God is saying—

No temptation will ever overtake us or spring upon us except the ones that God has already prepared us for in His Word. There are no new strains of sin viruses that have escaped God's notice. And what ever old temptation we get attacked by we can be sure that God is faithfully on guard. God Himself has promised us that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to take. Our God knows our limits and always stands right by us protecting us and holding open the way of escape so that we do not succumb to the snare of the Devil. God is always there, He is close enough to grab hold of His Hand that will pull us out.

The longer you meditate on this verse, the bigger the shadow looming over it becomes. It is God who towers over this passage: *God is there all the time.*

When Peter was walking on the water, looked away from Jesus, and started to sink—how close was Christ? You know the story. As soon as Peter said 'Lord save me' Jesus stretched out His hand and rescued Peter. God is always near, always close enough to hear and respond to that cry for help!

He tells us He is faithful. When we think we are alone, we are not alone. God has already measured and limited the attack of the world, our flesh and the devil upon us. He has already provided an escape route if we will only look for it and take it. If it were just us facing temptation, we would be hopelessly defeated. But God knows that we are helpless and so He is always there with us.

All the time. All the way. Every time. And He has the best way of escape clearly marked for us. What a Mighty God we serve!

We all have heard the touching story a father once told of his son's first serious conflict at school. But it bears repeating.

Once his son was being picked on by two or three bullies. They punched the youngster a time or two, pushed him over when he was riding his bike home from school, and generally made life miserable for the lad. They told him they would meet him the next morning and beat him up.

That evening the dad really worked with the boy at home. He showed him how to defend himself, passed along a few helpful techniques, and even gave him some tips on how he might try to win them over as friends. The next morning the lad and dad prayed together knowing that the inevitable was sure to happen. With a reassuring embrace and a firm handshake, the father smiled confidently and said, "You can do it, Son. I know you'll make out all right."

Choking back the tears, the boy got on his bike and began the lonely, long ride to school. What the boy did not know was that every block he rode he was under the watchful eye of his dad...who drove his car a safe distance from his son, out of sight but ever ready to speed up and assist if the scene became too threatening. The boy thought he was alone, but he wasn't at all. The father was there all the time.

In even greater measure, the God of the Universe is near.

He is with us though often unseen. He has gone ahead. He has been tempted in every way like us and triumphed. He has joined us in every temptation and makes the way of victory marked and open for us.

Look for God! He is always faithful!

Where Should We Look for God?

Where should we look for God? We should look for Him when we face all of the various temptations that are never new, but always so unexpected and powerful. Think of the blessing of the following testimonies.

- **Abraham looked for God** and found Him when he was on *the Mountain of Despair*. Abraham saw all that ever mattered to him being lost, and though he could not understand—he trusted God. Abraham looked and found God Faithful. When we do the same we also find like Abraham did *that God Supplies all my needs*. Genesis 22:1-14.
- **Joseph looked for God** when he unexpectedly found himself in *the Den of Passion*. Accosted, blatantly faced with strong physical temptation Joseph cried out to the God he could not see but knew was there! When we do the same we also find like Joseph *that God Sees and rescues me*. Genesis 39:1-9
- **David looked for God** when he was all alone and so weak in *the Cave of Fear*. Hunted, alone, depressed and surrounded by bad attitudes David found the only place he could look was up. When we do the same we also find like David *that God Supports me*. Psalm 142; 56
- **Jeremiah looked for God** when he was in *the gloom of failure*. Rejected by his own people, single and never married, seemingly a failure in all he did Jeremiah trusted the

Lord. When we do the same we also find like Jeremiah *that God is shaping me*. Jeremiah 16:1-13

- **Daniel looked for God** when he was in **the Spotlight of Pride**. Every eye was on him as he stepped forward to answer the king's question he pointed the praise to God. When we do the same we also find like Daniel *that God wants to use me*. Daniel 2:24-28
- **Peter looked for God** when he was sinking in **the fury of the storm**. The instant that Peter cried out 'Lord save me' Christ's hand was lifting him to safety. When we do the same we also find like Peter *that God saves me*. Matthew 14:24-31
- **Paul looked for God** when he was in **the grip of pain**. Paul found that all of his weaknesses and inabilities were the sources of Christ's strength made perfect through him. When we do the same we also find like Paul *that God's grace is sufficient for me*. II Corinthians 12:7-10

Don't forget to look for God. What else did David forget? David forgot to use the Word. David knew so much of God's Word, much of it he had written down for God. But gripped by his lust David suffered spiritual amnesia.

The only hope we have for purity and obedience through temptation is to quote Scripture like Jesus! Remember what Christ's method was in Matthew 4:1-11? Jesus used the Word to combat the Devil. He planned and prepared.

If the Word of God is hidden in our hearts:

- We will say with the Psalmist (119:9-11) *How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You! (NKJV)*
- We will say with Paul in Galatians 5:16 *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. NKJV*
- We will say with John (1 John 5:18) *We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. NKJV*

Don't forget to use God's Word! What else did David forget? David forgot to run from lust.

Always remember Paul's clear command for what we are to do when facing lust in any of its various forms. The command for us is found at that easy to find address in God's Word 2 Timothy 2:22. Look there and be sure this verse is somehow noted for future need in your Bible.

II Tim. 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. NKJV

Sensuality is easily the biggest obstacle to godliness today and is wreaking havoc in the Church.

Godliness and sensuality are mutually exclusive, and those in the grasp of sensuality can never rise to godliness. As we saw in David's unguarded moments, a mind controlled by lust has an infinite capacity for rationalization.

Listen to this piercing insight that the New Testament scholar Leon Morris has written:

“The man who carries on an act of impurity is not simply breaking a human code, not even sinning against the God who at some time in the past gave him the gift of the Spirit. He is sinning against the God who is present at that moment, against One who continually gives the Spirit. The impure act is an act of despite against God's good gift at the very moment it is being proffered.... This sin is seen in its true light only when it is seen as a preference for impurity rather than a Spirit who is holy.”[1]

If David Had Only Known the Consequences of Immorality

God has another perspective for us to consider. David took the wife (completer) of Uriah to be his completer. That is a dangerous thing to do. To complete your life with anything but what God has designed and planned for you is to make an idol out of something God has made—and that always brings God's displeasure.

2 Samuel 12:9 Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. NKJV

Who is completing you? Physically and emotionally it MUST be your wife if you are married—not another woman, not your work, not your hobbies, not a habit, not videos, pictures, chats, or work.

The sword shall not depart.

2 Samuel 12:10 Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ NKJV

The pain, the cutting that would tear his family would relentlessly be the consequence of his sin!

If David had only known what his sin would do to Bathsheba as she watched their child die; as she was reminded every day about the horrible death her husband suffered as he fell under a rain of arrows and lay their in agony dying; as she looked into the faces of her friends and saw behind their smiles the disbelief that she would ever do such a thing.

If David had only known what his sin would do as Uriah's lifeless body was brought back by a military detachment who carried him the 44 miles from Amman to Jerusalem. Bathsheba watched his body was washed, anointed and wrapped for burial in the family tomb, seeing the arrow's deadly marks that spoke of the agony of his final hours helpless as his life ebbed in anguish from his body. She would have thought that he was thinking of her as he died...thinking he died nobly. But instead he was murdered in the deceit of adultery's sinful grip!

If David had known what his sin would do to Ahithophel, Bathsheba's grandfather as he advised those who sought to kill David and overthrow his kingdom.

If David had only known what his sin would do to Absalom, Amnon, and Tamar as the lives of his own children were ravaged by lust, murder and death.

David gave up his credibility with his sons and daughters, ("Why listen to a man who betrayed Mom and us?")

- Amnon raped Tamar—but didn't dad kind of do that?
- Absalom killed Amnon—but didn't dad kill Uriah?
- Adoniajah took the throne without asking—but didn't dad do something like that?
- Joab betrayed David and took the side of his enemy—but didn't David do that?

*These are only some of the consequences. **If only we would rehearse in advance the ugly and overwhelming consequences of immorality, we would be far more prone to avoid it.** May we live each day in the love and fear of God.*

And on and on we could go. Sin has consequences and they are painful!

Don't forget—to look for God, to use His Word, and to run from lust! God is close. Cry out to Him. He will rescue you every time!

[1] R. Kent Hughes, *The Disciplines of a Godly Man*, pp.

David: The Song of a Soul Set Free

DSS: Message Twenty-Two (060625PM)

One day the generals of King David's cabinet made their way to the palace. They walked the cobbled streets up the winding way to the palace, as they did each morning.

Arriving at the huge stone citadel they expected to be dismissed again by the frustrated and depressed King of Israel. His chambers were usually shuttered and silent, unlike the old days when he was up at the dawn . . . but before they could get any further—the sound of the sweet songs of David stunned them. One by one with incredulous faces they looked up.

There he was. The sweet psalmist of Israel, perched on the steps of his throne, harp in hand, his face tilted reverently upward, the tears streaming down his face. He was back. David was back, and so was his song.

Like a spring gushing up in a parched desert, the generals dropped to the floor to drink from the river of worship again flowing from David's heart. Like the days of old their hearts began to burn again with adoring love to God.

Work was set aside, worship was their passion. Soon workers, servants, aides, guests, nobles, all took their places in the court of God's king.

David got his song back.

God has told us that when He moves to live within us by His Spirit—outward evidences will begin to be seen. Paul describes one of those evidences twice in his epistles to the church. Please open there with me to Ephesians 5.

*Ephesians 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord**, NKJV*

*Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord**. NKJV*

Wonderful as the Spirit flowing through us may be, when grieved or quenched—the spring of our soul and the song that results, dries up.

*Ephesians 4:30 And **do not grieve** the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. NKJV*

*1 Thessalonians 5:19 **Do not quench** the Spirit. NKJV*

That is what we saw happened when David was hiding his sin. The consequence David experienced because of the Lord's displeasure at his sin in II Samuel 11:27 was that he lost his

song. God was grieved with David's sin. The Spirit of God was quenched, snuffed out and doused with the deadening effects of David's sin.

But David's heart, touched by God's grace—responds with confession and repentance.

Before we turn to Psalm 32, we are opening to the song that marked the return of the rivers of living water to the soul David. The man after God's own heart has returned. The joy is back, the peace is back, the fellowship is renewed, and the songs begin to flow again. But we must never forget—the consequences continued.

And what a song it must have been. It was the song of a soul set free. This Psalm may capture that initial gratitude of liberation David must have felt. Psalm 32 is his testimony at the relief of forgiveness.

But to really experience the wonder of David's deliverance from the vice grip of sin open with me to that climactic moment when God gave back to David His joy, His peace and His new song! Turn again to II Samuel 11:27.

Swollen with the putrid puss of sin David's wounded soul throbbed with the long incubated infection of self-righteousness.

One day when that crushing weight of sin brought David to near collapse, God sent his word to confront David. In walked the prophet Nathan who said what God told him to say.

The Consequences of Sin

Read with me the report in 2 Samuel 11:27-12:14.

What a horrible thing sin is. It deceives with all those glittering promises. It destroys with deadly accuracy. When you have been defeated David is inspired of God to tell us steps we can take to come back to God.

Let's look at what happens when David confessed and forsook his sins the way God wanted him to. This is what will happen in our lives when we look at sin the way God wants us to look at sin. That record is in Psalm 32 our focus for this message.

David has just repented of the horrible pit of sin he had been covering up for weeks and months. That is where we find him in Psalm 32. He writes the song about what it means to return to God and receive and experience and to possess His forgiveness- "The Song of a soul set free"

Psalm 32

Look at the divisions of this Psalm; if you haven't marked them down let me remind you of them again. First of all-

1. David sings with DELIGHT when his SINS WERE CLEANSED. He says this:

v.1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

2. David sings in DESPAIR when he remembers what it was like when his SINS WERE CONCEALED.

v. 3-4 When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the daylong. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah

You see David was on the same road as Saul when he covered his sin. He was sliding damnably downward. But God intercepted him, just as God intercepted Saul, God pointed the finger of His Word at his sin and Saul concealed it and excused it and David exposes it and confessed it. That's the critical difference between these two men.

3. David sings of DELIVERANCE. He delighted that his sins were cleansed. He despaired when they were concealed. But he was delivered when his SINS WERE CONFESSED.

v.5-7 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah 6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. 7 You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah

That's why 1 John says a characteristic of a truly born again person is that they are confessing their sins. They are constantly agreeing with God, constantly exposing themselves to God's holy sight and saying--God before you I am naked and open. You can see me and I confess my sinfulness.

When we do that, when we don't cover it, we can prosper. But when we cover our sins—you know God sees them when we try and hide them—He says you will never prosper.

4. David sings about his DESIRE that his SINFUL WAYS BE CRUSHED and that his sinful ways be abated.

v.8-11 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. 9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you. 10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him. 11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Let's go deeper into each of these four divisions of Psalm 32. Maybe it will encourage you to spend a lot of time in it.

David sang a song of DELIGHT when his SINS WERE CLEANSED.

Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. NKJV

In verses 1-2 David uses three Hebrew words for Forgiveness in Psalm 32:

1. David rejoices because he experienced his SINS PULLED OFF. He says this in verse 1:

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven”

“Forgiven” [Hebrew *nawsaw*] means literally to have our sin lifted off by our Redeemer. As Pilgrim it rolls off and into Christ's tomb. We are being crushed by any sins we keep around. They suffocate, smother and squash the very life of our soul. But there is a Redeemer who can set us free. And to his only hope, David fled.

A man with a heavy load of sin was saved and later moved to serve the Lord the rest of his days in Jerusalem. He lived in a house on the walls of Jerusalem next to the Damascus Gate ministering to Moslem orphans. Here was his confession that most of us have heard. Listen especially to the third stanza.

It is Well with My Soul (Horatio G. Spafford, 1873)

1 When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like the sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
'It is well with my soul.'

2 Tho' Satan should buffet, tho' trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

3 My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious tho't!—
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

4 And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend,
'Even so,' it is well with my soul.

Chorus It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.

Then David goes on to say a second reality is now his—all of his just punishment has been graciously removed from him and he no longer faces God's wrath.

2. David rejoices because he experienced being SHEILDED FROM WRATH:

"...whose sin is covered".

Look at that little word "covered" [Hebrew *kawsaw*]. This word shouts the strong imagery in the events of the day of atonement.

On that day the High priest took the blood of an animal and sprinkled it onto the mercy seat. Above the mercy seat was the presence of God portrayed by the outstretched arms of the cherubim. Beneath the lid of the ark were the tablets portraying God's divine law.

In essence, the blood stood between a holy God and the sinners who broke His law, averting His wrath. David cried for joy when the wrath of God was turned away from him. So our sins are covered away by the blood of Jesus shed for us!

Arise, My Soul, Arise (Charles Wesley, 1742) #199

Arise, my soul, arise, shake off your guilty fears; The bleeding sacrifice, in my behalf appears; Before the throne my Surety stands, Before the throne my Surety stands, My name is written on His hands.

He ever lives above, for me to intercede; His all redeeming love, His precious blood, to plead; His blood atoned for every race, His blood atoned for every race, And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds He bears; received on Calvary; They pour effectual prayers; they strongly plead for me: "Forgive him, O forgive," they cry, "Forgive him, O forgive," they cry, "Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"

The Father hears Him pray, His dear anointed One; He cannot turn away the presence of His Son; The Spirit answers to the blood, The Spirit answers to the blood And tells me I am born of God.

My God is reconciled; His pardoning voice I hear; He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear With confidence I now draw nigh, With confidence I now draw nigh, And "Father, Abba, Father," cry.

3. David rejoices because he experienced ALL DEBTS CLEARED OUT:

²Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity; "Not Counted" speaks of a list of debts no longer held against us. David had become utterly bankrupted by his sin. The bills

were piling up, mounting like a flood and drowning him. Desire, deceit, cruel deception, cunning craftiness and shameless murder all charged heavy debts to his soul. And now in sheer delight all the mountain of impossible debt is cleared from the ledger. "My sins are gone, and shall not be remembered, God in mercy tenderly forgives."

The importance of forgiveness is a constant theme of Scripture. There are no less than seventy-five different word pictures about forgiveness in the world of the Bible. They help us grasp the importance, the nature, and the effects of forgiveness look at these word pictures.

- To forgive is to turn the key, open the cell door, and let the prisoner walk free.
- To forgive is to write in large letters across a debt, "nothing owed"
- To forgive is to pound the gavel in a courtroom and declare, "not guilty!"
- To forgive is to shoot an arrow so high and so far that it can never be found again.
- To forgive is to bundle up all the garbage and trash and dispose of it, leaving the house clean and fresh.
- To forgive is to loose the moorings of a ship and release it to the open sea.
- To forgive is to grant a full pardon to a condemned criminal.
- To forgive is to relax a stranglehold on a wrestling opponent.
- To forgive is to sandblast a wall of graffiti, leaving it looking like new.
- To forgive is to smash a clay pot into a thousand pieces so it can never be pieced together again.

Another great expression of what the Lord does when He removed our sins was written during the Civil War years here in America by Charitie Bancroft. This great hymn has been set to new music and has seen a revival in recent days. The message is so powerful to all of us who like David have had our sins "pulled off" by Christ's work on the cross for us.

Before the throne of God above (Words: Charitie Bancroft, 1863)

Before the throne of God above I have a strong and perfect plea. A great high Priest whose Name is Love Who ever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on His hands, My name is written on His heart. I know that while in Heaven He stands No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair And tells me of the guilt within, Upward I look and see Him there Who made an end of all my sin. Because the sinless Savior died My sinful soul is counted free. For God the just is satisfied To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there the risen Lamb, My perfect spotless righteousness, The great unchangeable I AM, King of glory and of grace, One in Himself I cannot die. My soul is purchased by His blood, My life is hid with Christ on high, With Christ my Savior and my God!

David is so thankful for his sin being forgiven, he uses four different Hebrew words for sin in Psalm 32.

Sin is such an offense to God that He has to use 15 different words in the Hebrew Old Testament just to describe it. Four of them are here in David's song. When David stole his neighbor Uriah's little ewe lamb for his already overflowing banqueting table he defied the rules God had laid down. David now sees his life as God saw him. God was displeased with David because of these four areas of his life.

Descriptions of Sin

1. *Resisting or defying God's rule is sin.* Transgression [Hebrew *peshah*]: 'a going away', 'departure', *passing over a boundary, doing what is prohibited*, or 'rebellion' against God and his authority. This is a picture of a relationship with God that is rebelled against. OUR TRANSGRESSIONS MUST BE PULLED OFF: "Forgiven" means literally to have our sin lifted off. *nesui*, borne away, i.e., by a vicarious sacrifice; for *bearing sin*, or *bearing away sin*, always implies this. As Pilgrim it rolls off and into Christ's tomb. "My sin oh the bliss . . .". We are being crushed by any sins we keep around. They suffocate, smother and squish the very life of our soul. But there is a Redeemer who can set us free. And to his only hope, David fled. God cleansed David's Sin that smothers: now they were forgiven "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven"

2. *Falling short of perfection or missing God's mark is Sin.* [Hebrew *chattath*] is same as *hamartia* in Greek 'coming short' or 'falling short' as in an arrow falling short. The target is God's law and sin is missing the mark on the target. This is a picture of failing to measure up to God's Divine Law. *chataah*, must be *covered*, *kesui*, hidden from the sight. It is odious and abominable, and must be put out of sight. Whose sin is covered. "Covered by God, as the ark was covered by the mercy-seat, as Noah was covered from the flood, as the Egyptians were covered by the depths of the sea. What a cover must that be which hides away forever from the sight of the all-seeing God all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit!" (Spurgeon) WE MUST BE SHEILDED FROM OUR SINS: "Covered" speaks of the strong imagery in the events of the day of atonement. On that day the High priest took the blood of an animal and sprinkled it onto the mercy seat. Above the mercy seat was the presence of God portrayed by the outstretched arms of the cherubim. Beneath the lid of the ark was the tablets portraying God's divine law. In essence, the blood stood between a holy God and the sinners who broke His law, averting His wrath. David cried for joy when the wrath of God was turned away from him. So our sins are covered away by the blood of Jesus shed for us! God cleansed David's Sin that soils: now they were covered by the cleansing blood. "Whose sin is covered".

3. *Defacing or distorting God's image is sin.* Iniquity [Hebrew *hawon*] means 'corrupt' or 'twisted' or 'crooked'. This word pictures what sin does to us inside as it warps and ruins us. So it must *not be reckoned to his account*. THE LEDGER OF OUR WAYWARDNESS CLEARED OUT: "Not Counted" speaks of a list of debts no longer held against us. David had become utterly bankrupted by his sin. The bills were piling up, mounting like a flood and drowning him. Desire, deceit, cruel deception, cunning craftiness and shameless murder all charged heavy debts to his soul. And now in sheer delight all the mountain of impossible debt is cleared from the ledger. "My sins are gone, and shall not be remembered, God in mercy tenderly forgives." God cleansed David's Sin that steals: now they were not imputed to his account as debts. "2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity" Note that the three

words so often used to denote our disobedience—transgression, sin, and iniquity—are the three-headed dog at the gates of hell, but our glorious Lord has silenced its barkings forever against his own believing ones. The trinity of sin is overcome by the Trinity of heaven. Non-imputation is of the very essence of pardon: the believer sins, but his sin is not reckoned, not accounted to him. Certain divines froth at the mouth with rage against imputed righteousness; be it ours to see our sin not imputed, and to us may there be as Paul words it, “Righteousness imputed without works.” He is blessed indeed who has a substitute to stand for him to whose account all his debts may be set down” (Spurgeon)

4. Deceiving God's people by a life of hypocrisy is sin. David says “guile” [Hebrew *remeeyaw*] and he means it. He was hunted down by the Holy Spirit, haunted by his own conscience through the night watches, but haughty and “business as usual” in the daytime. DECEIVING God's PEOPLE IS SIN. David says “guile” and he means it. He was hunted down by the Holy Spirit, haunted by his own conscience through the night watches, but haughty and “business as usual” in the daytime. *Guile, remiyah*. The fourth signifies *fraud, deceit, guile*, etc. To remove these evils, *three* acts are mentioned: *forgiving, covering*, and not *imputing*. *Guile, remiyah*, must be annihilated from the soul: *In whose spirit there is no guile*. God cleansed David's Sin that slithers: now there was no guile. “And in whose spirit there is no deceit.”

The man whose *transgression* is forgiven; whose *sin* is hidden, God having cast it as a millstone into the depths of the sea; whose iniquity and perversion is not reckoned to his account; and whose *guile*, the deceitful and desperately wicked heart, is annihilated, being emptied of sin and filled with righteousness, is necessarily a happy man.

By nature God is forgiving. The Old Testament abounds with teachings about His forgiveness.

- David declared, “For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon Thee” (Ps. 86:5).
- In another psalm he reminds us that God pardons all our iniquities. Psalm 103:3,12 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
- Daniel said, “To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness” (Dan. 9:9).
- God described Himself to Moses as, “the Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin” (Ex. 34:6-7).
- Micah extolled the Lord, saying, Micah 7:18–19 Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. 19 He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.

That is the essence of the gospel: God's divine and gracious provision for the forgiveness of man's sin. In Christ, Paul says, “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7; cf. Col. 1:14). John assures us that, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” and that our “sins are forgiven [us] for His name's sake” (1 John 1:9; 2:12).

No matter how severe the sin, God can forgive it. The worst conceivable sin would be to kill God's own Son-and that while He was on earth for the very purpose of providing salvation from sin and the way to everlasting life. Nothing could possibly be more heinous, vicious, and wicked than that. And, of course, killing Him is exactly what men did to the Son of God. Yet, while hanging on the cross and about to die, Jesus prayed and affirmed the forgiving mercy available to His executioners, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

- The *degree* of sin does not forfeit forgiveness, because even killing the Son of God was forgivable.
- Nor does the *volume* of sin end the possibility of mercy. A seventy-year-old profligate who has lived a life of debauchery, stealing, lying, profanity, blasphemy, and immorality is just as forgivable as a seven-year-old who has done nothing worse than normal childhood haughtiness.
- Nor does the particular *kind* of sin cancel grace. In Scripture we find God forgiving idolatry, murder, gluttony, fornication, adultery, cheating, lying, homosexuality, covenant breaking, blasphemy, drunkenness, extortion, and every other kind of sin imaginable. He forgives self-righteousness, which is the deceiving sin of thinking that one has no sin. He even forgives the sin of rejecting Christ; otherwise no one could be saved, because before salvation *everyone*, to some degree, is a Christ rejecter. There is no forgiveness of even the smallest sin unless it is confessed and repented of; but there is forgiveness of even the greatest sin if those divine conditions are met.

These three paragraphs are quoted from MacArthur, J. 2000. *The Murder of Jesus : A study of how Jesus died*. Includes index. Word Pub.: Nashville, TN

- God cleansed David's Sin that smothers: now they were forgiven "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven" My sins no longer smother me.
- God cleansed David's Sin that soils: now they were covered by the cleansing blood. "Whose sin is covered" He was no longer covered by his sin, he was covered by the Blood.
- God cleansed David's Sin that had stolen his blessing: now they were not imputed to his account as debts. "2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity" And finally at the end of verse 2-
- God cleansed David's Sin that slithers: now there was no guile. "And in whose spirit there is no deceit." God cleansed David's sin that made him slither around in deceitfulness- he says there is no more of that. Look at verse 3-

David sang a song of DESPAIR when his SINS WERE CONCEALED.

v. 3-4 "When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the daylong. ⁴For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah

David's Concealed sin sickened him "v. 3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old" Now that's a Biblical concept. Sin sickens Christians. Sin- God's chastisement- sickens Christians. Every time

you get sick doesn't mean you have committed a specific sin. All sickness and decay and old age is because of the curse. I was reading an article in Time Magazine about the great mysteries of the world. They said aging is a great mystery. At the age of 30, our DNA starts replicating in a little program that doesn't let the enzyme production continue at such a way as to utterly renew our body. Actually at the age of 30 we start dying. You have heard that you start dying from birth- actually, genetically in the protein and enzyme production it is at the age of 30- there is a genetic snap and we start going down. Now I really feel old because I am past 30! But you know he says that sin will sicken us. Scientists don't understand why it does that- if we could get in there and tinker around we could live forever. Our bodies wouldn't wear out, we would just go in there and we would change that and what they don't realize is that that's sin, the Fall, the Curse makes us decline and degenerate. But even before 30 at any time if we will conceal our sins it sickens us.

- David's Concealed sin saddened him "Through my groaning all the day long"
- David's Concealed sin burdened him "4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;"
- David's Concealed sin stifled him "My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah" (like sun parched brown grass when it's 120 degrees in the desert. He says I was totally sapped. But look at verse 5-

David sang a song of DELIVERANCE when his SINS WERE CONFESSED v. 5-7

Psalm 32:5-7 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. 6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. 7 You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. NKJV

David took personal responsibility for the sin. Unlike Saul who we saw blamed his sin on everyone else but himself.

v.5 "I acknowledged my sin to You"

David acknowledged God's ability to see all things and that nothing was hidden from Him. Just like Joseph who in the moment of temptation cried out to the God who saw him in Genesis 39.

v.5b "And my iniquity I have not hidden"

David acknowledged God's desire to forgive and cleanse away his sins.

v.5c "I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"

There were thousands of priests in Israel but he didn't look up any priests. He said I want to talk to You, God. God wants to hear us and forgive us. Finally in verse 5 it says-

David acknowledged God's power alone to completely remove sin .

v.5d “And You forgave the iniquity of my sin”. And he punctuates it with a Selah

David acknowledged his great opportunity, as he understood the Lord is Approachable; he says WOW, God I can come to You. You are an approachable God.

v. 6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found;”

David understood the Lord is worthy of our trust. God, when it looks like everything is just swirling around me, I can trust You.

v.6b “Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him.”

Now he understood he could rest in the Lord anywhere. Isn't that neat to be able to rest in the Lord?

v. 7 “You are my hiding place, you shall preserve me from trouble”

Now he understood he could delight in the Lord. And he punctuates that with another Selah. He says WOW, the blessing that comes from You, O God.

v.7b “You shall surround me with songs of deliverance”.

David's Song of DESIRE that his SINFUL WAYS BE CRUSHED v. 8-11

Psalm 32:8-11 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. 9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you. 10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him. 11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart! NKJV

David now longs God YOU LEAD ME “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide (counsel) you with My eye upon you.” David longs- he says God You lead me, I blew it, I can't do it my self. When I was running the show I was sinning. When You run the show, you bring holiness. God You lead me.

David now longs God YOU GUARD ME “v. 9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.” Guard me, God. I don't want to be hard and stubborn and rebellious. Guard me from that. He continues- he says teach me--

David now longs God YOU TEACH ME “v. 10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked;” Teach me that when sin looks alluring--- Allan Petersen wrote an interesting book called the Myth of The Greener Grass. It was a book that chronicled key Christians in the last 50 years who had given up the power of God and the blessing of God in their ministry in order to go off to the

greener grass. You know, it is just tragic to hear about another man who is willing to give up the blessings of God, the power of God, the intimacy with God to pursue a fleeting pleasure that lasts for a moment if that long. The book of Proverbs 20:17 says: But afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel. Proverbs 9:17 says-17"Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." Sin gives pleasure for an instant. Don't let anybody tell you that sin isn't fun but it's only fun for a moment then the venom and the dregs and the poison of guilt and remorse and destroyed lives follow. David says teach me, remind me that sorrows will be to the wicked. Continuing in verse 10-

David now longs God YOU SURROUND ME "But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him." He says Lord, I am not sure I can make it alone, surround me like the bodyguards around the President. I can still remember the pictures of the attempted assassination of Ronald Reagan. Remember how those Secret Service men just dove on him? They tackled him, they surrounded him. And if fallen, sinful humans will have that great of a desire to protect someone, God says I want to surround you. I want to clothe you with Christ (Romans 13:14- But put on the Lord Jesus Christ) I want you to put on Christ, I want you to put on My armor. I am going to surround you, I am going to guard you.

David now longs God YOU FILL ME "v. 11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!" You know, that is what God will do when we sin.

David nicely summarizes this Psalm with the use of an emphasis word SELAH. In today's language it mean, "Hey, look at this!"

Psalm 32:1-11 A Psalm of David. A Contemplation.

Psalm 32:1-4 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah [**God convicted me**]

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah [**God heard my confession**]

Psalm 32:6-7 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah [**God offers me refuge**]

Psalm 32:8-11 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. 9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you. 10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him. 11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart! NKJV [**God will keep me**]

What David experienced was #201 in your hymnbook. What Saul didn't experience was #201 in your hymnbook. I want you to think about these words as we read them together.

- Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.
- Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.
- Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.
What can avail to wash it away?
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,
Brighter than snow you may be today.
- Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see his face,
Will you this moment his grace receive?

Refrain:

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our (MY) sin!

The Miracle of Complete Forgiveness

DSS: Message Twenty-Three (060702AM)

As we open to Psalm 32, we are listening to David's testimony in song that came to his heart when David received complete forgiveness.

David experienced what the Scriptures often declare—God is a God who offers His children complete forgiveness. Trace with me again those life giving words in your hearts as I read them to you. You may even want to just close your eyes so that nothing distracts you from hearing these ten verses:

- *"... as far as the east is from the west, **so far has he removed** our transgressions from us". (Psalm 103:12)*
- *"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, **They shall be as white** as snow; Though they are red like crimson, **They shall be** as wool.." (Is. 1:18)*
- *"... But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, For You **have cast all my sins** behind Your back. (Is. 38:17)*
- *"I have **swept away** your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for **I have redeemed** you." (Isaiah 44:22)*
- *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:34b)*
- *"You will ... **hurl all our iniquities** into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:19)*
- *[At the Last Supper, Jesus commanded his own to drink, saying] "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many **for the forgiveness** of sins." (Matthew 26:28)*
- *"She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I **condemn** you; go and sin no more." (John 8:11)*
- *"There is therefore now **no condemnation** to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." (Romans 8:1)*
- *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and **will forgive us our sins and purify us** from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

David has just experienced the greatest of all miracles that God does on this planet today.

The Gospels record just 37 specific miracles that Jesus performed during His earthly ministry. These include sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, life to the dead, health to the sick - and many other tremendous miracles supernaturally performed by Christ.

Which one was the greatest? If you analyze them they were wonderful but ALL were only temporary.

- The paralyzed, lame, mute, and blind that Jesus gave back eyes, fingers, toes, and skin eventually lost them all again when they got sick and died some years later.
- Peter's mother-in-law was miraculously set free from a fever but years later died of other causes which may also have involved a fever.

- The food miraculously created by Jesus was consumed by the five and four thousands, and used up – and hunger returned the next day.
- The eyes restored to blind Bartimaeus were used, worn out, and dimmed by the time he died.
- The hearing that the deaf received were subject to the natural downward slide of the human body and faded most likely by their death.
- Those dancing feet after Christ's touch that the lame possessed, soon turned to a shuffle and then stopped working altogether as they lay in bed awaiting death many years later.
- Lepers who found fresh new skin and limbs saw them again return to wrinkles, weakness, and finally immobility as circulation, respiration, and digestion all slowly were assaulted by the weight of many years.
- So yes, Jesus performed many miracles – but all of them but one were TEMPORARY.

Which Was the Greatest of All Christ's Miracles?

The answer is the one that never faded, never aged, never ended. It was the miracle unfaded by time, untouched by health, unaffected by circumstances.

That miracle, the greatest miracle is the one that Jesus Christ is still doing in our midst today. It is the miracle that I have personally experienced. It is the miracle that most of us in this room have also experienced. It is the greatest of all Christ's miracles – **the miracle of complete forgiveness.**

But up until the moments just before Psalm 32, David wasn't so sure.

Have you ever wondered secretly in the back of your mind if could be completely forgiven of all your sins? I mean the really bad ones that most or nearly all people don't know about?

What makes complete forgiveness seem even more impossible is if you are someone most people would never even dream of having any kind of struggle with sin. Former drug addicts have a pass, right? They were bad, got saved and are all set. Same for the former alcoholics, the former sexual sinners—but what about 'church going, raised in Christian homes, never really into anything bad' people? What if they fall head long into sin. Other people wonder, are they even saved? Can they be really sure that they are completely forgiven?

That is exactly where David was just before Psalm 32. He has been a living testimony to the grace of God.

As a young shepherd boy he had told the world that he was going to live a pure life (Psalm 132) remember those disciplines he had committed to?

- God ahead of comforts v.3
- Devotions were a holy habit v.4
- Time for God was a priority v.5
- Longing for God was genuine v. 6-7
- He was going to stay pure v.9

Then as he became king of Israel he had laid out his plan for integrity that had become his personal operating system. That was probably the background for his words in Psalm 101. Remember them?

- He was personally committed to a non-hypocritical life of integrity v.1-2
- He made a strong personal pact of purity v.3a
- He wanted to never allow any build up of sin in his life v.3b
- He chose to limit his exposure to sin v.4-5
- He had chosen to only hold to proper heroes v.6-7
- He was following a pattern of regularly cleaning out anything displeasing to the Lord v.8

But as wonderful as all those personal, private, and public choices may have been—he had drifted away and gotten out of touch with the Lord in 2nd Samuel 11. And as we have been seeing, he fell deeply into sin.

And God had exposed him. The initial consequences of guilt and shame had multiplied and he came to the end of himself. David wondered, could it get any worse? David reflected on his sin, how he had one of his most loyal friends murdered, took his wife, angered her family that included two of his most trusted body guards and also one of his most senior advisors—and now he is exposed.

The whole world found out why his baby died, why his loyal friend was killed and what David had been up to when every one else was out of town.

He wanted to be forgiven—but now is all that possible?

Welcome to Psalm 32, a place in your Bible to flee when you wonder, “Can I ever be forgiven completely?”

Psalm 32 is a song sung and recorded by God’s Spirit for good people that do bad things and are crushed beneath a load of guilt and shame. Just like Bill Gaither wrote many years ago. Maybe if you know the words you can quietly say them with me--

Shackled by a heavy burden,
'Neath a load of guilt and shame.
Then the Hand of Jesus touched me,
And now I am no longer the same. _

Refrain

He touched me,
Oh, He touched me,
And oh the joy that floods my soul.
Something happened and now I know,
He touched me and made me whole.

Since I met the Blessed Savior,
Since He cleansed and made me whole,
I will never cease to Praise Him!
I'll shout it while eternity rolls.

The Miracle of Complete Forgiveness--A light in a dark place. A hope in a weary land. A promise from the God who cannot lie—neither do I condemn thee, I am willing, you are completely cleansed and forgiven in the Name of Jesus and because of His payment made for your sins.

Look back at Psalm 32, listen to what David literally sang in those first two verses:

“Oh, the happiness of the man whose rebellion has been forgiven, whose record of failures has been erased. How happy is the man on whose account the Lord does not put his crookedness, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.” [author’s amplified translation]

David had been guilty of each of those sins: David rebelled against God’s Law; David failed to meet God’s righteous standard; David yielded himself to his crooked nature’s control; and David deceitfully covered the whole matter up for a year. So when he received God’s complete forgiveness it is so wonderful he sings--

“Total forgiveness is something to celebrate. It is beyond anything positive thinking, therapy, or hypnosis can provide. It is complete, extending to the conscious and unconscious sins in our lives, because God knows all things and because Jesus’ blood is infinite.

And anyone can be forgiven, no matter what their sin is, whether they are the torturous commandant of Auschwitz or a serial killer like John Wayne Gacy or the most immoral (or even the most moral) person in America. Total forgiveness is possible through Christ.”.[1]

God’s forgiveness is always based on sin’s penalty being paid. Only an acceptable payment can satisfy God’s holy justice. God required a substitute—a perfect sacrifice to die in the sinner’s place. The chosen substitute—and the only one who qualified—was Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. Salvation during OT or NT times is always based on Christ’s sacrifice. When any sinner comes to God, convicted by the Holy Spirit that he cannot save himself from the deserved penalty of God’s wrath, God’s promise of forgiveness is granted when he believes.

But the modern tragedy is that many Christians are depressed about their sins and failures. They operate under the false notion that God still holds some or all of their sins against them. These misguided believers **forget** the Scriptures we read earlier.

- They forget that because God has taken their sins upon Himself, they are separated from those sins “as far as the east is from the west” (Ps. 103:12).
- They forget God’s promise through Isaiah that one day He would wipe out the transgressions of believers “like a thick cloud” and their “sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me,” He said, “for I have redeemed you” (Isa. 44:22).

- They forget that God looked down the corridors of time even before He made the earth and placed the sins of the world on the head of His Son, the Lamb of God. "...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8) At Calvary Jesus took the sins of all who would believe an eternal distance away.
- They forget that hundreds of years before Calvary, Micah proclaimed that the Messiah's death would provide a way for complete forgiveness--"Who is a God like Thee, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:18-19).
- They forget Christ's promise to never condemn them. When Jesus comes into our lives as Savior and Lord, He says to us what He said to the woman caught in the act of adultery, "Neither do I condemn you; go your way" (John 8:11). "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8:1-2).

The Miracle of Our Complete Forgiveness

"Because we continue to sin, we need the continued forgiveness of cleansing; but we do not need the continued forgiveness of redemption.

Jesus told Peter, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean" (John 13:10). Even though we continue to sin, Jesus "is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). He forgives all our sins in the sweeping grace of salvation.

That does not mean we will no longer sin, nor that when we do our sins have no harmful effect. They have a profound effect on our growth, joy, peace, usefulness, and ability to have intimate and rich communion with the Father. Thus the believer is called on to ask for forgiveness daily so that he may enjoy not just the general forgiveness of redemption, but the specific forgiveness of daily cleansing, which brings fellowship and usefulness to their maximum.

There are no second class Christians, no deprived citizens of God's kingdom or children in His family. Every sin of every believer is forgiven forever.

God knows how we were, how we now live, and how we will live the rest of our lives. He sees everything about us in stark-naked reality.

Yet He says, "I am satisfied with you because I am satisfied with My Son, to whom you belong. When I look at you, I see Him, and I am pleased." [2]

The greatest miracle is Christ's sacrifice applied to us as believers so we know that in Christ all sins—past, present, and future—are forgiven forever. In Christ all guilt and all penalty are permanently removed. In Him we will stand totally guiltless and holy for the rest of eternity.

And so we confess as one great saints of the past said:

The Bible is a corridor between two eternities down which walks the Christ of God; His invisible steps echo through the Old Testament, but we meet Him face to face in the New; and it is through that Christ alone, crucified for me, that I have found forgiveness for sins and life eternal. The Old Testament is summed up in the word Christ; the New Testament is summed up in the word Jesus; and the summary of the whole Bible is that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.[3]

When God saves, He ultimately takes away all sin, all guilt, all punishment. How is all that possible? That is what we will see as we study God's Word tonight.

The miracle of complete forgiveness is what Jesus said we are to celebrate every time we come to His table! And complete forgiveness that David experienced is #201 in your hymnbook.

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,

Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!

Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,

There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,

Threaten the soul with infinite loss;

Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,

Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.

What can avail to wash it away?

Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,

Brighter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,

Freely bestowed on all who believe!

You that are longing to see his face,
Will you this moment his grace receive?

Refrain:

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our (MY) sin!

[1] Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Ephesians—The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1997.

[2] MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, I Corinthians 1:7 in loc, electronic edition, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

[3] Adapted from a statement attributed to Bishop Pollak by McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

[3] McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

David - The Joy of Complete Forgiveness

DSS: Message Twenty-Four (060702PM)

The miracle of complete forgiveness is wonderful, but how did God do such a thing? This evening we will start a look at our salvation and how God accomplished the once and for all sacrifice of Christ for our sins. But we will do it in a way that is very unusual. We will start in Heaven and see the final results of our salvation as it will be. But first we start in the grand song of David.

Listen to his personal testimony. David nicely summarizes what God did for him in this Psalm with the use of an emphasis word SELAH. In today's language it means, "Hey, look at this!" Let's look at what God did.

Psalm 32:1-11 A Psalm of David—A Contemplation

Psalm 32:1-4 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah [Look at this--**God convicted me and forgave me**]

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah [Look at this--**God heard my confession and forgave me**]

Psalm 32:6-7 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah [Look at this--**God offers me refuge in His forgiveness**]

Psalm 32:8-11 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. 9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you. 10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him. 11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart! NKJV [Look at this--**God will keep me**]

David was the man whose *transgression* is forgiven; whose *sin* is hidden, God having cast it as a millstone into the depths of the sea; whose iniquity and perversion is not reckoned to his account; and whose *guile*, the deceitful and desperately wicked heart, is annihilated, being emptied of sin and filled with righteousness, is necessarily a happy man.

David experienced all this because by nature God is forgiving. The Old Testament abounds with teachings about His forgiveness.

God described Himself to Moses as, "the Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin" (Ex. 34:6-7).

- David declared, "For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon Thee" (Ps. 86:5).
- In another psalm he reminds us that God pardons all our iniquities. Psalm 103:3,12 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
- Daniel said, "To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness" (Dan. 9:9).
- Micah extolled the Lord, saying, Micah 7:18-19 Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. 19 He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.

No matter how severe the sin, God can forgive it. The worst conceivable sin would be to kill God's own Son—and that while He was on earth for the very purpose of providing salvation from sin and the way to everlasting life. Nothing could possibly be more heinous, vicious, and wicked than that. And, of course, killing Him is exactly what men did to the Son of God. Yet, while hanging on the cross and about to die, Jesus prayed and affirmed the forgiving mercy available to His executioners, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

- The *degree* of sin does not forfeit forgiveness, because even killing the Son of God was forgivable.
- Nor does the *volume* of sin end the possibility of mercy. A seventy-year-old profligate who has lived a life of debauchery, stealing, lying, profanity, blasphemy, and immorality is just as forgivable as a seven-year-old who has done nothing worse than normal childhood haughtiness.
- Nor does the particular *kind* of sin cancel grace. In Scripture we find God forgiving idolatry, murder, gluttony, fornication, adultery, cheating, lying, homosexuality, covenant breaking, blasphemy, drunkenness, extortion, and every other kind of sin imaginable. He forgives self-righteousness, which is the deceiving sin of thinking that one has no sin. He even forgives the sin of rejecting Christ; otherwise no one could be saved, because before salvation *everyone*, to some degree, is a Christ rejecter. There is no forgiveness of even the smallest sin unless it is confessed and repented of; but there is forgiveness of even the greatest sin if those divine conditions are met.[1]

So to see how God accomplished complete forgiveness of our sins through Christ's sacrifice—turn with me to our final destination—heaven!

Where would we find that? Most of us would turn to Revelation, but an even clearer picture of that wonderful city we are headed towards is actually in Hebrews 12. Please open there with me!

What Awaits Those Who Have Been Completely Forgiven?

What awaits all of us who have experienced the Miracle of Complete Forgiveness? Hebrews 12 tells us these precious realities.

1. **FINALLY WE THE FORGIVEN WILL ENTER THE CITY WITH**

FOUNDATIONS: those completely forgiven come to the *city of God*—“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God” (v. 22a). The longing of our hearts as throughout our earthly lives we were pilgrims and strangers always waiting for and looking for this city God was preparing for us.

- Mount Zion was the location of the city of Melchisadek, the site of Abraham's offering of Isaac and the later Jebusite stronghold that David captured. When David brought the Ark of the Covenant to this place he made Jerusalem the spiritual center of his kingdom—the place of God's presence with his people.
- Later as Solomon built the Temple and installed the Ark, Zion/Jerusalem became representative of the earthly dwelling-place of God.
- As believers we are already citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem and have all the privileges of that heavenly citizenship. Remember what Paul wrote, “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).
- As believers we are already seated at the banquet table with Jesus because of our position in Him as Paul wrote, for “God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6).
- So as Paul we follow after (keep going slogging through the trench warfare of life) so that we can arrive at the goal already ours through the upward call of Christ Jesus!

2. **FINALLY WE THE FORGIVEN WILL SEE THE COUNTLESS ANGELS:** those completely forgiven meet *angels*—“You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly” (v. 22b). At last we get to meet all those who watched over us while we went through this life—mighty flaming spirits, “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation” (1:14).

- Moses tells us that “myriads of holy ones” attended the giving of the Law (Deuteronomy 33:2), and from Daniel we hear that “Thousands upon thousands attended him [the Ancient of Days—God]; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him” (Daniel 7:10).
- David said, “The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands” (Psalm 68:17).
- So seldom do we even reflect upon God's special ministers who are as Kent Hughes writes “passing in and out of our lives, moving around us and over us just as they did Jacob of old. Sometimes they protect God's elect—
 1. For example, the “tall men in shining garments” who surrounded Mr. and Mrs. John G. Paton years ago in the New Hebrides—
 2. Or the “tall soldiers with shining faces” who protected missionary Marie Monsen in North China—

3. Or, on another occasion, the “huge men dressed in white with flaming swords” who surrounded the Rift Valley Academy—
4. And on another the “hundreds of men dressed in white, with swords and shields” who stood guard over a hut shielding Clyde Taylor, who would one day found the National Association of Evangelicals.
5. Olive Fleming Liefeld in her book *Unfolding Destinies* tells how two young Auca Indians, Dawa and Kimo, heard singing after witnessing the martyrdom of the five missionaries in the jungles of Ecuador: “As they looked up over the tops of the trees they saw a large group of people. They were all singing, and it looked as if there were a hundred flashlights.”
6. But the grand emphasis of our passage is not so much the angels' care of us, but rather our joining them in festal assembly. The word translated “joyful assembly” was used in ancient culture to describe the great national assemblies and sacred games of the Greeks. Whereas at Mount Sinai the angels blew celestial trumpets that terrified God's people, we are to see ourselves on Mount Zion as dressed in festal attire and worshiping in awe side by side with these shining beings!” [2]

3. FINALLY WE THE FORGIVEN WILL JOIN THE SAINTS OF ALL TIME:

those completely forgiven come to *fellow-believers*—“to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven” (v. 23a). Hebrews tells us that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters, so with Him we are sharing in the inheritance promised us by God the Father.

- In the ancient world all the rights of inheritance go to the firstborn. Because we are purchased by Christ and completely forgiven—we are “co-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17).
- Bishop Westcott says we are “a society of 'eldest sons' of God.” There are no second or third or fourth sons and daughters in the church. We all get the big inheritance! Plus our names are written in Heaven along with the all of those who are already there. In other words, we are all the Body of Christ! They are there awaiting us as we come one by one escorted by Christ. One with Him, brothers and sisters we are united until His entire family has safely made it home. Then Christ can celebrate communion with us when all are safely home.

4. FINALLY WE THE FORGIVEN WILL BE WITH OUR ALMIGHTY GOD: those completely forgiven come to *God the ALMIGHTY*—“You have come to God, the judge of all men” (v. 23b). At last we come before the God of the Universe. What an awesome moment to be transported before Him.

- The writer of Hebrews has already said that “nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (4:13).
- Plus he said that God is dreadfully powerful, “'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' and again, 'The Lord will judge his people.' It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (10:30, 31).

- But as we learned in Revelation, we come led by the nail scarred Hand of Jesus to meet our Heavenly Father--because Jesus paid it all. This is our *highest delight*—to gather before God! It is a miracle of grace.
- Look for a moment at what will happen then as recorded in Revelation 3:5, as Jesus tells us, "...but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

To be taken by the hand by the Lord Jesus, to be led up past the marshaled ranks of the angels, up along the golden boulevards of glory, up past the cherubim and the seraphim, up, up to the throne of God Himself and to hear the Lord Jesus call you by your name and present you in person as His well beloved!

Then to hear the Father say, "Bring the best robe and put it on him." Think of it, a robe of white, bright as the day, pure as the light! When the Lord Jesus was transfigured on the mount, something happened not only to His countenance, something happened also to His clothes. His raiment became white as the light.

What a reward for all of us who have been completely forgiven--to have a robe like that draped around our shoulders and to be invited to walk the shining ways of glory in light transfigured clothes. We have joined all the saints of all the ages home at last with our God.

FACE TO FACE (#549)

Face to face with Christ, my Savior,
Face to face—what will it be,
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ Who died for me?

Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!

Only faintly now I see Him,
With the darkened veil between,
But a blessed day is coming,
When His glory shall be seen.

Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!

What rejoicing in His presence,
When are banished grief and pain;
When the crooked ways are straightened,

And the dark things shall be plain.

Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!

Face to face—oh, blissful moment!
Face to face—to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer,
Jesus Christ Who loves me so.

Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!

5. **FINALLY WE THE FORGIVEN WILL ATLAST BE PERFECTED:** those completely forgiven come as *saints to heaven*—“to the spirits of righteous men made perfect” (v. 23c). We join in the assembly of the perfected ones, the justified, sanctified and now at last glorified ones. The hope and longing of all our earthly struggle has been realized. We are finally free from sin in all its hideous power and presence.
- We are sharing in that power of an endless life but amazingly by God’s plan we get to partake of it together with all the saints of all the ages. Though some will have preceded us by thousands of years God tells us in Hebrews 11:40, “that only together with us would they be made perfect.” The Old Testament saints waited for centuries for the perfection we received when we trusted Christ, because that came only with Christ’s death—“by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy” (10:14). Because of Christ’s work we are not one whit inferior to the patriarchs, for through Christ we are all equal in righteousness!
6. **FINALLY WE WILL BE WITH JESUS OUR SAVIOR:** those completely forgiven come to JESUS OUR SAVIOR—“to *Jesus* the mediator of a new covenant” (v. 24a). The writer of Hebrews uses the name given to God the Son at His birth. He is seen in Hebrews as the One who destroyed the Devil ‘him that had the power of death’; and who was made like us and has felt our temptations. He is Jesus who invites us to boldly come to the very Throne of God and find grace and mercy. Jesus is the One through whom all things are promised us, given us, and He sustains all things. So here we come to Him who is our all in all. Just like the chorus we often sing declared, we find here to be true.

ALL in ALL (D. Jernigan / Shepherd's Heart music)

You are my strength when I am weak; You are the treasure that I seek--You are my all in all.

You took my sin, my cross, my shame, Rising again, I take your name--You are my all in all.

Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name; Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name.

Seeking you as a precious jewel, Lord, to give up I'd be a fool, You are my all in all.

When I fall down, you pick me up, When I am dry, you fill my cup--You are my all in all.

Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name. Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name.

7. **FINALLY WE THE FORGIVEN WILL ENJOY HIS COMPLETE**

FORGIVENESS: those completely forgiven come to eternal forgiveness because of *Christ's blood*—"and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (v. 24b). The blood of Abel cried from the ground demanding vengeance; the blood of God the Son will forever proclaim that we are completely forgiven at an infinite price we were bought by the love of God who gave His only Son to die in our place!

The miracle of complete forgiveness is what Jesus said we are to celebrate in heaven forever! And complete forgiveness that David experienced and sang about in Psalm 32 is #201 in your hymnbook.

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,

Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!

Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,

There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,

Threaten the soul with infinite loss;

Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,

Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.

What can avail to wash it away?

Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,

Brighter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,

Freely bestowed on all who believe!

You that are longing to see his face,

Will you this moment his grace receive?

Refrain:

Grace, grace, God's grace,

Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;

Grace, grace, God's grace,

Grace that is greater than all our (MY) sin!

So God's Word tells us that those who come to Christ are completely forgiven. The writer of Hebrews says it is now our in Christ “you have come” (*right now!*) to these seven realities:

- To the City of God,
- To myriads of angels,
- To fellow-believers,
- To our awesome God,
- To at last be glorified,
- To Jesus our Savior,
- To complete forgiveness.

If this does not create a wellspring of thanksgiving in our hearts and make us want to march to Zion, what will?[3]

[1] These three paragraphs are quoted from MacArthur, J. 2000. *The Murder of Jesus : A study of how Jesus died*. Includes index. Word Pub.: Nashville, TN

[2] Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Hebrews Vol 1&2—An Anchor for the Soul*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1993. electronic edition, in loc.

[3] Adapter from Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Hebrews Vol 1&2—An Anchor for the Soul*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1993. electronic edition, in loc.

David--Enjoying the Benefits of Being Forgiven

DSS: Message Twenty-Five (060716AM)

Forgiveness

Nothing matters more to any who have sinned—and God says all have sinned. One moment before your last breath, one thing will matter more than anything else—whether you are dying forgiven or un-forgiven. That state (of being forgiven or un-forgiven) transforms those days that lead up to that one moment before you die—to either the serenity knowing that you are forgiven or the dread of knowing that you aren't. Which will be yours? The choices you make have everlasting consequences.

The peace you can have one moment before you die is available on a daily basis if you understand what God has done in Christ and if you choose to respond by faith to Him.

This morning we celebrate the forgiveness that is only in Christ. Through the life of a forgiven man named David we see the truth God has recorded for us in His Word. We are progressing through the life of David. David is the most written about man in the Bible. David gives us more material on the reality of personal forgiveness, personal assurance of cleansing and personal peace in spite of sin and failure—than anyone else in God's Word.

Open again to the song David wrote for all the world to see his confident assurance that he was forgiven! David had a present, personal assurance of his complete forgiveness—that his guilt was past and his peace was secure. This morning we will focus on the first five verses. Note the present tense of God's forgiveness.

Psalm 32:1-5 A Psalm of David. A Contemplation. (This marks the first[1] of a dozen of these *maskils* that are so titled because they give a 'teaching' or 'lesson' that need to be 'pondered' or 'contemplated'). This is also the second of the seven penitential Psalms[2] or Psalms that speak of sorrow over sin. The 4th or middle of the seven is of course the greatest and most well known—the 51st Psalm.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

David has just repented of the horrible pit of sin he had been covering up for weeks and months. That is where we find him in Psalm 32. He writes the song about what it means to return to God and receive and experience and to possess His forgiveness.

David's awareness of the pain or his personal sin has been a struggle mankind as always faced. One of the earliest written portions of the Bible is the book of Job that revolves around the grief that comes from being so aware of sin. From the secular world has a very moving insight from the writings of a man contemporary with the Apostle Paul. Listen to this historical connection as we turn to 1st Corinthians 18.11.

- When Paul stood in Acts 18.11-17, before the seat of the Roman proconsul of Achaia, his name was Gallio.
- From history we know that this Gallio's older brother was a brilliant philosopher and writer named Seneca (3 BC to 65AD).
- History also records that Seneca, who was the Emperor Nero's tutor, had written one famous essay about his despair with life with this concluding thought: *What humankind needs is a hand to lift them up.*

Just after Paul was in Corinth in Acts 18, he goes to Ephesus in Acts 19.

As we turn to the letter Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus remember that from ancient times to the present forgiveness and a hand to lift us back to God was a longing in many hearts. In modern times we see the same haunting desire in the lives of those who have not found forgiveness.

Yet as Ephesians 1:7 declares—that forgiveness is offered and it is available. Twenty plus years ago...

Charles Colson told of watching Albert Speer being interviewed on "Good Morning, America." Speer was the Hitler confidant whose technological genius kept the Nazi factories running throughout World War II.

Speer was the only one of the twenty-four war criminals tried at Nuremburg to admit his guilt, and he had served twenty years in a Spandau prison.

The interviewer referred to a passage in one of Speer's earlier writings: "You have said the guilt can never be forgiven or shouldn't be. Do you still feel that way?"

Colson said he will never forget the look of pathos on Speer's face as he responded, "I served a sentence of twenty years, and I could say, 'I'm a free man, my conscience has been cleared by serving the whole time as punishment.' But I can't get rid of it. This new book is part of my atoning, of clearing my conscience." The interviewer pressed the point: "You really don't think you'll be able to clear it totally?" Speer shook his head. "I don't think it will be possible."

Colson said: For thirty-five years Speer had accepted complete responsibility for his crime. His writings were filled with contrition and warnings to others to avoid his moral sin. He desperately sought expiation. All to no avail. I wanted to write Speer, to tell him about Jesus and his death on the cross, about God's forgiveness. But there wasn't time. The ABC interview was his last public statement; he died shortly after.

The tragedy for both Seneca and Speer is that there was, and is, a hand to lift them up — complete forgiveness of sins — though they didn't know it.[3]

From the Garden of Eden onward God has offered to all who come to Him—but how are we to get that forgiveness? Paul triumphantly declares that truth for us in Ephesians 1:7. *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*

Christ's blood shed through His death on the cross purchased our redemption. Redemption was the payment of a price or ransom. For guilty sinners, the only price was Christ's own blood, which He poured out on the Cross. All humanity is enslaved to sin and powerless to pay for their freedom, but Christ paid for all who would believe an infinite price as the Scriptures repeatedly attest:

[Jesus came] "to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

[Jesus] entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. (Hebrews 9:12b)

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. (1 Peter 1:18, 19)

Our redemption cost God the very life of Christ, which was an astounding mystery which puzzled the Old Testament prophets and which angels "long to look into" (cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12).

Christ's death to pay the price of our sin is so wonderful that we, the redeemed of all the ages will be joined by the angels so that together we may sing a new song, as Revelation records:

And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Revelation 5:9–12)

So to see how God accomplished complete forgiveness of our sins through Christ's sacrifice—turn with me to our final destination—heaven! The Christian life is lived in the present tense. We have today in Christ the benefits of His work on the cross.

We are forgiven, we are justified (Romans 3.24), we are redeemed, we are cleansed, and we are kept. What awaits all of us who have experienced God's forgiveness? Hebrews 12 tells us these precious realities are all ours in the present tense. Look at how this passage begins.

Hebrews 12:22-24 NKJV ²²But *you have come* [that is right now, these are present possessions of the forgiven] to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are registered* in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling *that speaks* better things than *that of Abel*.

1. FORGIVENESS MEANS THAT WE WILL ENTER THE CITY WITH

FOUNDATIONS: those completely forgiven come to the *city of God*—“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God” (v. 22a). The longing of our hearts as throughout our earthly lives we were pilgrims and strangers always waiting for and looking for this city God was preparing for us.

- So as Paul we follow after (keep going slogging through the trench warfare of life) so that we can arrive at the goal already ours through the upward call of Christ Jesus!

2. FORGIVENESS MEANS THAT WE WILL SEE THE COUNTLESS

ANGELS: those completely forgiven meet *angels*—“You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly” (v. 22b). At last we get to meet all those who watched over us while we went through this life—mighty flaming spirits, “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation” (1:14).

3. FORGIVENESS MEANS THAT WE WILL JOIN THE SAINTS OF ALL

TIME: those completely forgiven come to *fellow-believers*—“to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven” (v. 23a). Hebrews tells us that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters, so with Him we are sharing in the inheritance promised us by God the Father.

- In other words, we are all the Body of Christ! They are there awaiting us as we come one by one escorted by Christ. One with Him, brothers and sisters we are united until His entire family has safely made it home. Then Christ can celebrate communion with us when all are safely home.

4. FORGIVENESS MEANS THAT WE WILL BE WITH OUR ALMIGHTY

GOD: those completely forgiven come to *God the ALMIGHTY*—“You have come to God, the judge of all men” (v. 23b). At last we come before the God of the Universe. What an awesome moment to be transported before Him.

- The writer of Hebrews has already said that “nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (4:13).
- Plus he said that God is dreadfully powerful, “ ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ and again, ‘The Lord will judge his people.’ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (10:30, 31).

- But as we learned in Revelation, we come led by the nail scarred Hand of Jesus to meet our Heavenly Father--because Jesus paid it all. This is our *highest delight*—to gather before God! It is a miracle of grace.
- Look for a moment at what will happen then as recorded in Revelation 3:5.as Jesus tells us, “...but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”?

To be taken by the hand by the Lord Jesus, to be led up past the marshaled ranks of the angels, up along the golden boulevards of glory, up past the cherubim and the seraphim, up, up to the throne of God Himself and to hear the Lord Jesus call you by your name and present you in person as His well beloved!

Then to hear the Father say, “Bring the best robe and put it on him.” Think of it, a robe of white, bright as the day, pure as the light! When the Lord Jesus was transfigured on the mount, something happened not only to His countenance, something happened also to His clothes. His raiment became white as the light.

What a reward for all of us who have been completely forgiven--to have a robe like that draped around our shoulders and to be invited to walk the shining ways of glory in light transfigured clothes. We have joined all the saints of all the ages home at last with our God.

FACE TO FACE (#549)

Carrie Breck (1855-1934) wrote these words in 1898

1. Face to face with Christ, my Savior,
Face to face—what will it be,
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ Who died for me?

2. Only faintly now I see Him,
With the darkened veil between,
But a blessed day is coming,
When His glory shall be seen.

3. What rejoicing in His presence,
When are banished grief and pain;
When the crooked ways are straightened,
And the dark things shall be plain.

4. Face to face—oh, blissful moment!
Face to face—to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer,
Jesus Christ Who loves me so.

Chorus: Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;

Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!

5. FORGIVENESS MEANS THAT WE WILL AT LAST BE PERFECTED:

those completely forgiven come as *saints to heaven*—“to the spirits of righteous men made perfect” (v. 23c). We join in the assembly of the perfected ones, the justified, sanctified and now at last glorified ones. The hope and longing of all our earthly struggle has been realized. We are finally free from sin in all its hideous power and presence.

We are sharing in that power of an endless life but amazingly by God’s plan we get to partake of it together with all the saints of all the ages. Though some will have preceded us by thousands of years God tells us in Hebrews 11:40, “that only together with us would they be made perfect.” The Old Testament saints waited for centuries for the perfection we received when we trusted Christ, because that came only with Christ’s death—“by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy” (10:14). Because of Christ’s work we are not one whit inferior to the patriarchs, for through Christ we are all equal in righteousness!

6. FORGIVENESS MEANS THAT WE WILL BE WITH JESUS OUR

SAVIOR: those completely forgiven come to JESUS OUR SAVIOR—“to *Jesus* the mediator of a new covenant” (v. 24a). The writer of Hebrews uses the name given to God the Son at His birth. He is seen in Hebrews as the One who destroyed the Devil ‘him that had the power of death’; and who was made like us and has felt our temptations.

It is Jesus who invites us to boldly come to the very Throne of God and find grace and mercy. Jesus is the One through whom all things are promised us, given us, and He sustains all things.

So here in Hebrews 12:24 we at last get to fall before Jesus, Him who is our all in all. Just like the chorus we often sing declared, we find here to be true.

ALL in ALL (Dennis Jernigan / Shepherd's Heart music)

You are my strength when I am weak; You are the treasure that I seek--You are my all in all.

You took my sin, my cross, my shame, Rising again, I take your name--You are my all in all.

Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name; Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name.

Seeking you as a precious jewel, Lord, to give up I'd be a fool, You are my all in all.

When I fall down, you pick me up, When I am dry, you fill my cup--You are my all in all.

Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name. Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name.

7. FORGIVENESS MEANS THAT WE WILL FOREVER ENJOY HIS

COMPLETE FORGIVENESS: those completely forgiven come to eternal forgiveness because of *Christ's blood*—"and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (v. 24b). The blood of Abel cried from the ground demanding vengeance; the blood of God the Son will forever proclaim that we are completely forgiven at an infinite price we were bought by the love of God who gave His only Son to die in our place!

The miracle of complete forgiveness is what Jesus said we are to celebrate in heaven forever! And complete forgiveness that David experienced and sang about in Psalm 32 is #201 in your hymnbook.

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.
What can avail to wash it away?
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,
Brighter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see his face,

Will you this moment his grace receive?

Refrain:

Grace, grace, God's grace,

Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;

Grace, grace, God's grace,

Grace that is greater than all our (MY) sin!

So God's Word tells us that those who come to Christ are completely forgiven. The writer of Hebrews says it is now our in Christ “you have come” (*right now!*) to these seven realities:

- To the City of God,
- To myriads of angels,
- To fellow-believers,
- To our awesome God,
- To at last be glorified,
- To Jesus our Savior,
- To complete forgiveness.

If this does not create a wellspring of thanksgiving in our hearts and make us want to march to Zion, what will?[4]

[1] *Maskil* means ‘giving of instruction’. The twelve that bear this title are: Psalms 32; 42; 45; 52-55; 74; 78; 88-89; 142.

[2] The Penitential Psalms are: Psalms 6; 32; 38; 51; 102; and 130.

[3] Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Ephesians—The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1997.

[4] Adapter from Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Hebrews Vol 1&2—An Anchor for the Soul*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1993. electronic edition, in loc.

David: Coming Back to God

DSS: Message Twenty-Six (060723AM)

David fell so far, so fast—he didn't even realize it until the dullness of his soul spread to every inch of his spiritual life. Soon his cold heart was combined with his tormented soul and trapped in a painfully chastened body. David was at the bottom, and he stayed there for almost a year. Almost a year—did that length of time strike you?

Think of who we are talking about, that fell so far away from the God he so passionately loved and served.

- A man that God talked to directly by way of inspiration;
- A man who knew the indwelling Presence of God the Spirit;
- A man who had the direct line to God's Throne by way of prophets;
- A man who could enter the very tent of God built to the specs God left;
- A man who had held perhaps the very scrolls Moses had written down;
- A man who may have seen the stone tablets of the law that were kept in the ark;
- A man who had seen God's supernatural protection month after month in hand to hand combat as David was never defeated on the battlefield—and as far as we know, never even wounded by arrow, sword, spear or sling stone, though there had been tens of thousands pointed at him and held by those who hated him and wanted him dead.

That man who knew God, experienced God's presence, loved God, sang scores of songs inspired by God, wrote chapters of the eternal Word of God—that man seemed to lose touch with God for a YEAR!

Now, think about yourself.

- David knew the same God we know.
- David wrote the same Bible we read.
- David sang the same songs we sing.
- David felt the same closeness we feel and probably even more so that many of us have ever felt.
- Yet he stayed away from God for almost a whole year.

Maybe we shouldn't give up on people so fast. Maybe we shouldn't stop praying so easily. Maybe we shouldn't be so quick to write them off and erase them from the group. David spent as much as a year in absolute misery.

What is amazing is that David hid this so well. He went through the motions of being the king. He was God's leader, he was God's king. He was still the sweet psalmist of Israel. He still had the family line that would never end. He was still the one through whom the Christ would come.

But all those blessings and benefits meant nothing, like an engine without fuel, an electronic device with no power—David had walked away from God and stayed away for a long time.

But if you were just a casual observer, it looked as if David had gotten by with it.

But always remember one thing: David was God's man, and God would not let David get by with it. In reality, during the interval when he kept quiet, he was a tormented man. In Psalm 32 we saw what really went on in his heart. David says this: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long" (Ps. 32:3). If we could have visited the court of David during that nearly year of hidden sin—we would have literally seen David aging before our eyes. The self-inflicted stress of those months was completely debilitating. "For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer" (Ps. 32:4). This describes his feelings during that interval.

A hymn writer once wrote what David must have felt as he responded to God's heavy hand of chastisement and conviction and repented of his sin and came back to God.

Lord, I'm Coming Home (1898) #341

William Kirkpatrick (1838-1921)

I've wandered far away from God, Now I'm coming home;
The paths of sin too long I've trod, Lord, I'm coming home.

I've wasted many precious years, Now I'm coming home;
I now repent with bitter tears, Lord, I'm coming home.

I'm tired of sin and straying, Lord, Now I'm coming home;
I'll trust Thy love, believe Thy Word, Lord, I'm coming home.

My soul is sick, my heart is sore, Now I'm coming home;
My strength renew, my hope restore, Lord, I'm coming home.

I need His cleansing blood, I know, Now I'm coming home;
O wash me whiter than the snow, Lord, I'm coming home.

Refrain

Coming home, coming home, Nevermore to roam,
Open wide Thine arms of love, Lord, I'm coming home.

This morning, if you have ever felt far away from God—you can relate to David. If you have ever sinned deeply and paid a heavy price—you can relate to David. If you are here this morning in body only, and your heart like David's had been, is cold, dull, burdened, and distant—then you can relate to David.

So now as we turn to Psalm 51 we find that it is all about David who went so far away--Coming Back to God. Psalm 51 stands as a paradigm of prayers for forgiveness of sins. Believers have been comforted by the fact that since David's sins were forgiven theirs can be too.

The 51st Psalm is a divinely inspired roadmap, clearer than any other map in the world, on the way back to God. David tells us how he found his way back from a cold, distant and tormented heart to immediate joy, relief, peace, and security. Only God offers and provides such a blessing. The power of God is present today to heal you today, if you will like David—come back to God.

To understand that way back to God, turn with me to the 4th Penitential Psalm, the 51st Psalm, and listen as David lays bare his soul and explains how he came back to God.

Just before I read this Psalm and you follow along, I want you to notice the 35 words that I will emphasize while reading this Psalm. Out of the 327 words in these 19 verses there are 35 that all say the same thing. David says “I, me, my” those many times to show that he is personally responsible for his sin.

In fact the lesson of this Psalm and the lesson that will change your direction away from sin and towards God is that ALL SIN is AGAINST GOD, not merely a personal defeat. If you only think that sin is just a defeat you experienced--then sin is manageable, it is just something you learn to live with.

But David saw that sin was against God (v. 4) and David took personal responsibility for his sin (35 times he repeats that it is me, I am guilty)! That is David taking God's perspective. God says we are sinners.

But when the church has a superficial view of sin, this attitude affects everything the church believes and does. If men and women are basically good and not sinners under the wrath of God, then why preach the Gospel? Why send out missionaries? For that matter, why did Jesus even die on the cross? If people are good, then what they need is counseling and consoling, not convicting; we should give them encouragement, not evangelism. [1]

So as we read, get those two truths firmly planted in your mind.

All sin is against God. Take personal responsibility for sin.

Psalm 51 was designed primarily for public reading and worship. It was part of the regular songs of the Tabernacle and then Temple and now the church. The structuring like this was intended for effective communication in public assembly and worship. Note the emphasis and how it changes.

David's responsibility for sin is emphasized in the first half. Sin and sinner occur eight times and God by Name is not mentioned one time in vv. 3-9.

Psalm 51:3-9 3 For I acknowledge **my transgressions (1)**, And **my sin (2)** is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have **I sinned (3)**, And **done this evil (4)** in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth **in iniquity (5)**, And in **sin (6)** my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from **my sins (7)**, And blot out all **my iniquities (8)**.

The Holy God against whom David sinned is emphasized in the second half. But sin and sinner are only mentioned one time and God twenty times in vv. 10-19.

Psalm 51:10-19 10 Create in me a clean heart, **O God (1)**, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from **Your presence (2)**, And do not take **Your Holy Spirit (3)** from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of **Your salvation (4)**, And uphold me by **Your generous Spirit (5)**. 13 Then I will teach transgressors **Your ways (6)**, And **sinners*** shall be converted to **You (7)**. 14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, **O God (8)**, The **God of my salvation (9)**, And my tongue shall sing aloud of **Your righteousness (10)**. 15 **O Lord (11)**, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth **Your praise (12)**. 16 For **You (13)** do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; **You (14)** do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of **God (15)** are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, **O God (16)**, **You (17)** will not despise. 18 Do good in **Your good pleasure (18)** to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then **You shall be pleased (19)** with the sacrifices of righteousness, With burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then they shall offer bulls on **Your altar (20)**.

How Do I Get Back On Track?

How do we get back on the track? How do we come back to God? God's Word gives us a pathway, we can follow David. When you have been defeated by sin, David is inspired of God to tell us four steps we can take to come back to God.

#1 Understand that all Sin is Against God. (Psalm 51:1-4)

- The Lord can RENEW OUR RELATIONSHIP v. 1
- The Lord can WASH US CLEAN v. 2
- The Lord can REMOVE THE ROADBLOCK v. 3
- The Lord can UTTERLY FORGIVE v. 4

#2 Take Personal Responsibility for your Sin. (Psalm 51:5-9)

- As Sinners we show our nature, our choice and confirm God's declaration. v. 5
- As Sinners we need truthfulness v. 6
- As sinners we need cleansing v. 7
- As sinners we need joyfulness v. 8
- As sinners we need fellowship with our God v. 9

#3 Believe that Only God can cleanse and restore us. (Psalm 51:10-13)

- God is washing our hearts v. 10 [Heb 9.14; 10.22]
- God is restoring our walk in the Spirit v. 11
- God is renewing the fruit of the Spirit v. 12
- God is preparing us for further ministry v. 13

#4 Seek God and repent. (Psalm 51:14-19)

- Call sin what it is v. 14 (David murdered Uriah)
- Talk to God v. 15 (Psalm 32 David had dried up spiritually)
- Experience true contrition not mere externalism v. 16-17
- Begin zealous worship anew and afresh v. 18-19

Now let's begin an in depth look at each of these four sections. First we need to--

Understand that all Sin is Against God. (Psalm 51:1-4)

David starts this first section by saying—

I Am Guilty Psalm 51:1 David begins at quite a different reference point from that of modern psychotherapists or the social workers today. They usually begin with *“our inner experience. They invite us to try to face up to our moral problems, to recognize how our misdeeds affect society for the worse or how we have even broken society's laws”*.^[2]

But David sweeps beyond all these human and moral considerations and looks straight at the Almighty and Holy God he had sinned against.

- By confessing that he was guilty, David was coming back to God who alone can RENEW OUR RELATIONSHIP broken by sin. v. 1 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your loving kindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions.

David appealed to God's love and compassion as he petitioned the Lord to forgive him by grace and cleanse him from sin. Mercy is to not get what we deserve and grace is to get what we don't deserve. Mercy withholds, grace outpours.

*God's attributes of **unfailing love (chesed)** for His servant and His **compassion** for the helpless, were the basis for David's appeal for mercy. Even the verb **have mercy** was a prayer for **God** to act in accord with His nature. It is also a recognition that David did not deserve forgiveness. God's forgiveness is by His grace alone. [3]*

If you want swift, immediate and relationship restoring help from God, start with that simple guilty plea. If you want to see a David type of response to God in the NT open with me to Luke 18:9-14.

Do you know what God just can't resist? This type of heart cry to Him. The Greek tenses tell us that the publican couldn't stop saying this, he was an ongoing longing on his heart.

Luke 18:13 “And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, [kept on present active participle] saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

Like the publican who wouldn't even lift his face towards God but just said God be merciful to me, we can also come back to God.

A hymn writer once wrote what David must have felt as he responded to God's heavy hand of chastisement and conviction and repented of his sin and came back to God.

If you have ever felt far away from God—you can come back to God just like David. If you have ever sinned deeply and paid a heavy price— you can come back to God just like David. If you are here this morning in body only, and your heart like David's had been, is cold, dull, burdened, and distant— you can come back to God just like David.

[1] Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Holy*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1994.

[2] Knight, George A. F., *Daily Study Bible Series: Psalms, Volume 1*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press) 2001, c1984.

[3] Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

David--A Forgiven Sinner

DSS: Message Twenty-Seven (060723PM)

I am guilty. I was wrong. I am sorry—please take from me the just punishment I deserve. So begins the greatest song about the love of God experienced by a most desperate man named David.

David was overwhelmed. In a moment he went from absolute gloom and heaviness of soul to the joy of his sins lifted off. That weight that had grown heavier day after day was now lifted. The spiritual scales that had slowly taken the color and light from his life were removed.

His soul now flooded with light and peace began again to drink deeply from the wells of his salvation. David had fallen so far, so fast—but the dullness of his soul spread to every inch of his spiritual life had pressed him harder and harder. But now that weight was lifted.

His cold heart was warmed, his tormented soul was set free. David was no longer trapped in a painfully chastened body. David had left the bottom, where he had stayed there for almost a year.

How did David get back on the track? And even more pressing for each of us here this evening--how do we come back to God when we've sinned and grown cold and distant?

God's Word gives us a pathway, we can follow David. When you have been defeated by sin, David is inspired of God to tell us four steps we can take to come back to God.

- **#1 Understand that all Sin is Against God.** (Psalm 51:1-4)
- **#2 Take Personal Responsibility for your Sin.** (Psalm 51:5-9)
- **#3 Believe that Only God can cleanse and restore us.** (Psalm 51:10-13)
- **#4 Seek God and repent.** (Psalm 51:14-19)

We are in the midst of an in depth look at each of these four sections. We are examining the first four verses--

Understand that All Sin is Against God (Psalm 51:1-4)

David starts this first section by saying—I Am Guilty. But David sweeps beyond all these human and moral considerations and looks straight at the Almighty and Holy God he had sinned against.

By confessing that he was guilty, David was coming back to God who alone can RENEW OUR RELATIONSHIP broken by sin. v. 1 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your loving kindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions.

We learned last time that if you want swift, immediate and relationship restoring help from God, start with that simple guilty plea. If you want to see a David type of response to God in the NT open with me to Luke 18:9-14.

We learned that God just can't resist this type of heart cry to Him. The Greek tenses tell us that the publican couldn't stop saying this, he was an ongoing longing on his heart.

Luke 18:13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, [kept on present active participle] saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

Like the publican who wouldn't even lift his face towards God but just said God be merciful to me, we can also come back to God.

This cry of acknowledgment of our sin is very humbling. Paul reminds us of a secret in our lives as believers—the very way we started is how we are to continue.

Remember Colossians 2:6? "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him". The word received is the very same word for salvation as we find in John 1:12 "...as receive Him, to them He gave...". That humble contrition that brought us salvation brings us back time after time when we sin. Remember again with me how each of us came, just as we were and humbly fell at His feet pleading for mercy.

The humble approach we need when we come to Jesus was beautifully seen in the story behind one of the best known hymns in America. It was in London, in 1822, when a visiting evangelist was invited one evening to a very large and prominent home where a choice musical was to be presented.

The musician was Charlotte Elliott born in Clapham, England. As a young person she had lived a carefree life, gaining popularity as a portrait artist, musician and writer of humorous verse.

Now at thirty, her health began to fail rapidly, and soon she would become a bedridden invalid for the remaining years of her life. With her failing health came great feelings of despondency. The visit that night by the noted Swiss evangelist, Dr. Caesar Malan, proved to be a turning point in Charlotte's life.[1] Charlotte thrilled the audience with her singing and playing. When she finished, the evangelist threaded his way through the crowd which was gathered around her.

When he finally came to her and had her attention, he said, "Young lady, when you were singing, I sat there and thought how tremendously the cause of Christ would be benefited if you would dedicate yourself and your talents to the Lord.

But," he added, "you are just as much a sinner as the worst drunkard in the street, or any harlot on Scarlet Street. But I am glad to tell you that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, will cleanse you from all sin if you will come to Him."

In a very haughty manner, she turned her head aside and said to him, “You are very insulting, sir.” And she started to walk away. He said, “Lady, I did not mean any offense, but I pray that the Spirit of God will convict you.”

Well, they all went home, and that night this young woman could not sleep. At two o’clock in the morning she knelt at the side of her bed and took Christ as her Savior. And then she, Charlotte Elliott, sat down and, while sitting there, wrote the words of a favorite hymn “Just As I Am” (# 342):

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, tho’ tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind—
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need in Thee to find—
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

And then the final stanza:

Just as I am—Thou wilt receive,

Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;

Because Thy promise I believe,

O Lamb of God, I come!

And that this is the basis on which all of us must come to Christ.[2]

Throughout the remainder of her life, Miss Elliott celebrated every year the day on which her Swiss friend had led her to a personal relationship with Christ, for she considered it to be her spiritual birthday. Although she did not publish this hymn until 1836, fourteen years after her conversion experience, it is apparent that she never forgot the words of her friend, for they form the very essence of this hymn. [3]

Remember, David first said I am guilty (51:1a), next David says—Wash Me Psalm 51:1b-5

David's Plea for Cleansing

The Lord can WASH US CLEAN. v. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. *The three verbs David employed here are figurative.*

1. Blot out implies a comparison with human records that can be erased; In the NT Paul also uses this idea in Colossians 2:14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Exaleiphom (canceled out) means “to wipe off,” like erasing a blackboard. Ancient documents were commonly written either on papyrus, a paper like material made from the bulrush plant, or vellum, which was made from an animal's hide. The ink used then had no acid in it and did not soak into the writing material. Since the ink remained on the surface, it could be wiped off if the scribe wanted to reuse the material. Paul says here that God has wiped off our certificate of debt, having nailed it to the cross. Not a trace of it remains to be held against us. Our forgiveness is complete.

2. Wash away (καὶ_ας) compares forgiveness with washing clothing (often viewed as an extension of a person),

- Isaiah 64:6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.
- Revelation 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

3. And cleanse *is drawn from the liturgical ceremonial law in which one might be purified for temple participation. These requests (cf. vv. 7, 9) stressed David's desire for God's total forgiveness of his **transgressions . . . iniquity, and sin.** [4]*

The Lord can REMOVE THE ROADBLOCK as soon as we confess our sin. v. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin *is* always before me.

When you read Psalm 51, David's prayer of confession, you can't help but notice how his sins defiled every part of his being:

1. His eyes (v. 3), David's eyes were also affected; all he could see were his sins.
2. His mind (v. 6), His mind was affected, for he begged for wisdom (v. 6). The inner person (heart and spirit, v. 10) was out of fellowship with God (v. 11), and there was no joy. God does not take away the Holy Spirit when we sin (John 14:16), but we do grieve the Spirit and thereby lose His fellowship and help (Eph. 4:30–32). May we never forget the high cost of committing sin!
3. His ears (v. 8), Sin also affected his ears, for he lost the sound of joy and gladness. Nothing sounds good to a person out of fellowship with God.
4. His bones (v. 8), like a wandering lamb that had to be taught to stay with the flock, David's Good Shepherd broke his bones.
5. His heart (v. 10), Verse 17 suggests that David's heart not only became defiled, but it also became hard. When we harbor sin, it hardens the heart. People with a dirty conscience are usually on the defensive, wondering what other people may know.
6. His mouth (vv. 13–15). Even David's lips were affected, for he could no longer testify or witness, or even sing God's praises (vv. 13–15). Nothing shuts a Christian's mouth like unconfessed sin.
7. His hands were stained with Uriah's blood (v. 14), and all he could do was throw himself on the mercy of God and cry out, "Wash me!" (vv. 2, 7)

That is because for us as believers *sin always isolates and defiles*. The Prophet Isaiah confessed that he was "a man of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5), and then he spoke for all of us when he wrote, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (64:6).

Whatever sin touches, it defiles; only the blood of Jesus Christ can wash away that defilement (1 Cor. 6:9–11; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5). [5]

- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.
- 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.
- Revelation 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

Look at Mark 1:40-42 to see this attitude of David portrayed in person at the feet of Jesus. Just as the public found justification by his humble cry, so this leper found complete cleansing by his humble faith in Christ's powerful ability to cleanse him.

The Lord can WASH US CLEAN v. 2 I like what William Cowper (#196) once wrote.

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains;
Lose all their guilty stains;
Lose all their guilty stains;

And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

[1] Adapted from two different stories of this hymn. The first written by Osbeck, Kenneth W., *101 Hymn Stories*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications) 1997.

[2] Details of Charlotte Elliott's conversion recorded by McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

[3] Osbeck, Kenneth W., *101 Hymn Stories*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications) 1997.

[4] Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

[5] Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Holy*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1994.

David--Purge Me

DSS: Message Twenty-Eight (060813AM)

Have you ever felt so dirty that you just can't stand it any longer? There is nothing like a good hot bath after camping for a few days, or working in the attic or barn—when you feel dirty, completely grimy, sweaty and stinky.

That was how David felt. It is Psalm 51 time in his life. Months of sweating out in the wilderness of sin, trudging through the filthy wasteland of guilt had brought David to a sad and bitter end of himself.

He was dirty and he knew it. One remedy was all he wanted. Scrub, cleanse, and purge me so I will be clean; wash me and I shall be white!

David cries out to God from a heart that longed to know again the sweet fellowship of his early years, the deep spiritual intimacy of his mature years and an assurance of security for his final years.

When David cries to God in the first seven verses of Psalm 51—wash and purge me, the context of that cry is deeply rooted in the promise of sacrifice and atonement. God designed a way that sinners could know God and receive His wonderful salvation. Today as we look back at that sacrificial system, we see the most comprehensive explanation by God of just what Christ accomplished once and for all on the Cross.

Join me in the 51st Psalm as we listen to David.

Sometimes those words are so familiar that we need to hear them to a different tune. The following is a modern paraphrase of the 3,000 year old words of David's prayer to God.

Please stand with me, open to Psalm 51 and follow along in your Bible as I read this paraphrase. Though the language may shock you, hold on to the concepts that this Psalm gives us about the deadly work of sin and God's offer to purge us from its curse.

Psalm 51:1-19

1. Generous in love—God, give grace! Huge in mercy—wipe out my bad record.
2. Scrub away my guilt, soak out my sins in your laundry.
3. I know how bad I've been; my sins are staring me down.
4. You're the One I've violated, and you've seen it all, seen the full extent of my evil.
5. You have all the facts before you; whatever you decide about me is fair. I've been out of step with you for a long time, in the wrong since before I was born.

6. What you're after is truth from the inside out. Enter me, then; conceive a new, true life.
7. Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean, scrub me and I'll have a snow-white life.
8. Tune me in to foot-tapping songs, set these once-broken bones to dancing.
9. Don't look too close for blemishes, give me a clean bill of health.
10. God, make a fresh start in me, shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life.
11. Don't throw me out with the trash, or fail to breathe holiness in me.
12. Bring me back from gray exile, put a fresh wind in my sails!
13. Give me a job teaching rebels your ways so the lost can find their way home.
14. Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation God, and I'll sing anthems to your life-giving ways.
15. Unbutton my lips, dear God; I'll let loose with your praise.
16. Going through the motions doesn't please you, a flawless performance is nothing to you.
17. I learned God-worship when my pride was shattered. Heart-shattered lives ready for love don't for a moment escape God's notice.
18. Make Zion the place you delight in, repair Jerusalem's broken-down walls.
19. Then you'll get real worship from us, acts of worship small and large, Including all the bulls they can heave onto your altar! [1]

We are returning to one of the greatest examples of God's forgiving love in the entire Bible.

David sinned, he was chastened and convicted, he turns back to God in humble contrite repentance—and now he pleads for the cleansing only God can give.

We saw last time how clearly David saw that his sin was against God. This must be the starting place for any relief, any forgiveness, and any cleansing.

I Am Guilty

That is the first thing David says (51:1a), next David says—

Wash Me Psalm 51:1b-7

Remember that when it comes to our spiritual side, our minds, our consciences and that part of us that is eternal—only the Lord can WASH US CLEAN.

This next section of Psalm 51 is so very important, if not this moment, then in the not too distant future each of us will seek for cleansing when we sin. That is what God explains through this inspired record of David's prayer.

Read along with me Psalm 51:1-2 again. Note the end of verse 1 and then verse two the very clear cry to God made by David:

Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your loving-kindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,

- Blot out **my transgressions**.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from **my iniquity**,
- And cleanse me from **my sin**.

We saw last time that there were three requests for cleansing: blot, wash, cleanse.

Now we need to examine what it was that David wanted cleansed away from his life. Notice, there are not only three words for cleansing, there are also three types of stains being washed away. Those three are: transgressions, iniquity, and sin.

The three verbs David employed for removing his sins are a comprehensive look at how deeply we are stained and how completely Christ can clean us up.

1. **Blot out** (*machah*, "wipe or blot out") v. 1b "Blot out **my transgressions**". David compares his sins to a human record that needed to be erased. In the New Testament Paul also uses this idea in Colossians 2:14:

"...having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."

The word Paul uses is *Exaleipho* (canceled out) means "to wipe off," like erasing a blackboard. Ancient documents were commonly written either on papyrus, a paper like material made from the bulrush plant, or vellum, which was made from an animal's hide. The ink used then had no acid in it and did not soak into the writing material. Since the ink remained on the surface, it could be wiped off if the scribe wanted to reuse the material.

Paul says here that God has wiped off our certificate of debt, having nailed it to the cross. Not a trace of it remains to be held against us. Our forgiveness is complete. David asked God to wipe out the record of his sins, God erased them, and David rejoices.

2. **Wash away** (*kaub_as*) "thoroughly wash". v.2a 'Wash me thoroughly from **my iniquity**'. The word David uses compares forgiveness with washing clothing (often viewed as an extension of a person), so he says completely wash me like dirty clothes that need a

complete cleansing. In the world of the Bible this meant in cold water, beating the clothes against rocks and bleaching them in the sun.

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

Revelation 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

3. ***And cleanse*** (*taher*, “clean as not to contaminate others.”) v. 2b “And cleanse me from **my sin**”. This word used by David stresses the need for ceremonial cleansing so that his sin would not keep him or others from being able to approach God. David did not want to hinder anyone else by what he had done.

Sin contaminates everything—our souls, our lives, our homes, and our society. David cries cleanse away the contamination so no one else gets defiled by my sin.

What Sin is David Talking About?

Sin is such an offense to God that He has to use 15 different words in the Hebrew Old Testament just to describe it. When David’s adultery stole his neighbor Uriah’s little ewe lamb for his already overflowing banqueting table he defied the rules God had laid down.

There are three major Hebrew word groups that communicate the concept of sin in the Old Testament. Each of them is used in David’s prayer of confession, Psalm 51.

David now sees his life as God saw him. God had to deal with these areas of sin in his life.

1. First David says, ***I am guilty of resisting or defying God’s rule in my life***, and that is sin. v. 1b “Blot out **my transgressions**”.

God has put up certain boundaries in this life: God has certain physical laws, He has certain moral laws, He has certain spiritual laws. And anytime we attempt to step over them, we suffer the consequences. That kind of sin is always called transgression.

The word the Holy Spirit guided David to use is such a powerful picture of how God looked upon David’s sin. It was a transgression [Hebrew *peshah*]: ‘a going away’, ‘a departure’, ‘a passing over a boundary’, ‘doing what is prohibited’, or ‘a rebellion’ against God and his authority. This is a picture of how our actions are in direct affront against the Lord Himself. That is why David starts by saying, it was against You and You alone, I have sinned!

So each day in our lives we transgress against the Lord when ‘stepping over the boundaries that God has established’; or ‘defying God by crossing over the line God has drawn’. With David we need to say to God, I have gone over the line. You had a fence up and I climbed right over it. That’s the first word he uses. David first called his sin “transgression” and so should we.

All our transgressions need to be removed, and only God can do that. God can pull them off of us who lie beneath a load of sin that crushes us. When Nathan had told David that he would not die, but rather that his sins would be forgiven (2 Samuel 12:13; Psalm 31:1)—he used the word which literally means having our sin lifted off or carried away. This can only happen in God's Holy justice by Christ's vicarious (or substitutionary) sacrifice.

We are being crushed by any transgressions we keep around (Ezekiel 33:10). They suffocate, smother and squish the very life of our soul. But there is a Redeemer who can set us free.

And to his only hope, David fled. God cleansed David's sin that was smothering him; he was forgiven. That was the theme of the song he already sang for us in Psalm 32, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven". David couldn't help but break into song when he knew that powerful redemptive work of God his Savior.

So, God lifted up and off of David his sin that has smothered him. Complete forgiveness means that my sins no longer smother me. If you feel buried, smothered by sin—cry out to God, say I am guilty, you are holy. I have sinned, help me now. Save me from my sins—and He will!

If you know this moment that all your sins have been lifted off by the One who took your place on the Cross; the One who died the death you deserved; the One who was not guilty yet bore each and every one of our sins forever away—then allow the Spirit of God to energize a song in your heart back to Him.

For just a moment, let's not just hear this truth, let's respond. Grab your hymnbooks and turn to #206 and sing with me to the One who has delivered each of us from being smothered by our transgressions.

There is a Redeemer (Keith Green, 1982)

There is a redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy one,

* Thank you oh my father,
For giving us your son,
And leaving your spirit,
'til the work on earth is done.

Jesus my redeemer,
Name above all names,
Precious lamb of god, messiah,
Oh, for sinners slain. *

When I stand in glory,
I will see his face,
And there I'll serve my king forever,
In that holy place. *

2. Secondly David says, I am guilty of *twisting, or warping, or defacing, or distorting God's image in my life*, and that is sin. v. 2a “Wash me thoroughly from **my iniquity**”.

My iniquity is my wicked internal filth. He says I am iniquitous on the inside. **Iniquity** means inward crookedness, perversity; that which is altogether wrong. You can't excuse it; you can't offer some sort of apology; you can't in any way condone it. Iniquity [Hebrew *hawon*] means 'corrupt' or 'twisted', “twisted out of shape”, or 'crooked'. This word pictures what sin does to us inside as it warps and ruins us.

The only remedy as we saw earlier is in God's Hands. He has the precious blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us, washing us whiter than snow. That word wash we saw means thoroughly wash like they did in Jerusalem 3,000 years ago in cold water, beating the clothes against rocks and bleaching them in the sun.

Have you allowed the Lord to take you to the cleaners? Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing His blood provides? That is the question of Elisha Hoffman's hymn # 190 in our hymnbooks.

Are You Washed in the Blood? (Elisha Hoffman, 1878)

Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

*Are you washed in the blood,
In the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb?

Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Are you walking daily by the Savior's side?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Do you rest each moment in the Crucified?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? *

When the Bridegroom cometh will your robes be white?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Will your soul be ready for the mansions bright,
And be washed in the blood of the Lamb? *

Lay aside the garments that are stained with sin,
And be washed in the blood of the Lamb;
There's a fountain flowing for the soul unclean,
O be washed in the blood of the Lamb! *

3. Thirdly David says, I am guilty of *falling short of God's perfection and missing God's mark in my life*, and that is also sin. v. 2b "And cleanse me from **my sin**".

Sin means missing the mark. David says I have missed the mark. And God says we all fall short of His glory. God is perfect and holy--and no matter how hard we try, we just can't get up to Him. We fall short of Him.

There is a divine standard which, for some reason, a person does not live up to. That's all—just to miss the mark. You don't come up to God's standard. It's in that sense that all of us today are sinners. None of us come up to the standard of God. All come short of the glory of God.

This word for sin [Hebrew *chattath*] is same as *hamartia* in Greek 'coming short' or 'falling short' as in an arrow falling short. The target is God's law and sin is missing the mark on the target. This is a picture of failing to measure up to God's Divine Law.

Sin must be *cleansed*, removed from God's sight. It is odious and abominable, and must be put out of sight. David's song in Psalm 32 also describes this cleansing as the blessing of one 'whose sin is covered'. The word David uses in Psalm 32 for sin being 'covered by God' is the same word that is used for the ark of the covenant in the Tabernacle, covered by the mercy-seat. It is also used for the earth covered by the flood, and the Egyptians were covered by the depths of the sea.

When God takes our sins they are buried and unable to return. As Spurgeon said at this point in Psalm 51, what a cover must that be which hides away forever from the sight of the all-seeing God all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit!"

Our sins washed, cleansed, and covered also speaks of the strong imagery in the events of the day of atonement. On that day the High priest took the blood of an animal and sprinkled it onto

the mercy seat. Above the mercy seat was the presence of God portrayed by the outstretched arms of the cherubim. Beneath the lid of the ark were the tablets portraying God's divine law.

In essence, the blood on the mercy seat stood between a holy God and the sinners who broke His law, averting His wrath. David cried for joy when the wrath of God was turned away from him. So our sins are covered away by the blood of Jesus shed for us! God cleansed David's Sin that soils: now they were covered by the cleansing blood.

I sometimes have to just borrow the poets and one put it this way-Horatio G. Spafford once penned these blessed words:

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought—

My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

So David says

- Blot out **my transgressions**--I have crossed the line. You said don't go over that and I went over that.
- Wash me thoroughly from **my iniquity**--I am dirty inside and I can't make it to You.
- And cleanse me from **my sin**--I've missed the mark so I ask You to cleanse me.

[1]Peterson, Eugene H., *The Message*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing Group) 1997.

David--And I Shall Be Clean

DSS: Message Twenty-Nine (060813PM)

When David stood at the other end of Nathan's boney finger, pointed directly in his face—he was guilty, and he knew it. David had broken every law in the book, God's Book.

In reality, David had broken all of the Ten Commandments when he sinned with Bathsheba. How had he broken them all? In two ways; first by his actions he broke them all. And secondly, by God's standards he broke them all.

- 1: "**No other gods...**"—David allowed his lust to be the god to which he bowed in obedience.
- 2: "**Not take the Name...**"—David took the Holy Name of God in vain as he said he was God's man and lived like the devil.
- 3: "**Not make a graven image...**"—David engraved the image of naked Bathsheba as she bathed so deeply on his lustful soul, that he forgot even the God he loved for that moment of sin.
- 4: "**Remember the Sabbath...**"—David didn't keep the Sabbath or any other day holy for God once he allowed lust to rule.
- 5: "**Honor thy father and mother...**"—David dishonored them and all his family as he sank into such wicked and premeditated sin.
- 6: "**Not kill...**"—David sent the murder request to Joab, so it was not his sword but the arrows of others that David used—but it was his desire that Uriah be killed.
- 7: "**Not commit adultery...**"—that was the clearest of all David's law breaking.
- 8: "**Not steal...**"—David stole the wife of his neighbor and trusted friend Uriah as Nathan clearly pointed out in the story of the lamb.
- 9: "**Not lie...**"—David's false response was a lie when the messenger came with the ghastly news of Uriah's death; and even more, every day David lived in sin was a lie that he deceptively covered.
- 10: "**Not covet...**"—David broke this law as he so coveted his neighbors wife that he would steal her and kill her husband to lie in sexual sin with her.

So David was a guilty sinner. He broke them all. But in reality, so have every one of us. We all by God's standards have become guilty of breaking them all. Listen to the very first New Testament letter, written by the very first New Testament local church pastor named James.

James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

The Good News

Jesus died for all of us who are guilty sinners. As we read the rest of this Psalm and see how David asked for the sacrificial death of another to be counted for him (purge me with hyssop)—we can see why Christ's death for us sinners is so precious, and so powerful.

Purge Me

- **As sinners we are defiled internally** v. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

He says I am so aware of my utter filthiness on the inside compared with God's holiness. Compare myself with God and see what we really are. And that's what he does, he says purify me, I see myself, I see my character-

- **As sinners we need cleansing** v. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Purge me with hyssop. Sprinkle Christ's atoning blood upon me. Give me the reality which ceremonies symbolize. Nothing but His blood can take away my bloodstains; nothing but His cleansing can cleanse me.

This verse should also be read as the voice of faith: "Thou wilt purge me with hyssop, **and I shall be clean.**" There is such power in Christ's sacrifice, my sin will vanish away. I will be accepted back into the assembly of God's people—and by grace into God's Holy Presence.

Wash me. But not just ceremonially clean, I also need real spiritual purification of soul and spirit, my deepest parts. **And I shall be whiter than snow.** Snow stays white only briefly, soon it gathers dirt, smoke and dust, then it melts and disappears in a muddy mess; but God offers to me an endlessly kept purity. He has promised to 'save to the uttermost' (Hebrews 7:24-25).

Back in the Old Testament hyssop was used for three purposes.

- First, when God took the children of Israel out of Egypt, He said, "There is one thing you must do at Passover. You are to take a lamb, slay it, and take its blood in a basin out to the front door. Then use bunches of hyssop to apply the blood to the doorposts and to the lintel." *Hyssop portrayed the application of Christ's blood to shield from God's wrath.*
- Second, when God was giving instructions for cleansing a leper, He told about taking a live bird brushed with hyssop dipped in the blood of a slain bird, and then letting it fly away. *Hyssop portrayed the death and resurrection of Christ.*
- Third, when the children of Israel were on the wilderness march and one of them sinned, they couldn't stop and put up the tabernacle and offer a sacrifice. So provision was made for purification of sin by killing a red heifer, burning it along with hyssop, gathering the ashes, and taking them along on the wilderness march. When a man sinned, the ashes were put in water, then hyssop was used to sprinkle them on him. What a tremendous message! *Hyssop portrayed the reception of Christ's sacrifice that brought forgiveness.*

You have to go to Calvary to find the explanation of David's cry to 'purge me with hyssop'.

On the cross the Son of God said, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). Why did He say that? Because God cannot by any means clear the guilty. He cannot. He never will. And when the Lord Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us on the

cross—when He was delivered for our offenses that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him—God had to treat Him as He must treat sin.

Remember that God spared Abraham's son, but God did not spare His own Son when He had my sin and your sin upon Him. He had to slay Him, because God cannot pardon the guilty. Let's be clear on that. God hates sin and He will punish sin. By no means will He clear the guilty.

On the cross Jesus also said, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34). How can He forgive them? How can He extend mercy to thousands? How can He forgive iniquity? How can He forgive David? And how can He forgive you and me? The Bible is clear on this: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

And every time you find forgiveness in the New Testament, the blood of Christ is responsible. God never forgives sin apart from the death of Christ. Never. God is not forgiving sin because He is a big-hearted old man sitting on a cloud. He forgives sin because His Son paid the penalty.

And now, with open arms, He can say to you, "I can extend mercy to you because My Son died in your place." Oh, David knew the way into the heart of God[1].

So when David said, "Purge me with hyssop," he was crying out to God—apply Christ's sacrificial death on me. Much like the publican of Luke 18, David was saying 'God be merciful to me' and like the thief on the Cross 'remember me'.

When David finished breaking all the commands (just like we all have) he was totally guilty before a Holy God. The Scriptures tell us that who ever breaks even one law of God—is guilty of all. (James 2:10)

James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

- So David in God's sight was a debtor owing an impossible debt his sins had run up against God.
- David was a guilty convict, he was legally convicted as having broken God's law.
- Since adulterers were supposed to be stoned, David was dead as far as God was concerned in his sin.

David saw himself in Psalm 51 as God saw him—a guilty, convicted sinner. And that is why David, the man who broke all the commandments--found complete forgiveness.

We are also guilty and convicted sinners. We also have stumbled in at least one point—so we all are guilty of breaking all of God's Law.

The good news of the Gospel is exactly this truth—Christ died for sinners. He died in the place of guilty sinners. And all who receive His gift, through His Son will confess that--

- God the innocent died for me the guilty.
- God the offended died for me to offender.
- God the Holy died for me the sinful.
- God the Just died for me the unjust.
- God the perfect died for me the imperfect.

Like David, we need to see ourselves as God saw us. We like David are guilty of breaking them all. We should see ourselves as worst than we think, rather than better. Because Christ's death is only for the guilty, only for the hopelessly stained, and only for the helplessly lost. It is in that condition—like David's, that we find God's grace.

1. Because of our sin, like David--we are all debtors.

So Christ died to take the hopeless debt we owe to God and pay with His own life our eternal death sin has caused us to be responsible to pay--**that's forgiveness**. A Sinner stands before God as a debtor and that debt is forgotten by His payment.

- Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. NKJV
- Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace NKJV
- Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. NKJV

Have you like David, **experienced the relief of knowing that all your sins, everyone of them—past, present, and future, are GONE?** Your sins are paid for, and your eternal life is purchased—and you have the receipt in your hand, written in the very blood of the One who paid the price. Christ's record of that payment is forever settled in this book the Bible!

2. Because of our sin, like David--we are all guilty convicts in God's sight.

So Christ died to take guilty convicts and destroy any record that that ever committed a crime and takes their place in the punishment—**that's justification!** A Sinner stands before God as accused and is declared righteous by His imputed righteousness.

- Psalm 51:3-4 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. NKJV
- Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. NKJV
- Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ, NKJV

Have you like David, experienced **the peace of justification, all guilt removed, all punishment forever taken away from God's sight?**

3. Because of our sin, like David--we are all dead in our trespasses and sin.

So Christ died to take dead and rotting spiritual corpses and make them vibrant, full of endless life and brand new—**that's regeneration!**

- Ephesians 2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, NKJV
- John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. NKJV
- Hebrews 7:16b ...but according to the power of an endless life. NKJV;

Have you like David, **experienced the power of an endless life**, and every day partaking of the powerful presence within of the very Lord God Almighty?

4. Because of our sin, like David--we are all enemies of God.

So Christ died to take enemies and make them friends—**that's reconciliation!** A Sinner stands before God as an enemy and is made a friend by His peace.

- Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. NKJV
- Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, **having been reconciled**, we shall be saved by His life. NKJV;
John 15:14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. NKJV

Have you like David, experienced **the wonder of friendship with God?**

5. Because of our sin, like David--we are all strangers to God.

So Christ died to take strangers and make them part of the family—**that's adoption!** A Sinner stands before God as a stranger and is called a Son by His choice.

- Ephesians 2:12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. NASB
- Galatians 4:4-6 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, **that we might receive the adoption as sons.** 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" NKJV

Have you like David, experienced **the joy of being adopted into Christ's family?**

6. Because of our sin, like David--we are all slaves to unrighteousness.

So Christ died to take slaves and make them freed forever—**that's redemption!** A Sinner stands before God as a slave and is granted freedom by His ransom.

- John 8:34 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. NASB
- John 8:36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, **you shall be free indeed.** NKJV

Have you like David, experienced **the thrill of being liberated, set free, rescued by God forever?**

7. Because of our sin, like David--we are all defiled.

So Christ died to take our soiled and spotted lives that always get wasted and make them clean, focused and fruitful—**that's sanctification!** Just before we read Romans 6:13b, may I again remind you of the two sides of the coin of salvation. To best understand what God has done, let me contrast and explain justification and sanctification. Because we are saved (justified) this is how we should live (sanctified).

- ❖ **Justification** is what Christ did for me on the cross--**sanctification** is what Christ is doing in me because of the cross.
 - ❖ **Justification** is immediate and was completely finished in me the instant I was saved—**sanctification** is an ongoing process never completed on earth until I meet Jesus face to face at death or His coming.
 - ❖ **Justification** is activated the moment I trust in the Person of Christ Jesus and His finished sacrifice of the cross—**sanctification** grows with each obedient choice I make empowered by the Holy Spirit.
 - ❖ **Justification** is my position declared right in God's sight—**sanctification** is my practice made right by becoming more conformed to s image.
- Romans 6:13b ...but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. NKJV
 - Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. NKJV
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. NKJV
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. NKJV

Have you like David, experienced **the stability of coming under new management?** Do you know the thrill of looking at your life and sensing His control? Do you see your hands as

extensions of His? Your voice as a channel for Him to speak? Your days as no longer belonging to you but to be lived unto Him who loved you and gave Himself for you?

So that is what David asked and received in Psalm 51. Mercy and grace from the Cross. Christ died to save sinners from their sins and to rescue them from death, destruction, despair and doom.

- I am guilty; I have sinned against You alone
- Purge me by the cleansing power of Christ's death—who gave Himself for me!

An incredible worship song that captures what the Lord does when He removed our sins was written during the Civil War years here in America by Charitie Bancroft. This great hymn has been set to new music and has seen a revival in recent days.

The message is so powerful to all of us who like David have had our sins “pulled off” by Christ's work on the cross for us.

Before the throne of God above (Words: Charitie Bancroft, 1863)

Before the throne of God above

I have a strong and perfect plea.

A great high Priest whose Name is Love

Who ever lives and pleads for me.

My name is graven on His hands,

My name is written on His heart.

I know that while in Heaven He stands

No tongue can bid me thence depart. (2x)

When Satan tempts me to despair

And tells me of the guilt within,

Upward I look and see Him there

Who made an end of all my sin.

Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free.
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me. (2x)

Behold Him there the risen Lamb,
My perfect spotless righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of glory and of grace,

One in Himself I cannot die.
My soul is purchased by His blood,
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ my Savior and my God! (2x)

[1] M cGee, J. Vernon, *David: A Man After God's Own Heart*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc.) 2001, c2000.

David's Purpose--God's Glory

DSS: Message Thirty (900121PM)

WHERE DOES DAVID FIT IN THE SCOPE OF THE SCRIPTURAL PORTRAITS OF GOD'S SERVANTS?

- David = Ruth 4 (1), 1 Sam. 16-1 Kings 2 (41), 1 Chron. 1- (29), Psalms (75) = 146 Chapters thus in I Samuel 13:14 and Acts 13:22 he the man after God's own heart.
- MOSES = Ex. 2-40 (38), Lev.-Deut. (97), Psalm 90 (1) = 136 Chapters
- Christ = Gospels (89), Rev. 2-3 (2), Acts 1 (1), Hebrews (13) = 105 Chapters
- Paul = Acts 9, 13-Philemon (104) = 104 Chapters
- John = Synoptic Gospels - half (44), Acts 1-8 (8), Rev./Epistles (29), John (21) = 102 chapters
- Peter = Gospels - half (45), Acts 1-8, 10-12, 15 (12), Peters (8) = 65 chapters

DAVID'S PERSONAL LIFE:

- Special Family Line (Ruth 4) - "Who was he?"
 1. He was a descendent of a Harlot, Rahab.
 2. He was a descendent of a Cursed Foreign nation, Moabite Ruth.
 3. He was a descendent of an immoral woman, Tamar. All are portraits of God's grace!
- Special Family Position (1 Sam. 16:1-13) - "How was he?"
 1. v. 11 He is the youngest.
 2. v. 12 He is handsome and hard working.
 3. v. 12 He is chosen of God.
 4. v. 13 He is annointed by the Spirit of God.
- Special Family Testimony (1 Sam. 16:14-23) - "What was he?" (Answered by how the Spirit's presence was displayed in his life...)
 1. v. 18 - It is visible to others
 2. v. 19 - It produces true humility
 3. v. 23 - It produces comfort in others.

Robinson in ISBE[1] writes:

It is generally allowed that he is the most gifted and versitile personage in Israelite history; that he is surpassed in ethical greatness and general historical importance only by Moses...Dean Stanley writes, there is no OT character to be compared to the complexity of David in the elements of passion, tenderness, generosity, and firceness; David was a soldier, shepherd, poet, statesman, priest, prophet, king, the romantic friend,

chivalrous leader, and the devoted father, all in one; only Jacob's life comes near in the variety.

Okay, so we have a great man. But what about II Samuel 11 and his adultery. Sin, murder, adultery and hypocrisy? Yes, but he was willing to confess in Psalm 51 and repent and thank God for cleansing in Psalm 32.

What was the foundation such a life of blessing was built upon? We can find it in David's Public Life. we have seen his:

- Portrait is massive in scripture
- His Personal life is special in private.
- But now, lets see the essence DAVID'S PUBLIC LIFE

DAVID'S PUBLIC LIFE (1 Sam. 17-2 Sam. 24) - The key to all the blessing upon David's life and ministry can be found in the longest chapter of the historical books, 1 Sam. 17.

Concern for God's Name to be Honored (1 Sam. 17) is hidden in the story of Goliath.

David's personal life:

- v. 15 David is HUMBLE
- v. 20 David is DISCIPLINED
- vs. 25, 26 Divine perspective (also vs. 36, 45).
- v. 36-37 David MAGNIFIES God's hand in his life.
- v. 45-46 David has as his purpose in life, GOD'S GLORY.
- v. 46 David's purpose is revealed in the details.
- v. 54 David is DEDICATED wholly to the Lord.

Concern for God's Name to be Praised

In every trial he leans upon God and demonstrates faith. Compare 1 Sam. 19:11-18/Psalm 59:

- David TURNS to God when in greatest danger.
- He TRUSTS in God.
- He TRIUMPHS through God's power.

So, what is the secret of being after God's own heart? It is concern for God's honor. In fact that was the worst part of David's adultery, it made the enemies of the Lord reproach His name.

May we have such a consuming passion!

[1] ISBE, David, paragraph #11 An estimate of David.

David--Facing Consequences

DSS: Message Thirty-One (060820AM)

To know God is the greatest treasure in all of life. The treasure of knowing God comes to us through His Word. Are you finding the treasures of God? He has left them out in plain sight in His Book the Bible.

Please open with me to one of the most treasure laden chapters in the Bible—Psalm 51. These 19 verses have been the source of hope to many troubled by sin, comforting more repentant hearts than nearly any other chapter of the Bible.

History records some amazing events; times when people have walked over treasures of immense value—usually without even knowing it.

That is often what happens when we get so used to a place that we can walk almost without noticing anything around us.

That familiarity with our physical surroundings can also happen to us spiritually. We can almost think that we have exhausted a passage of God's Word and when we come to it we only see what we saw before and so we just pass on by.

That can also happen when we open week after week to the same chapter of the Bible here as we gather at church. As we return week after week to Psalm 51, it can become common, familiar and almost a place where we notice nothing new. The only solution is to ask the Lord to open our eyes and heart every time we enter His Word. The Lord can make every entrance into His Word yield great treasures.

That reminds me of a bit of American History that has always fascinated me.

Gold was found at the head of Six-Mile Canyon in the territory of Nevada in 1859 by two miners named Pat McLaughlin and Peter O'Reilly. A fellow miner, Henry Comstock, stumbled upon their find and claimed it was on his property. The gullible McLaughlin and O'Reilly believed him and assured Comstock a place in history when the giant lode was named.

Soon multitudes of treasure seeking miners, lured by gold fever, began following the vein of gold up the canyon. They spent each day slogging their way up and down that narrow Six Mile Canyon chipping the outcropping of gold encased in quartz. Though they labored feverishly it was slow going for two reasons—the quartz was so hard to break, and the only way to their mining claims was that unusual canyon filled with strange, heavy, almost glue like mud, it's entire length.

Day after day miners complained that the biggest problem in this grubstake paradise was the sticky blue-gray mud that clung to their boots, their wagons, their picks and shovels. But they slogged on day after day and week after week. It seemed like their feet were covered with lead and the tools would become too heavy to lift the longer they worked.

Finally one miner, new on the scene, saw the mud differently. He immediately scraped the mud off his boot at the assayer's office and asked for an analysis of why it was so heavy.

When the mud was assayed, it proved to be silver ore worth over \$2,000 a ton in 1859 dollars! That was a dollar per shovel full then or at 2006 silver prices it was equal to--\$100 for every shovel scooped up and hauled away. No wonder some of the legendary California fortunes like the Crocker Bank of California and the William Randolph Hearst empire both began here.

The rest is history. They had all been walking through the Comstock Lode. Beneath their feet in the sticky blue-gray mud that day in 1859 laid \$400,000,000.00 worth of silver.

The common mud that thousands of miners had walked on for months was the greatest lode of silver ever discovered in all of history. Far more valuable than the gold they had feverishly chipped from the hard quartz veins in the mountain sides, was the silver laden mud. All they had to do was stop and scoop it up!

Don't walk through Psalm 51 or any other portion of God's Word again without scraping what you find off in the Presence of the Lord—ask him to tell you how much it is worth. Then start a life long habit of scooping up the treasures of His Word. It will be a spiritual fortune.

Our return to Psalm 51 is part of a careful look at the three final eras of David's life. The twenty or so years after David's sin with Bathsheba (when he was about age 50) divide into three distinct lessons that are captured for our learning by God's Word. May I underline once more in your mind where we are, and where we are headed?

Over Psalm 51 as well as Psalm 32 and 38 you should write these words in your hearts and minds—"***Unguarded Moments Lead to Sin***". We must never isolate the Psalms that flow from a period of David's life (like Psalm 32, 38, and 51) from the inspired record of that period. Let me trace the three periods of David's final days and the inspired record of God's perspective on the events that surround those Psalms.

Unguarded Moments lead to SIN—Uriah and Bathsheba. The saddest chapter, the darkest and the event we all wince at—is his sin with Bathsheba. God gives us a Divine record of those moments and days in 2nd Samuel 11-12. Out of this time period Psalms flow explaining the effects of what I call "*David's Unguarded Moments that led to SIN*". These are Psalm 32; 38; 51. That is what we are concluding in this study today.

- **Inevitable Consequences lead to PAIN—Absalom and Shimei.** Eleven chapters record the many years of painful consequences because of David's sin from 2nd Samuel 12-21, and 24. This inspired record of that period that I call "*David's Inevitable Consequences that led to Pain*" explains the Psalms that flow from David's PAIN. These are Psalms 3; 31; 55; 63.
- **Humble Obedience leads to JOY—Solomon, and the Temple.** And last, the final days of David's life. When we see that despite the failures of Bathsheba incident—David truly was after God's own heart. We see him end well, using his final days for God's glory. Four chapters capture these years in 2nd Samuel 22-23 and I Kings

1-2. The Psalms that flow from this final era I call “*David’s Humble Obedience that leads to JOY*” are Psalms 18; 71.

As we examine these lessons from David, they are very difficult but so necessary. For any and all of us today ring Paul’s words across the centuries as a reminder to stay in the diligent study of God’s Word. Turn there with me next—

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Every shovelful of the Scriptures that we prayerfully dig through in our devotional quiet time can yield something powerful from God’s Word for each of us. As Paul said, all Scripture was designed by God and given by God to do something in our lives. Note the six phrases Paul uses:

- “...profitable for doctrine”, (That is God teaching us what is RIGHT). This Greek word *disdaskalia* refers to the content or message of God’s Word not the particular method or means of communicating it.
- “...for reproof”, (That is God teaching us what is WRONG). This Greek word *elegmos* refers to using God’s Word to point out errors in conduct or belief.
- “...for correction”, (That is God teaching us how to get RIGHT). This Greek word *epanorthosis* refers to using God’s Word for restoring someone back on their feet after stumbling or falling; it is the edification and building up ministry of God’s Word.
- “...for instruction in righteousness”: (That is God teaching us how to stay RIGHT). This Greek word *paideia* refers to using God’s Word for positive training and discipling us in righteousness.
- “...that the man of God may be complete”, (That is God teaching us He is ENOUGH). This Greek word *artios* refers to the reality that God’s Word makes us complete and capable to be proficient for anything God call us to do.
- “...thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (That is God teaching us how to SERVE). This Greek word *exartidzo* could be paraphrased, “enabled to meet all demands of righteousness.” When we are mended by God’s Word (that is what equipped mean) we are then able to build up and help strengthen the lives of those around us.

So, as we turn back again to Psalm 51, we are entering a portion of Scripture that is

- Profitable for doctrine (God teaching us what is right about David’s response to his sin),
- For reproof (God pointing out what was wrong in David’s life that led to his sin),
- For correction (God explaining to us how to get right with Him using David as an example),
- For instruction in righteousness (God directing us how to stay right with Him again using David as a real living and breathing example);
- That each believer may be complete (God reminding us that He is more than enough for all we will need through life as we see His dealings with David the most recorded life in the Bible),

- Thoroughly equipped for every good work (God teaching us how we can serve Him like we saw in David's life before he failed, after he failed, and for the rest of our lives).

First, a quick reminder of the four main ideas of Psalm 51. David says, I--

- **#1 David said, I...Saw that all Sin is Against God.** (Psalm 51:1-4)
- **#2 David said, I ...Took the blame for my sin and repented.** (Psalm 51:5-9)
- **#3 ...Asked for help, because only God can cleanse and restore.** (Psalm 51:10-13)
- **#4 ...Sought God for a fresh start.** (Psalm 51:14-19)

We have already studied the first seven verses. This morning we will begin with verse 8, as we watch **David taking the blame for his sin and repenting.**

When David repented he needed joyfulness v. 8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. As sinners we lose our joy. He says I have lost my song, I don't hear Your joyful song anymore.

When David repented he longed for fellowship with God v. 9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. In Eden we saw Adam and Eve hiding from God. Sin separates and blinds us to God's Presence. So David wants instead fro the sin that blinds and separates to be taken away. He wants God more than any sin.

Thirdly, David explains, I ...Asked for help, because only God can cleanse and restore. (Psalm 51:10-13)

David knew that only God could give him a new beginning. v. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. This word create speaks of what only God can do by his gracious power.

We must never think that God's forgiving grace, wonderful as it is, either permits or encourages us to go on sinning.... "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" asked Paul. He answered, "By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (Rom. 6:1-2).

Remember the ending of the story of Jesus and the woman trapped in adultery in John 8? Christ's concluding words are so important, and so overlooked. They are another treasure of God's Word. [Having forgiven her, Jesus] added in John 8:11, "Go now and leave your life of sin." God's grace always demands a change; always following forgiveness will be Christ's words--if we are saved, we must stop sinning.

At the same time, we can be grateful that Jesus spoke as he did. For we notice that he did not say, "Leave your life of sin, and I will not condemn you." If he had said that, what hope for us could there be? Our problem is precisely that we do sin.

There could be no forgiveness if forgiveness was based upon our ceasing to sin. Instead of that, Jesus actually spoke in the reverse order. First, he granted forgiveness freely, without any conceivable link to our performance.

Forgiveness is granted only on the merit of his atoning death. But then, having forgiven us freely, Jesus tells us with equal force to stop sinning.[1]

Two of my favorite verses in God's Word explain the wonderful power of new beginnings as Christ's blood is applied to our hearts.

- Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
- Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

David knew that only God could restore his walk in the Spirit v. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

The days that had stretched into the weeks and months of that spiritual wasteland David had just experienced were so bad he wanted to never revisit that time again. He was so aware that the sweet influence of the Holy Spirit came upon him that filled his heart with joy, with songs, with peace that made him a blessing had been pulled back. So David says

1. I want You to renew my heart by washing it. (v. 10)
2. I want You to restore my walk by giving me Your Spirit back. (v. 11)
3. I want You to bring back the fruit of the Spirit in my life. (v.12)

David knew that only God could renew the fruit of the Spirit v. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. (sustain me with a willing spirit)

Remember the fruit of the Spirit is love, and JOY. It's not something we get by moving to a nicer home and neighborhood—that is so temporary. It's not something we get by buying something we really want—that is so brief. It's not something we get by accomplishing some deed of greatness—that is so fragile. It's an internal fruit born by the Spirit of God that grows deeper and deeper inside of us.

David says bring back the fruitfulness of Your Spirit in my life. I am going to focus on Your work, I want You to wash my heart. I want You to restore my walking in the power of Your Spirit. I want You to renew his fruit growing in me. Verse 13 he concludes this section focusing on God's work—he says I want You, God to help me have further ministry.

David knew that only God could prepare him for further ministry v. 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You.

When I let You, God do all this, when I let You wash my heart, when I let You restore my walk in the Spirit, when I let You renew His bringing forth His fruit in my life, You prepare me for further ministry.

You know sometimes when we hit the bottom, when we are into sin, we just think it's all over—nothing, I can't do anything, I'm useless. Look at what he says in Wow, David says I am going to come back, I'm going to serve You.

Now he didn't go back when he was still in sin. There was quite a long period of time. God had worked through the process and it utterly cleansed him and filled him back with joy.

Fourthly, David explains, I ...Sought God for a fresh start. (Psalm 51:14-19)

David sought God by calling sin what it is. v. 14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.

We must repent of sin. Turn from it, change your mind about it, want to get rid of it, get uncomfortable about it. A lot of people, they are willing to say I have made a mistake. They are willing to say I didn't do that as well as I should have. Instead of saying I sinned. We don't like to humbly confess when we've sinned. Why? Because to say I've sinned, we have to agree with God. And all that's within us, our flesh and our pride rebels against humble repentance. We don't want to say that we have sinned. We want to say we made a mistake, that we are weak—but not that we have sinned.

David called his sin what it really was. Look at v. 14, “Deliver me from blood guiltiness”. Wait a minute. Did David literally kill Uriah? No, an Ammonite archer shot arrows and did it for him. But it was really David who killed Uriah; David sent him there, David ordered Joab to send Uriah to the front lines and get him killed.

When David truly turns to God, he repents by calling his sin what it really was. So unabashedly David prays, “Deliver me from blood guiltiness, I killed Uriah--O God, thou God of my salvation: [and] my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. I'll call sin what it is—in my life that was sin. God, forgive me of that, cleanse me of that, renew me.”

David wanted to talk to God. v. 15 O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

Remember we saw in Psalm 32 that those months of hiding his sin had dried up David both physically and spiritually. When we are attached to our sin, we are strangely silent towards God. That's what Psalm 32 is all about. David had dried up spiritually—he just closed his mouth, he wasn't talking to God in fact he wasn't talking to anybody. He was just empty inside. When he lost his song, he wasn't interested in talking to God.

But when we call sin what it is, when we repent, we have to start talking to God. We have to just open our lips and say like David said, 'God open my mouth back up--don't let me hang around down here in the low lands. Let my mouth declare Your praise'.

When we are down, if all we will do is just start praising God for who He is and what He has done, and what He means to us, God will restore our joy.

David wanted to Get Real (Experience true contrition not mere externalism). v. 16-17 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise.

You see, it would have been easy to have taken a lamb to the Tabernacle and had them kill it in his place. It would have been easy to have brought a guilt offering, or a sin offering. God says I don't want you to merely externally do something. I want you, on the inside, to have a broken spirit. What does James 4:9 say? Be afflicted, mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning, your joy to heaviness.

What did Paul say in 2 Corinthians 7:8-10? ... For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Let me explain the difference. Godly sorrow is when we say to the Lord like David did:

- God I have sinned against You.
- God I have broken Your righteous standard.
- God against You I have _____ and you name the sin.

Do you know what the sorrow of the world is?

- Oh no, I've lost my health.
- Oh no, I've lost my job.
- Oh no, I have a sexually transmitted disease.
- Oh no, I'm pregnant. Or whatever.
- It is just sorrow over what happens to us and that's not Godly sorrow. That's not sorrow that brings repentance.

It reminds me of what Howard Hendricks said once while I was in seminary. He said when the man goes in to the convenience store (or nowadays online) and sees the pornographic material and stands there and looks at it; and begins the fires burning within him; when he comes out he thinks—'God I'm sorry I looked at the magazine'. Howie always said, "That's not confession that is only an admission".

Confession is saying, "I offended You my Holy God; I lusted and wanted to lust; I started a fire as the writer of Proverbs says, inside that will burn me up. God I ask You to cleanse that and take away that wicked desire." That's confession. Admission doesn't count.

How Can I Get On God's Path?

If you are facing lust you need to consider the final result of it. What can we do right now to get us started back to God's path or keep us on that path? Let me give you three choices we need to make:

1. Make yourself look at the final result or ultimate form (mature plant) of the momentary choices of (or seeds you are planting) today.

- If your parents knew what you have been hiding from them, would it crush them and grieve their hearts?
- If your husband or wife knew about the area you have surrendered to lust, would it rob your relationship of joy and trust?
- If you keep on in this path what will it do to your body, your family, your reputation and your heavenly reward?
- Is it really worth as much as it will eventually cost you?

2. Choose to cultivate new and godly choices—remember every time we descend into lust our flesh is strengthened.

It's takes control of more of our life. And I'll tell you the tragic result of a life of lust and sin is the life of those that can't stop sinning because lust controls them and God says that He has given them over to the desires of their heart. that will become habits of holiness for old and ungodly patterns. Cut cable or online service for a few months and join an accountability group or Bible study; take a fast from TV watching (even sports) and start a Scripture memory plan like our "108 verses".

3. Remember it will only be harder to stop tomorrow.

Every wrong choice we make sets in motion a wave of consequence and growing bondage throughout our mind and body. Every obedient choice we make set in motion a wave of liberating blessing and spiritual strength.

David says here I'm not going to admit, I am going to confess. I am going to experience true contrition, not mere externalism. I am not just going to offer some little lamb. I am going to be broken hearted inside.

David wanted to Chase After God (Begin zealous worship anew and afresh)

v. 18-19 Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, With burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

What he is saying is- God now that I am back with you, I am going to zealously follow Your program. I am going to zealously praise You in Zion. I am going to zealously bring my offerings to You--but not as a token, but now from a true heart.

[1] James Boice quoted by John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Vanishing Conscience - Drawing the Line in a No-Fault, Guilt-Free World*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing) 1997, electronic edition, n.p..

Confessions of A Cave Man

DSS: Message Thirty-Two (900218PM)

Ever felt prehistoric? A life reduced to grunts and groans? As one poet expressed it, "life must go on . . . I just can't remember why". A vicious swirl of getting up, going through the day and dropping into bed exhausted only to fall further behind instead of ahead? Trapped in a cave, David baby-sat four hundred fellow fugitives. That's his address in Psalm 142. From the cave of Adullam he looks up and discovers some great truths about God. So can we.

Cave times often slide in right after our victories as David discovered. As "the hero" David toppled the #1 Villain of the hour (Goliath) and lived to tell about it (I Samuel 17). As "Mr. Brave" David escaped an assassination attempt by Saul (I Samuel 19). As "Mr. Clever" David acted his way out of the presence of the dreadful commander of the Philistines (I Samuel 21). In our text we meet David running for his life, caring for his family and hosting all these malcontents.

Cave life yields great discoveries about God. David sings them in Psalm 142. Listen to the confessions of this caveman: "Lord of Refuge, You are my Portion" (v.5), "O Listening One, hear my cry and Rescue me (v.6). My God who Provides the righteous to gather about me, You are Sufficient" (v. 7). How's your world? Caving in? Why not look out of your need and find the courage needed in the One David found sufficient!

Well, meet someone who went through that ahead of you. He lived 3,000 years ago in the Middle East. His name is = DAVID.

DAVID -

- Humble in origins
- Devout to His God
- Chosen as God's man
- Resolute to follow
- Human to the point of great sin
- Repentant to the point of great forgiveness
- Incomparable in worship

DAVID: After God's Own Heart. Why?

1. I Samuel 17 - Because of an UNCHANGEABLE CONCERN that God's Name be honored. (So he stands for Him.) Remember -he was the only one...
2. Psalm 59 - Because of an UNSHAKABLE TRUST that God was protecting him. (So he depends on Him). Remember - his Saul, his father-in-law tried to kill him.
3. Psalm 34 - Because of an UNWAVERING HOPE that God was watching - so HE MAGNIFIED Him. (22 x David notes it!)

4. Finally in Psalm 142: David - a man after God's own heart Because of his UNMISTAKABLE AWARENESS that God was hearing him... so He calls on him. (7 x David expresses THIS TRUTH). Look at Ps. 142.

Now how did David get in this fix? It was after some great days.

Usually "cave times" are. They were for David!

(1) They usually follow great victories.

- I Sam. 17 - David was "the hero" who toppled Israel plus God's #1 Villain of the hour (Goliath) and lived to tell about it - I Sam. 17.
- I Sam. 19:11 - David was "Mr. Brave" who escaped an assassination (by Saul) attempt and lived to tell it all - Ps. 59.
- I Sam. 21:10-15 - David was "Mr. Clever" who acted his way out of the presence of the commander of the dreadfully feared Philistine warriors in Achish - and lived to tell about it all - Ps. 34.
- Now, I Sam. 22:1-2 - Here's David
 1. Running for his life
 2. Caring for his family
 3. Hosting all these malcontents

WHAT AN ASSIGNMENT! HOW DID HE DO?

Well - If "cave times" usually:

(1) *FOLLOW TIMES OF GREAT VICTORIES*. Then they are -

(2) *ACCOMPANIED BY GREAT DISTRESS*

- OVERWHELMED IN SPIRIT (v.3)

"Roof caving in!"

"Everything going wrong at once!"

"Always happens to me!"

"Not now!"

"I have some bad news"

- HIDDEN A TRAP FOR ME

"They're all after me"

"I've been railroaded"

"Framed"

- NO ONE REGARDS ME (v.4)

"No one called..."

"I'm a nobody"

"Poor me..."

"I'm all alone"

- NO ESCAPE FOR ME

"One-way trip to nowhere"

"You're TOO old"

"I'm sorry but the qualifications for this position..."

YES, NO ONE CARES FOR MY SOUL

Cave times also - Accomplished great discoveries about God v. 5

- Thou art my REFUGE
- Thou art my PORTION
- Thou art my LISTENER 'Give heed my cry'
- Thou art my DELIVERER "bring
- Thou art my OBJECT OF WORSHIP
- Thou art my PROVIDER
- Thou art my SUFFICIENCY

Finally, cave times usually:

- Followed times of great victory
- Accompanied by great distress
- Accomplished great discoveries about God
- Preceded great blessings

Like what? Well, David went on to:

- Vindication as just man
- Coronation as king
- Exaltation as warrior

- Immortalization as Psalmist

But let's wait to next week and Ps. 57.

Is Your World Caving In?

Look now and find:

- FLEE TO YOUR REFUGE. **Thou art my Refuge**
- FEED ON YOUR PORTION. **Thou art my Portion**
- SPEAK TO YOUR MASTER. **Thou art my Listener**
- TRUST IN YOUR REDEEMER. **Thou art my Deliverer**
- ADORE YOUR LORD. **Thou art my Object of Worship**
- REST IN HIS SUFFICIENCY. Thou art my Provider, Thou art my Sufficiency

David--When Life Doesn't Turn Out As Planned

DSS: Message Thirty-Three (060820PM)

There is probably no more touching, poignant moment in all the incredible life of David than the scene of 2 Samuel 15:13-37.

To the loud wails of the country people who watched (v. 23) a somber band of commanders in their armor walked in formation. They were surrounding the King of Israel now deposed by a rebellious son, driven from his throne, banished from his city, fleeing for his life.

David walks head down, tears dropping silently to the ground. His face is wet, his eyes are swollen and red, his head is covered as he trudges heavily down the slopes of Zion toward the brook called Kidron.

Stepping across the stones as the water ran across them, the steep upward incline of the path pointed David feet towards the Mt. of Olives green with countless olive trees. Nearby where David walked and wept would be a Garden called Gethsemane where the Son of David would also walk and weep—both for the sins of others.

"and David wept as he went up the Mt. of Olives" (2 Samuel 15:30).

David who had faced lions and bears, armies and giants—stumbles out of his beloved Jerusalem with eyes blurred by his own tears. He is fleeing for his life. He has left everything—behind him is the Ark of God, behind him is the Tent of God's Presence, behind him is Zion the City of His Great God, behind him are the trophies of all his battles, the treasures amounting to the largest personal fortune in gold and silver ever amassed by anyone ever...so David walked, wept, and covered his head.

As we open again to the final chapters of David's life, we find that David's final years from God's perspective, begin with his fall into sin with Bathsheba.

Everything from 2 Samuel 11-12 (Bathsheba) to 1 Kings 2 (David's death) is touched, affected, and colored by that event.

God forgives the sins, and God forgets the iniquities. But the consequences and loss are recorded in the Bible, God's forever settled in Heaven Word. The consequences David faced are many. In our text this evening it is the great pain of a son's betrayal. Then David faces the verbal abuse by Shimei. Then the physical abuse and death threats of Absalom.

All of this is resulting from David's sin and the consequences that sin brings. Remember that incredible postscript to an incredible life? Has it stopped you yet and made you soberly think about where your life, habits, and secret thoughts are headed?

Listen as I read and emphasize that one word God emphasizes for us.

- 1 Kings 15:5 because David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. NKJV

Over Psalm 51 as well as Psalm 32 and 38 you should write these words in your hearts and minds—“**Unguarded Moments Lead to Sin**”. Also never isolate the Psalms that flow from a period of David’s life (like Psalm 32, 38, and 51) from the inspired record of that period. Let me trace the three periods of David’s final days and the inspired record of God’s perspective on the events that surround those Psalms.

Unguarded Moments lead to SIN—Uriah and Bathsheba. The saddest chapter, the darkest and the event we all wince at—is his sin with Bathsheba. God gives us a Divine record of those moments and days in 2nd Samuel 11-12. Out of this time period Psalms flow explaining the effects of what I call “*David’s Unguarded Moments that led to SIN*”. These are Psalm 32; 38; 51. That is what we are concluding in this study today.

- **Inevitable Consequences lead to PAIN—Absolom and Shimei.** Eleven chapters record the many years of painful consequences because of David’s sin from 2nd Samuel 12-21, and 24. This inspired record of that period that I call “*David’s Inevitable Consequences that led to Pain*” explains the Psalms that flow from David’s PAIN. These are Psalms are 3; 31; 55; 63.
- **Humble Obedience leads to JOY—Solomon, and the Temple.** And last, the final days of David’s life. When we see that despite the failures of Bathsheba incident—David truly was after God’s own heart. We see him end well, using his final days for God’s glory. Four chapters capture these years in 2nd Samuel 22-23 and 1 Kings 1-2. The Psalms that flow from this final era I call “*David’s Humble Obedience that leads to JOY*” are Psalms 18; 71.

There are lessons to be learned from David that are very difficult but so necessary. For any and all of us today ring Paul’s words across the twisted wreckage of so many lives that litter the highway of the redeemed—

- Galatians 6:7-9 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; **for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.** 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Although we often forget about it, both halves of this verse impact all of us. In reality, most Christians find we may still be reaping the unpleasant long-term consequences of past bad choices and at the same time, as forgiven sinners, we are probably also sowing to the Spirit for a future positive harvest.

Sin *always* pays us back with boredom, guilt, shame, loneliness, confusion, emptiness, loss of purpose, not to speak of--loss of rewards.

This was happening to David as we followed him through Psalm 13, 34, 40, and 70. His bad choices led to guilt and shame, produced numbing loneliness, profound confusion, emptiness, and a complete loss of purpose. When we suffer through similar times we need to look back and see if there are consequences of choices we have made also at work.

The negative consequence engine for the Christian should never be thought of as punishment for sins--because Jesus has already been fully punished for the believers sins--all of them. Consequences of our bad choices is not the same thing as punishment for sin. Neither is it to be confused with God's corrective discipline of his wayward sons and daughters (Hebrews 12:6-17).

David was forgiven. "The Lord also has taken away your sin" (2 Samuel 12:13), but the Lord's forgiveness never seems to take away the consequences of the sin.

When David wrote Psalm 51, it was in the joy of assured forgiveness but also in evident painful remorse and agony.

- David fully experienced God's matchless and gracious forgiveness.
- David fully saw the awfulness of his sin. "Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight" (v. 4).
- David also had to endure the coming years of painful consequences, which he did with peace and settled faith in the goodness and wisdom of God.

As we turn back to Second Samuel 12:1-6 we find by close examination, that it contains an amazing explanation of the cost to David of his sin. Nathan the prophet said that David would have to make restitution fourfold. In the context of his parable about the two men and the one lamb we know from Exodus 22:1 that God's law demanded a 4-fold restitution for the stealing of sheep.

We can easily see that in this parable, that the rich man represented David, the poor man, Uriah, and the ewe lamb, Bathsheba. But when we read Ex. 22:1, we can easily see that the penalty for stealing and slaughtering an ox or a sheep was not death, but restitution. But, in Nathan's parable, the wrongful taking and using of the lamb pointed to David's adultery with Bathsheba and David's murder of Uriah. Under the Mosaic law, both sins adultery (Lev. 20:10) and murder (Lev. 24:17) were punishable by death. When David pronounced his judgment on the rich man of Nathan's parable, David was also condemning himself to death.

Four Fold Restitution

It is very possible that the four fold restitution may be seen in the tragic events of David's final years.

1. It could be an allusion here to the subsequent death of 4 of David's sons: Bathsheba's first son (2 Samuel 12:18), Amnon (2 Samuel 13:28, 29), Absalom (2 Samuel 16:14, 15), and Adonijah (1 Kin. 2:25).

2. There is also a possible allusion to the four disasters that marked the final days of David's reign: Ammon's rape of his sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-22) and his subsequent death at the hand of his brother Absalom (2 Samuel 13:23-33); Absalom's treasonous rebellion (2 Samuel 15:1-18:8) and subsequent death at the hand of Joab (2 Samuel 18:9-19:8); Sheba the Bichrites rebellion (2 Samuel 20:1-22); the plague following David's numbering of the people (2 Samuel 24:1-25); and the plot of Adonijah to grasp the Throne, endangering Solomon and Bathsheba (1 Kings 1:1-53).

What a lesson David becomes of the goodness and justice of the Lord. God's grace is free, but the cost of sin is high.

Every sin I as a Christian commit is forgiven in Jesus Christ." But no sin is ever right or good, and no sin ever produces anything right or good. The price for doing some things is terribly high, terribly unprofitable. Sin never brings profit; it always brings loss.

David was a man after God's own heart and was greatly used of the Lord in leading Israel and even in writing Scripture. But David was not exempted from the consequences of his sin. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and she became pregnant. He then arranged for her husband to be killed in battle and took her as his own wife. "But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Sam. 11:27).

Through His prophet Nathan, God told David that because of his sin, "the sword shall never depart from your house. ... I will raise up evil against you from your own household," and "the child also that is born to you shall surely die" (12:10-11, 14).

David paid for those sins almost every day of his life. Several of his sons were rebellious, jealous, and vengeful, and his family life was for the most part a tragic shambles.[1]

When David faced the consequences for his sins he faced them in a godly way. Part of genuine repentance is the grace to go forward no matter what life may bring. Our text this evening shows the way a godly person faces abuse. When we are saved we begin to live for the first time in our lives deliberately. We know at last why we are here, where we are going, and how to get there.

We also know who wants to lead and guide us. And we want to follow Him. That is living deliberately. One facet of living deliberately is facing painful abuse in the strength of the Lord. And that is exactly what David did.

[1] MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary I Corinthians 6:12*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983, in loc.

David Conquers

DSS: Message Thirty-Four (900318PM)

David - our focus these past weeks! Why? Because he's so much like all of us. **In David's life time he:**

- Loves God
- Falls...
- Sins...
- Discouraged...
- Encouraged...
- Righteous...
- Conquers...
- Worships God... In fact, David and Psalms (1/2 he wrote) mirror nearly all our lives the ups and downs!

A Review of David's Life

1. 1 Sam. 17 - He stands alone for God (Israel covering behind him) facing God's enemies (Goliath + co.). Why?

- UNCHANGING CONCERN FOR GOD'S HONOR!
- Now Psalms mirror David's life.

2. 1 Sam. 19:11-18 > Psalm 59

- We see David depending on God (when assassins come/Saul). Why?
- UNSHAKEABLE TRUST IN GOD'S PROTECTION

3. 1 Sam. 21:10-12 > Psalm 56

- We see David confident (Ps. 56:9)! Why?
- "THIS I KNOW THAT GOD IS FOR ME"
- DISTINCT IMPRESSION GOD IS ON HIS SIDE!

4. 1 Sam. 21:13-15 > Ps. 34

- We see David magnifying God. Why?
- UNWAVERING AWARENESS
- GOD WAS WATCHING

5. 1 Sam. 22:1-2 > Ps. 142

- We see David calling on God. Why?
- UNFAILING HOPE

- GOD WAS LISTENING AND HEARING

6. 1 Sam. 23:133-14 > Ps. 63

- We see David seeking God. Why?
- ABUNDANT SATISFACTION
- GOD REFRESHED HIM

7. 1 Sam. 23:19-25 > Ps. 54

- We see David finding refuge in God. Why?
- CONSTANTLY SETTING GOD BEFORE HIMSELF V. 30

8. 1 Sam. 24:16-22 > Ps. 57

- We see David rising above discouragement. Why?
- APPLYING HIS GREAT DISCOVERIES ABOUT GOD
- Learned Ps. 142

9. 2 Sam. 5:17-25 - 2 Sam. 22 > Ps. 18

- We find David triumphing over all enemies! Why?
- **SEEING LIFE FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE**
- And what might that be?

1. v.1-3 God is greatest attraction
2. v. 4-6 We are in desperate condition
3. v. 7-15 God is awesome
4. v. 16-24 It is God who rescues
5. v. 25-29 God is just
6. v. 30-36 God reveals Himself
7. v. 37-45 God conquers enemies
8. v. 46-50 God is to be praised

How Can I Apply This in My Life?

- Be concerned for God's honor - stand alone
- Trust God's protection - don't fear
- Realize God is on your side - you are valuable
- Remember God's watching - fear God
- Expect God to hear - pray
- Be satisfied in God's refreshment - seek Him
- Set God first - deny self
- Apply God's great truth - live it

What's that? Seeing life through God's eyes!

David--How to Respond When Slandered and Abused

DSS: Message Thirty-Five (060827AM)

One of the oldest and meanest tricks in the book is to hit someone when they're down. Just sneak up on them when they are distracted by something else and hit them with a knockout blow. That is one of Satan's tactics.

He used it on Joseph after his being sold into slavery by his brothers, before he could get over that--Potiphar's wife lands him in prison. But by God's grace, it didn't work, and Joseph keeps following the Lord!

For Job it was one wave after another of bad news, each wave higher, deeper and more devastating—and then his wife turns on him. But by God's grace, it didn't work, and Job keeps following the Lord!

We can trace the same pattern in Abraham's life, Elijah's life, Daniel's life, and many other Old Testament heroes.

In our lives it may be when we are in the midst of recovering from being sick and we lose our job. Or just when we finally find a job our wife can't go on and wants to move back to her family. Or just after we weather the loss of a parent through death we get a report that one of our children is secretly leading an alternate lifestyle. It is sudden, it is unexpected—and it is always at our weakest moments when it is the worst time possible.

As we open to 2 Samuel 15:14 we are watching David while he is down. It is the saddest day of his life. And that day while he is at the bottom, when he is really down and driven out of town—he gets an unexpected hit. He is attacked, slandered, and painfully abused from a totally unexpected person. In that moment—we see the real David.

What you and I are at our most desperate moments is a glimpse into what we really are. Where we decide to turn, when we face what we never wanted, never dreamed of happening to us—that is when what is really on the inside comes out.

The good news is that what comes out of David at that most painful moment of his life is a song. And it was a song that was so good, God captured it and made it forever recorded in Heaven. That is better than the top of the charts, better than the top of the billboard, better than gold or platinum—because it pleased God. What ever you and I can do in this life that pleases God; that is what will last from our life eternally.

Watch David show us how to live even in pain, even through tears, even while slandered, and even when living through painful abuse. David shows us how to live pleasing God. We can gain eternal rewards from every part of our life that is lived in a way that pleases God.

Barefoot, crying, and fleeing for his life. Could it get any worse? That must have been on David's mind as the saddest day of his life unfolded. To face the hatred of pagan Philistines was one thing—but the hatred of your own son is quite another. To have a murderous father-in-law is devastating, but to have a murderous child is beyond words.

So David was speechless as his tears ran and the wailing sobs of his friends rose about him. That was how life became for a nearly 60 year old King David in the fall of 980 BC[1]. I think that a modern song writer once felt a bit of what David may have felt. Those feelings were captured by Bill Gaither 35 years ago. Listen to Gaither's testimony in a song called—

SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL[2]

If there ever were dreams that were lofty and noble--

They were my dreams at the start.

And the hopes for life's best were the hopes that I harbored--

Down deep in my heart.

But my dreams turned to ashes,

My castles all crumbled,

My fortune turned to loss.

So I wrapped it all in the rags of my life--And laid it at the cross

Something beautiful, something good;

All my confusion, He understood.

All I had to offer Him

Was brokenness and strife,

But He made something beautiful of my life.

Just as we saw last time, this was the darkest day yet in David's life. Remember how Satan often attacks us when we are at our weakest point? David was down—and life was about to get much worse.

So much happened to David all at once, and God catches each detail for His purposes of doctrine (teaching us what is right); for reproof (teaching us what is wrong); for correction (teaching us

how to get right); and instruction in righteousness (teaching us how to stay right). That is why God has preserved these pages of Scriptures that lay open before us.

Just to help you understand this day, God's Word gives us a step by step account. Follow along in your Bibles as we trace the events of that fateful day.

- In 2 Samuel 15:14 David has left the City of David on Mount Zion (where it still sits today now excavated after centuries beneath the dust of time); he walks down Zion to the Kidron ravine, passes over a small brook of flowing water (15:23), follows the pathway up the mountain called Olives (15:30).
- At the very top he pauses (15:32) and offers worship to the Lord. Then he runs into Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth (the crippled son of David's friend Jonathan, son of Saul) who brings food to help David (16:1-4)

David has been joined by his faithful soldiers and mighty men. He has been sought out by the good and godly priests. He has been fed by the humble servants of others. So this next visitor was so unexpected. But so was everything else happening on this fateful day.

David is just reeling from it all. The whole insurrection or coup d'état was so unexpected. The speed at which a loved and trusted son was able to draw the entire nation away from David was staggering. David's thoughts raced back and forth from all the battles he had fought to save these people of Israel from their enemies. And now those very people's children were the army that had joined his son to kill him.

Then he thought of how he had rescued his own son Absalom so many times. Before he was old enough to even realize it David had kept young Absalom from Saul's hand. Later David had risked his life to attack the raiding bands of the desert peoples and rescue Absalom from their grasp. Then David remembered bringing young and handsome Absalom up to Jerusalem, the City of David, Zion the City of God. How it had thrilled David's heart to build a home and see his wives and children happy and secure in the home that God had provided. But nothing would ever be the same. Tamar was raped by Amnon. Absalom killed Amnon. Now Absalom was seeking to kill his own father David. Nothing was right; nothing would ever make this go away.

Back and forth flew his thoughts, his painful questions—why do the people turn away from me so quickly? Why does my own son hate me? Why does God allow all this?

And then as David looks around at his mighty men marching like a wall of strength around him, that space once occupied by the bravest of the brave, is empty. The same Uriah that went to his death at David's deceitful bidding and murderous plot did so because he was loyal to the death for David—and always had been.

David's thoughts raced back over the years and again smote him with contrition. Yes, again he knew that against the Lord all this had been done. And now David was suffering the consequences.

Somewhere in the midst of thoughts like these, mingled with tears, a barefoot David hears trouble coming. Before he saw him, he heard the hatred of his curses. Coming up from Bahurim, the first village on the downward slope of the Mt. of Olives is the figure of an angry man. Bitter to the point of blindness is this distant relative of Saul. With the poison of a venomous serpent on his tongue--curses, dust and rocks fly from the one man army named Shimei. With every means possible he tries to attack David while he is down.

Isn't that how temptations often come? The devil in alliance with our flesh, the world around us, and the demons—tries to always get us at our weakest moment. It was perfect timing—David was physically, emotionally, mentally, and humanly at his weakest and lowest point. But much to Satan's disappointment I'm sure, David was not at his lowest point spiritually.

David's responses, in the verses of our text this morning are the most beautiful example of how to respond "When Attacked, Slandered and Painfully Abused"!

Now let's examine this passage capturing the saddest of all moments in David's life as he fled from his son Absalom. We know that this was part of the inevitable consequences. But even as David faced those consequences—God was still watching to see what choices he would make. Either he would respond in a selfish and thus sinful way, or he would respond in a godly or glorifying way.

The good news is what we just read. David responds consistently for God—before Bathsheba and after Bathsheba. He was truly God's man—that slipped into sin, repented and walked the walk from there on out.

The Final Era of David's Life

We are in part two of a three part examination of the final era David's life. The first era starts when David seems from the biblical chronology to be about 50 years old. And in that era, David's unguarded moments lead to sin—Uriah and Bathsheba.

Part two is the sobering reminder that the--

- **Inevitable Consequences of David's sin led to PAIN—Absalom and Shimei.**

Chapters 15 and 16 where we stop today are two of the eleven chapters from 2nd Samuel 12-21, and 24 recording the many years of painful consequences because of David's sin. This inspired record of that period that I call "David's ***Inevitable Consequences that led to Pain***" explains the Psalms that flow from David's PAIN. These are Psalms are 3; 31; 55; 63.

Of course the good news from the God of New Beginnings is that the 3rd and final chapter of David's life records **David's Humble Obedience leads to JOY—Solomon, and the Temple.**

It is here we see that despite the failures of Bathsheba incident—David truly was after God's own heart. We see him end well, using his final days for God's glory. Four chapters capture

these years in 2nd Samuel 22-23 and I Kings 1-2. The Psalms that flows from this final era I call “*David’s Humble Obedience that leads to JOY*” are Psalms 18; 71.

But here is the summary of what God has captured for us in this text.

- Even when we face the consequences of our sin,
- even when they are so painful—it is even then that we can praise our God, glorify our Savior, and experience even more than ever His grace that is always enough.

Now as we go step by step through this sad and painful day we can mine 8 wonderful truths to live by when we also suffer abuse, attacks, and slander.

God Was Glorified in David’s Painful Consequences

1. When David was at the bottom—God sent him help.

- 2 Samuel 15:19-21 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. 20 In fact, you came only yesterday. **Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where?** Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth be with you.” 21 But Ittai answered the king and said, “As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, **surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be.**” NKJV

2. When David was at his weakest point--he waits for God’s provision.

- 2 Samuel 15:25 Then the king said to Zadok, “Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, **He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place.** NKJV

Note that David does not try to defend himself. David left his burdens with the Lord so he didn’t have to take matters into his own hands. Notice that David does not grasp things, even when they are rightfully his. That is the strength and serenity we can have from the Lord. It is unusual and magnificent to see such strength—for it only comes from the Lord!

David knew that the Lord was with him, he didn’t need a box covered with gold to remind him. He had the Lord Himself, so he was willing to leave the Ark in the Tent and go out of the city trusting in God and God alone.

3. When David was at his lowest moment of his life--he bows and offered up a Psalm of praise to God.

- 2 Samuel 15:30, 32 So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and **wept as he went up**; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. 32 Now it happened when David **had come to the top of the mountain**, where **he worshiped God**—there

was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head.
NKJV

God's servants can continue in worship even when life is tough, difficult, and almost looking like it is impossible to go on. Turn with me to the exact record of the worship that flowed from David. This is what can flow from us if we like David—bow in worship when the bitter tears of sorrow and grief fall across our lives.

David trusted God's control—even through bitter tears of sorrow and grief. He relied upon it and prayed for it. Instead of fear he had faith and gave worship.

4. When David was least in control of his circumstances—he entrusts his situation to the Lord.

- 2 Samuel 15:31 Then someone told David, saying, **“Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.”** And David said, **“O Lord, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!”** NKJV

People often share reports that can either lead us to fear or prompt us to prayer. David lifts his heart in prayer to the Lord at this evil report!

5. When David was attacked—he realized that God allows adversaries for His own purposes.

- 2 Samuel 16:9-11 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, **“Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?** Please, let me go over and take off his head!” 10 But the king said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, **because the Lord has said to him, ‘Curse David.’** Who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’ ” 11 And David said to Abishai and all his servants, “See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? **Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the Lord has ordered him.** NKJV

He entrusts his personal adversaries to the Lord. David knew that God raises up and puts down. He knew adversaries were allowed by God—and he wanted to respond correctly! God often allows us to be attacked by various adversaries, just to reveal what is really in our hearts.

6. When the painful abuse was overwhelming him--David fled to the Lord for hope.

- 2 Samuel 16:12 **It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will repay me with good** for his cursing this day.” NKJV

David knew God cared; he knew God saw his troubles. He knew that the Lord can cause all things to work together for good. He always entrusted his personal sufferings to the Lord.

7. Even when David's situation looked hopelessly impossible--God was managing everything.

- 2 Samuel 17:14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite [is] better than the counsel of Ahithophel. **For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.** (KJV)

When we let God take care of us, and when we entrust our personal vengeance to the Lord—the Lord can do what we never could to remedy the situation. ‘Vengeance is mine saith the Lord’ (Hebrews 10:30). Allow the Lord to recompense your enemies. David had many enemies and adversaries, but he let the Lord deal with them all.

8. At just the exact moment God planned--David's needs are met.

- 2 Samuel 17:27-29 **Now it happened**, when David had come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the people of Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, 28 brought beds and basins, earthen vessels and wheat, barley and flour, parched grain and beans, lentils and parched seeds, 29 honey and curds, sheep and cheese of the herd, **for David and the people who were with him to eat.** For they said, “The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.” NKJV

God works behind the scenes in the hearts of people to provide just what David needed to continue on. So a servant of the Lord must always entrust his personal needs to the Lord.

Now, slip back with me to that third point we saw. **When David was at his lowest moment of his life--he bows and worshipped and offered up a Psalm of praise to God—even through bitter tears of sorrow and grief.**

- 2 Samuel 15:30, 32 So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and **wept as he went up**; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. 32 Now it happened when David **had come to the top of the mountain**, where **he worshiped God**—there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. NKJV

God's servants can continue in worship even when life is tough, difficult, and almost looking like it is impossible to go on. Turn with me to the exact record of the worship that flowed from David. This is what can flow from us if we like David—bow in worship when the bitter tears of sorrow and grief fall across our lives.

David trusted God's control. He relied upon it and prayed for it. Instead of fear he had faith and gave worship.

What does David do? He writes a Psalm. A Psalm is a worship song, truth offered to God in worship that is to be shared by participation. David invites us by God's help and power to join in and participate in praising God for what He has done.

The 3rd Psalm is an amazing Psalm: it is the first Psalm in the Bible called a Psalm; it is the first Psalm noted as written by David; and it is the first Psalm that gives us a Divinely written setting in the first verse of the Hebrew text.

Psalm 3:1-8 (NIV) A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

- LORD, how many are my **foes**! How many rise up against me! 2 Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." Selah
- 3 But you are a **shield** around me, O LORD; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. 4 To the LORD I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill. Selah
- 5 I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me. 6 I will not fear the tens of thousands **drawn up against me** on every side. 7 **Arise, O LORD!** Deliver me, O my God! Strike all my **enemies** on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked. 8 From the LORD comes **deliverance**. May your blessing be on your people. Selah

Psalm 3:1-8 (NAS) A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

- Lord, how my **adversaries** have increased! Many are rising up against me. 2 Many are saying of my soul, "There is no deliverance for him in God." [Selah].
- 3 But Thou, O Lord, art a **shield** about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head. 4 I was crying to the Lord with my voice, And He answered me from His holy mountain.[Selah].
- 5 I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustains me. 6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have **set themselves against me** round about. 7 **Arise, O Lord;** save me, O my God! For Thou hast smitten all my **enemies** on the cheek; Thou hast shattered the teeth of the wicked. 8 Salvation belongs to the Lord; Thy blessing be upon Thy people! [Selah].

Psalm 3:1-8 A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son. NKJV

- 1 Lord, how they have increased who **trouble** me! **Many** are they who rise up against me. 2 **Many** are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." SELAH
- 3 But **You, O Lord, are a shield for me**, My glory and **the One who lifts up my head**. 4 **I cried** to the Lord with my voice, And **He heard** me from His holy hill. SELAH
- 5 **I lay down and slept; I awoke**, for **the Lord sustained me**. 6 **I will not be afraid** of ten thousands of people Who have **set themselves against me** all around. 7 **Arise, O Lord;** Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my **enemies** on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. 8 **Salvation** belongs to the Lord. **Your blessing** is upon Your people. SELAH

Warfare & Battles

This Psalm is set in the context of battles. If you trace through the verses you find about seven different indications of warfare and battlefields are the setting:

1. David was facing “foes” NIV; “adversaries” NAS (v. 1);
2. David needed a “shield” (v. 3);
3. David saw them deployed like an army v.6 “set against me” (NAS/NKJV) “drawn up against me” (NIV);
4. David calls them “enemies (v. 7);
5. David cries “arise O Lord” v.7 and uses the actual formula for entering battle from Numbers 10:35;
6. David speaks of armies (“people” in v. 8 can also be used for an army);
7. David sought victory implied by the word “deliverance” (v. 8 NIV), and deliverance from the Lord is a war cry.

This Psalm divides up the message God is giving through David by the use of the word SELAH. Selah means ‘lift up’ and is a musical term for crescendo. It means boom it out, crank it up—punctuate that with emphasis. Then stop and ask yourself what do you think of that?

So at the end of verse two, ‘many say there is no help for him in God.’ Selah—boom! Stop and consider this. What do you think of that? And David pauses and thinks about that and finds a lifetime of definite proof that God did care for him.

So at the end of verse four he says, ‘He answered me...’. Selah—boom! Stop and consider this. What do you think of that? And David reflects upon his steadfast hope, and confident faith that God has rescued him in the past and will continue to do so.

So at the end of verse eight he says, ‘Salvation is of the Lord’. Selah—boom! Stop and consider this. What do you think of that? And David reflects upon the truth that it is God who alone can save us from all and any of our deepest troubles.

[1] David’s scouts hid in a well where grain was spread to cover their hideout means fall; David reigned from 1010-970 BC and this tragic scene with Absalom was approximately 9-10 years before his death in 970 BC.

[2] © 1971 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Lust--The Giant That Slew David

DSS: Message Thirty-Six (971026AM)

Did you know that one of the greatest events in history has an equally tragic sequel? First there was David and Goliath, when David kills Goliath in one of the greatest moments in history.

But there is a horrible sequel, David and Bathsheba, when David was killed by another giant. You say wait, didn't David kill Goliath? Yes, wonderfully by God's power this **humble teenaged David** slew God's enemy Goliath. But later in life **a proud David:**

- Ignored God's word and
- Allowed another giant to come right into God's city Jerusalem, and
- Welcomed God's enemy into the presence of this man after God's own heart, and
- David was slain by the giant of LUST!

That is exactly the warning James gave. Look at our text this morning: James 1:13-16. There are three powerful truths tucked away in these verses:

- Temptation is Inevitable James 1:13a “Let no one say when he is tempted”, it isn't if but when!
- Temptation is inevitable: Use the Word
- **God is Faithful** James 1:13b-14 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed”

God is Faithful: Look for God

I Corinthians 10:13 Look for God - He's there. The apostle Paul gives us hope in this verse of Scripture. “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it”. God is there all the time. He tells us He is faithful. When we think we are alone, we are not alone. God has already measured and limited the attack upon us. He has already provided an escape route if we will only look for it and take it. Last week we saw Where we need to look for God:

We need to look for God when we are on the Mountain of Despair like Abraham; in the Den of Passion like Joseph; in the Cave of Fear like David; in the Spotlight of Pride like Daniel; when we are sinking in the fury of the storm like Peter; in the grip of pain like Paul; in the grip of hopelessness like Jeremiah.

Finally in our text -

- **Lust is Horrible** James 1:13-16 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.¹⁵ Then, when

desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.NKJV

Let's go back to the crisp, cool air of a middle eastern morning three thousand years ago to see just how horrible lust can be.

Two calloused feet slipped quietly out from under the warmth of a wool fleece and deftly into the sandals left carefully beside the low wooden cot. In the twilight of early morning's pre-dawn darkness the red headed, teenaged-boy crept carefully out of the stone house on the outskirts of Bethlehem. With the confidence of integrity and the joy of purity, young David was on his way to a moment never to fade from the pages of history.

Walking excitedly the rocky paths up and down the hills of Judah, the young shepherd boy was headed to the Valley of Elah a mere 8 miles off. Arriving before breakfast young David eagerly surveyed the eastern rim of the valley. Campfires and tents dotted the hillside as he looked at the army of God's people Israel. With a heart filled with gratitude and wonder David strode up to the first tent and asked if anyone knew where his brothers from Bethlehem were camping. The special provisions his dad had sent them were only a part of his purpose in coming.

- David longed to see the people who stood for the God. But even more,
- David so loved the God of Israel, he wanted to see Him at work.
- David sang of His God on his long vigils around the hills of Bethlehem caring for his father's sheep.
- David came as God's man for this very climactic moment in history!

Suddenly a loud voice brimming with evil echoed up the valley hillsides. In the distance a pillar of armor encasing God's enemy Goliath sprayed the venom of the ancient serpent from Eden across the faithless and frightened people of God.

Shocked and angered David heard for the first time this irreverent pagan reviling the God of Heaven. Instantly he wanted to stand for the honor of God at all costs. As we know so well, he did. Unafraid and with no concern for self he embodies what God can do with all who think only of the Lord and not of themselves.

The events of that day are indelibly sketched on our hearts. The shepherd lad, a handful of stones, a homemade weapon plus God made an unbeatable army of one. David defeated the giant and became an instant and enduring hero of all the ages.

But less than 30 years later David would be slain by a different giant. Far more dangerous than the Goliath that he faced as a teenager, the Giant of Lust had crept into David's own inner chambers. In a moment blinded by his own selfish desires David was slain.

These verses are part of the book of James. A letter written 19 ½ centuries ago warning us about the lethal nature of lust. James gives us the final key to overcoming temptation. Our study this morning: FLEE FROM LUST because it is horrible!

Lust is Horrible: Run from lust

As the New Testament scholar Leon Morris has written: “The man who carries on an act of impurity and lust is not simply breaking a human code, not even sinning against the God who at some time in the past gave him the gift of the Spirit.

- He is sinning against the God who is present at that moment,
- Against One who continually gives the Spirit.
- The impure act is an act of despite against God’s good gift at the very moment it is being proffered....
- This sin is seen in its true light only when it is seen as a preference for impurity rather than a Spirit who is holy.”

Three Dimensions of Temptation

TEMPTATION comes in Three Dimensions[1], packaged in varied shapes, sizes, and colors...but most of them fall into one of three categories:

1. **Material Temptation.** This is lust for things. The things may be as large as a house of our dreams or as small as a precious ring, as bright and dazzling as a new sports car or as dull and dusty as a two-hundred-year-old antique dresser.
2. **Personal Temptation.** This is lust for status. Special recognition. The status of fame, fortune, power, or authority. Having a title that makes heads turn, like “top executive” or “president” or “executive director” or even “doctor”.
3. **Sensual Temptation.** This is lust for another person. The desire to have and enjoy the body of an individual, even though such pleasure is illegal and/or immoral.

Turn back to II Tim. 2:22 Run from Lust Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. NKJV

Now, lets examine David the giant killer, killed by the giant of lust. Note six dreadful steps down in II Samuel. Join me in II Samuel 5:

- David Desensitized his conscience by incomplete obedience II Sam 5:13
- David Relaxed his grip on personal purity II Sam 11:1
- David Fixated his heart on physical desires v. 2
- David Rationalized his mind about wrong decisions v. 3
- David Decended his life into lustful sin v. 4
- David Destroyed his testimony by the sin of a moment of stolen pleasure. Death, deceit, murder, immorality and spiritual oppression, poverty and famine of the soul are only a few offspring of this act of momentary pleasure.
- David Desensitized his conscience by incomplete obedience II Sam 5:13 This was just CARELESSNESS, a slight Wandering, just a tiny LOOSENING in a socially acceptable area. (II Samuel 5:13) David’s sin with Bathsheba was decided back in the earlier days. David relaxed his grip on the way God asked him to live. Listen to the record of his start as king 2 Samuel 5:13 And David took more concubines and wives

from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David. So you ask, was it really wrong? Didn't all the men back then do it? Some, but if God says it is wrong, it is wrong even if all do it! Listen to God's instructions for His leaders: Deuteronomy 17:15-20 "you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 "But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' 17 "Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. 18 "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. 19 "And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 "that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

Now turn to 2 Samuel 11:1-6 and see the 2nd step down -

- David Relaxed his grip on personal purity II Sam 11:1 You see it was RESTLESSNESS, aimless waiting, purposeless LINGERING (II Samuel 11:1) David stepped back from the normal place of leadership he was expected to have. He relaxed his grip on the priorities he was to have as king. He was in one of those restless in between times that is so dangerous. Nothing good usually occurs in those purposeless times of wondering what to do.
- David Fixated his heart on physical desires v. 2 He didn't look away from the temptation, rather he engaged in watching, this became lust filled LOOKING v. 2 In this period of restlessness, with time on his hands moment of listless, boredom and wandering the palace he uses the highest spot in the city to take an innocent peek at his neighbors wife. But wait -

You see There is no such thing as an innocent peek at another woman, There is no such thing as an innocent peek at an off-color TV show, There is no such thing as an innocent peek at pornographic materials. There is no innocent trying out of intoxicating alcohol, There is no innocent trying out of enslaving cigarettes, There is no innocent trying out of debilitating drugs, and There is no innocent trying out of premarital sexual relations.

These are steps to life crippling habits that can destroy your testimony and usefulness for Christ!

- DAVID Rationalized his mind about wrong decisions v. 3 Wanting LUSTING v. 3;
- DAVID Descended his life into lustful sin v. 4
- DAVID Destroyed his testimony by a sin for the moment LYING v. 4. (See thin NASB Psalm 51 notes).

What a horrible thing sin is. It deceives with all those glittering promises. It destroys with the precision of a surgeon.

How Can We Get Back on Track?

How do we get back on the track? I think the key is of course in the Word. Let's close in Psalm 51. When you have been defeated by the giant of lust David is inspired of God to tell us four steps we can take back to God.

WE MUST - **Focus on God's Character**: He is Exalted even in our sin (51:1-4)

- The Lord can RENEW OUR RELATIONSHIP v. 1
- The Lord can WASH US CLEAN v. 2
- The Lord can REMOVE THE ROADBLOCK v. 3
- The Lord can UTTERLY FORGIVE v. 4

WE MUST - **Focus on our Character**: We are sinful (51:5-9)

- As Sinners we show our nature, our choice and confirm God's declaration. v. 5
- As Sinners we destroy inner truthfulness v. 6
- As sinners we are defiled internally v. 7
- As sinners we lose our joy v. 8
- As sinners we lose fellowship with our God v. 9

WE MUST - **Focus on God's Work**: He is renewing (51:10-13)

- God is washing our hearts v. 10 [Heb 9.14; 10.22]
- God is restoring our walk in the Spirit v. 11
- God is renewing the fruit of the Spirit v. 12
- God is preparing us for further ministry v. 13

WE MUST – **Focus on our work**: We must repent (51:14-19)

- Call sin what it is v. 14 (David murdered Uriah)
- Talk to God v. 15 (Psalm 32 David had dried up spiritually)
- Experience true contrition not mere externalism v. 16-17
- Begin zealous worship anew and afresh v. 18-19

Three Choices We Should Make in Our Lives

If we neglect fleeing lust and rooting out what can we do right now to get us started back to God's path or keep us on that path? Let me give you three choices we need to make:

1. Make yourself look at the final result or ultimate form (mature plant) of the momentary choices of (or seeds you are planting) today.

- If your parents knew what you have been hiding from them, would it crush them and grieve their hearts?

- If your husband or wife knew about the area you have surrendered to lust, would it rob your relationship of joy and trust?
- If you keep on in this path what will it do to your body, your family, your reputation and your heavenly reward?
- Is it really worth as much as it will eventually cost you?

2. Choose to cultivate new and godly choices that will become habits of holiness for old and ungodly patterns. Cut cable or online service for a few months and join an accountability group or Bible study; take a fast from TV watching (even sports) and start a Scripture memory plan like our “108 verses”.

3. Remember it will only be harder to stop tomorrow. Every wrong choice we make sets in motion a wave of consequence and growing bondage throughout our mind and body. Every obedient choice we make set in motion a wave of liberating blessing and spiritual strength.

Numbers 33:50-56 Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho, saying,⁵¹ “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan,⁵² then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places;⁵³ ‘you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess.⁵⁴ ‘And you shall divide the land by lot as an inheritance among your families; to the larger you shall give a larger inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give a smaller inheritance; there everyone’s inheritance shall be whatever falls to him by lot. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers.⁵⁵ ‘But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.⁵⁶ ‘Moreover it shall be that I will do to you as I thought to do to them.’”

William James, in his classic Principles of Psychology, put it this way:

Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke or virtue or vice leaves its ever so little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying "I won't count this time!" Well! He may not count it, but it is being counted nonetheless. Down among his nerve cells and fibers the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. Of course, this has its good side as well as its bad one.[2]

FLEE YOUTHFUL LUSTS: DON'T-

1. HABITUATE your lusts
2. CRIPPLE your conscience
3. SOIL your mind
4. DESENSITIZE your warning system

5. MISUSE your body, mind and eyes
6. SPOIL your ability to give
7. LESSEN your desires for a godly wife

How can I check my progress in holiness. What is the area to take my spiritual pulse? Let me give you four easy spiritual health indicators:

1. Have you taken your temperature? Is it hot with 1st love for Jesus or cooling or cold? Look into the eyes of Jesus as He bends over you just now.
2. Have you checked your diet? What kind of heavenly food have you eaten in the past week. Sufficient for life and growth? Is your soul malnourished? Or do you suffer from spirtual obesity?
3. Have you examined your phone bill ? Do you have regular long distance calls to heaven? Are they regular, frequent and of all different durations? Or are you kind of out of touch?
4. Have you looked for any numbness? Sensitivity to sin is good test of spiritual health. If we are sensitive to sin in our life and the world it means the Spirit of God is unquenched and operating. Does your heart ache for your own sin and the sin of others

[1] Swindoll, Sensuality, p. 4.

[2] William James, Principles of Psychology (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1952), p. 83.

David--Handling Betrayal in a Godly Way

DSS: Message Thirty-Seven (060827PM)

In the midst of the worst time of his life David fell sound asleep. In the midst of one of the most dangerous situations David had ever faced he relaxed, sang a song to the Lord and laid down--completely confident that the Lord would protect him.

Have you ever really thought about why we sleep as humans? In fact, have you considered that every one of us will probably spend about 1/3rd of our life sleeping? And that sleep is not an accident—God is the designer and promoter of sleep?

Yes, God designed sleep for us His creatures. But why? As believers who look at life through the lens of God's Word (just as we are to do with all the rest of life)—we need to see sleep and life as having the very signature of God written across it. When God has designed something it is very special and has specific purposes that God wants us to know about. So have you gained the benefits of knowing what God has to say about one-third of our lives?

What Does Sleep Mean?

- Sleep means that work must stop.
- Sleep means that a day must end.
- Sleep means that our strength has been depleted and must be renewed.
- Sleep means that our minds have become weary and must be refreshed.
- Sleep means that our bodies have gotten exhausted and must be restored.
- Sleep means that we have limitations that must be faced.
- Sleep means that we have a dependence that must be acknowledged.
- Sleep means that we must deny self-sufficiency. As Psalm 121 tells us:

So one of the clearest reasons for sleep is to remind every human on this planet, and especially us believers—that God is God and we are not. We are helpless, limited, and dependent. But that is not all. Sleep can also be one of the most beautiful reminders of what true saving faith looks like.

In a few hours when it comes to be your time to sleep, think of what you will do. You will plan to end activities, end conversations, and even end your consciousness of life around you and lay the full weight of your body on an object that can hold you up (usually a bed). Then as you lay down you must choose to completely trust that something else other than yourself will hold you up while you are no longer able to take care of yourself. That is pure faith.

So David laid down and slept in Psalm 3:5 in his most vulnerable hour. Are you facing danger, adversaries, uncertainty about the future, even the possibility of death? Then David's discoveries in this 3rd Psalm are for you. David slept in the face of danger and possible death—and so can we if we understand what he understood, and believe what he believed.

It must have been amazing to travel with David. For those 30 mighty men that always stayed near David, just like Christ's disciples—some pretty amazing memories must have been their's.

For Joab, this evening must have been the most amazing. As we saw last time, David fled for his life, Absalom was mobilizing and meeting with his rebel forces and they were poised to swoop down on David and his little band.

David and his entourage has walked from Jerusalem, down Mt. Zion, across the Kidron brook, up the Mt. of Olives and paused. There at the top we found this life defining moment. As we saw last time, it was what David really was on the inside.

When David was at his lowest moment of his life--he bows and worshipped and offered up a Psalm of praise to God—even through bitter tears of sorrow and grief.

- 2 Samuel 15:30, 32 So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and **wept as he went up**; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. 32 Now it happened when David **had come to the top of the mountain**, where **he worshiped God**—there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head.
NKJV

God's servants can continue in worship even when life is tough, difficult, and almost looking like it is impossible to go on. That is what we find in the exact record of the worship that flowed from David's heart and onto paper as Psalm 3.

This song David shares is what can flow from us, if we like him—bow in worship when the bitter tears of sorrow and grief fall across our lives. David trusted God's control. He relied upon it and prayed for it. Instead of fear he had faith and gave worship.

Onward David trudged after that brief worship stop. Soon insult was added to injury. Shimei kicks David when he is down. Spraying him with curses, dust, and stones. Onward trudges the man after God's own heart until at last safely across the Jordan River and in the wilderness camp came be made for the night.

Joab, commander in chief of all David's armies is feverish in preparation. Guards are posted, troops are stations. Concentric rings of defenses are planned and prepared so that the 600 soldiers that marched out with David are arrayed to face any army and any enemy that would come on this very vulnerable night.

Joab is tense as he comes back to camp. He is worried that a frontal assault by Absalom's army could overwhelm his perimeter. He wonders about taking David deeper into the wilderness or finding some other spot. With his head just spinning with all these thoughts he greets David.

For the first time in hours he sees him all alone and realizes that something is completely different about David. Gone are the red swollen eyes of the morning. Back are the clear and

bright eyes he remembered from so many years of fighting alongside of this giant of a man. David was calm, peaceful and actually joyous. He begins to tell Joab what the Lord had done in his heart. Incredulous Joab smiles, shakes his head and hurries off to check the defensive positions one more time.

This time as Joab comes back he is struck with and even more amazing sight. David is on the ground, an animal skin unrolled in front of him, and with pen and ink in hand he is busily writing just like Joab remembered from those days in the Cave of Adullam as David wrote Psalm 56 and 142; just like he remembered in those days of fleeing from King Saul when David wrote Psalms or songs to the Lord. And here he is at it again.

Finishing up, David holds up the scroll to the fading light of the evening sky. Reads it over as he quietly sings it to a tune he had made and then rolls it up, ties a cord about it and tucks it into his cloak. David has just written Psalm 3. And then he turns, unrolls his sleeping bag, lies down and soon is sound asleep. In the very presence of his enemies, in the middle of the camp that could be over run at any moment—David sleeps. Joab marvels again at this man after God's own heart.

Please turn there with me to Psalm 3. And follow along as I read to you David's song of trust in God.

Psalm 3:1-8 A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son. NKJV

- 1 Lord, how they have increased who **trouble** me! *Many* are they who rise up against me. 2 *Many* are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." SELAH
- 3 But *You, O Lord, are a shield for me*, My glory and *the One who lifts up my head*. 4 *I cried* to the Lord with my voice, And *He heard* me from His holy hill. SELAH
- 5 *I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me*. 6 *I will not be afraid* of ten thousands of people Who have **set themselves against** me all around. 7 **Arise, O Lord;** Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my **enemies** on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. 8 **Salvation** belongs to the Lord. *Your blessing* is upon Your people. SELAH

When David is at the bottom, comes to his weakest point—and gets hit while he is down, what does he do? He writes a Psalm. A Psalm is a worship song, truth offered to God in worship that is to be shared by participation. David invites us by God's help and power to join in and participate in praising God for what He has done. The 3rd Psalm is an amazing Psalm because it actually introduces us to this Book of Psalms.

If you stepped back and look at the Psalms, there are 150 of them. Now look at the superscription or first words of this Psalm. Here is what we observe:

- This is the first one that is called a Psalm, '**A psalm** of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.'
- This is also the first Psalm that is attributed to David. '**A psalm of David**. When he fled from his son Absalom.'

- This is the first Psalm that gives us a Divinely written setting in the first verse of the Hebrew text. ‘A psalm of David. **When he fled from his son Absalom.**’
 - This is the first Psalm to use the Divinely placed pause to think about an important point. That pause we know as the Selah. **Selah**: “to pause and lift up”; it can be freely rendered: “There! What do you think of that?”
1. Occurs once (in 16 different Psalms): Psalms 7; 20; 21; 44; 47; 48; 50; 54; 60; 61; 75; 81; 82; 83; 85; 143;
 2. occurs twice (in 15 different Psalms): Psalms 4; 9; 24; 39; 49; 52; 55; 57; 59; 62; 67; 76; 84; 87; 88;
 3. occurs three times (in 7 different Psalms): Psalms 3; 32; 46; 66; 68; 77; 140;
 4. occurs four times (in only 1 Psalm): Psalm 89;
 5. And occurs first in Psalm 3 three times!

Psalm 3:1-8 (NIV) A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

- LORD, how many are my **foes**! How many rise up against me! 2 Many are saying of me, “God will not deliver him.” Selah
- 3 But you are a **shield** around me, O LORD; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. 4 To the LORD I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill. Selah
- 5 I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me. 6 I will not fear the tens of thousands **drawn up against me** on every side. 7 **Arise, O LORD!** Deliver me, O my God! Strike all my **enemies** on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked. 8 From the LORD comes **deliverance**. May your blessing be on your people. Selah

Indications of Warfare and Battles

This Psalm is set in the context of battles. If you trace through the verses you find about seven different indications of warfare and battlefields are the setting:

1. David was facing “foes” NIV; “adversaries” NAS (v. 1);
2. David needed a “shield” (v. 3);
3. David saw them deployed like an army v.6 “set against me” (NAS/NKJV) “drawn up against me” (NIV);
4. David calls them “enemies (v. 7);
5. David cries “arise O Lord” v.7 and uses the actual formula for entering battle from Numbers 10:35;
6. David speaks of armies (“people” in v. 8 can also be used for an army);
7. David sought victory implied by the word “deliverance” (v. 8 NIV), and deliverance from the Lord is a war cry.

This Psalm divides up the message God is giving through David by the use of the word SELAH. As we have seen, Selah means ‘lift up’ and is a musical term for crescendo. It means boom it out, crank it up—punctuate that with emphasis. Then stop and ask yourself what do you think of that?

1. So at the end of verse two, ‘many say there is no help for him in God.’ Selah—boom! Stop and consider this. What do you think of that? And David pauses and thinks about that and he finds a lifetime of definite proof that God did care for him.
2. So at the end of verse four he says, ‘He answered me...’. Selah—boom! Stop and consider this. What do you think of that? And David reflects upon his steadfast hope, and confident faith that God has always listened, responded, and rescued him in the past and will continue to do so.
3. So at the end of verse eight he says, ‘Salvation is of the Lord’. Selah—boom! Stop and consider this. What do you think of that? And David reflects upon the truth that it is God who alone can save us from all and any of our deepest troubles.

These three uses of ‘Selah’ make three very clear divisions that are the message points of this Psalm.

Like David—We All Will Face Battlefields v.1-2

What we need to remember as we look at this Psalm is that we all are facing battles as we go through every day life. Think about the workplace—it is cutthroat these days. Enduring personal attacks and abuse are the norm as more and more people are competing for fewer and fewer good jobs with less and less job security.

This prompts the use of weapons such as lying, slander, gossip, misrepresentation, bribes, stealing, falsification and blame shifting—all to gain personal advancement. And how many enemies does it take to make life miserable? Just one that is persistent.

Also, it may not be the workplace that becomes our battlefield, it may be our home. Maybe you and I will never face an army led by our son seeking to destroy us and take our throne like David was facing—but we may someday face the slander, attack, and abuse through the hatred of our children. We may face them betraying what we stand for and even seeking to undermine our family unity, or discredit and destroy us as parents.

We can face slander, attack or abuse like David faced in another way—coming from the closest on earth to us our husband or wife when they turn against us with no warning, desert us, seek to harm us or just torment us by breaking the lasting promise they made in marriage.

Others may face parents that turn against them, abandon them, and are slanderous and abusive against their very own children. Life is hard, sin is horrible, and people seem to be able to harm other so easily. So that is why David says SELAH. He is saying stop, look around—and think about your battle.

Like David—We All Will Make Choices v.3-4

But then David shows us what makes him such a godly example. David turns his attention from his problems to God. Suddenly everything gets back into proper proportion. David does this by holding tightly to a truth about God. God has been a shield in the past for David. That is a truth, that was the focus of past praise he offered to the Lord—so David says You *are* a shield about me! Then he says You are my glory, the One I want to please, the One I live for—You are worth living for, praising, and honoring.

He addresses God by the name Lord, that is Yahweh or Jehovah. The significance is that this is the name for God as the covenant keeping God. He is the God who keeps His Word. So David says Lord, You who keep your Word, You who brings to pass Your promises that You have made—be the shield around me that You have promised to be and have always been.

This exposes the secret that kept David even through his darkest hours. He know and trusted in the Lord. This trust in the Lord has stayed with David since way before his rule as King. He reminds himself that the Lord can be trusted and counted upon as the One who lifts up my head. Just as in the days when the Amalekites plundered David's home, stole his property and took his family hostage in 1 Samuel 30:1-6. What did David do then?

- 1 Samuel 30:6 Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters. **But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.**

When David couldn't go on, he couldn't even look up because he was so cast down—at that moment he felt the gentle hand of his loving Lord under his chin, lifting his head. It is the Lord alone who can truly encourage us. He is the only One that can lift our heads when they are cast down.

David knew that, sought that, wanted that—and experienced that. So now in this saddest of hours he declares in faith—You are the One who lifts my head. You are the One who encourages and strengthens me. I remember and I want you to do that again. I need You to help me now.

Sin always beats us down—God always lifts us up.

Others may ignore us, God always answers us. SELAH

See that? David says, SELAH—look at this, think about this, stop and let that truth settle down on your heart. God always lifts, God always answers. I am going to think about the God I can trust and stop looking at all my problems. Anxiety is meditating on problems; but peace is believing His promises. That is what David chooses.

Like David—We All Need Sleep v.5-8

Have you ever really thought about why we sleep as humans? In fact, have you considered that every one of us will probably spend about 1/3rd of our life sleeping? And that sleep is not an accident—God is the designer and promoter of sleep?

Yes, God designed sleep for us His creatures. But why? As believers who look at life through the lens of God's Word (just as we are to do with all the rest of life)—we need to see sleep and life as having the very signature of God written across it. When God has designed something it is very special and has specific purposes that God wants us to know about. So have you gained the benefits of knowing what God has to say about one-third of our lives?

First just list off in your mind what sleep means:

- Sleep means that work must stop.
- Sleep means that a day must end.
- Sleep means that our strength has been depleted and must be renewed.
- Sleep means that our minds have become weary and must be refreshed.
- Sleep means that our bodies have gotten exhausted and must be restored.
- Sleep means that we have limitations that must be faced.
- Sleep means that we have a dependence that must be acknowledged.
- Sleep means that we must deny self-sufficiency. As Psalm 121 tells us:

So one of the clearest reasons for sleep is to remind every human on this planet, and especially us believers—that God is God and we are not. We are helpless, limited, and dependent. But that is not all. Sleep can also be one of the most beautiful reminders of what true saving faith looks like.

In a few hours when it comes to be your time to sleep, think of what you will do. You will plan to end activities, end conversations, and even end your consciousness of life around you and lay the full weight of your body on an object that can hold you up (usually a bed). Then as you lay down you must choose to completely trust that something else other than yourself will hold you up while you are no longer able to take care of yourself. That is pure faith.

So sleep is when we relax fully because we no longer need to take care of our self, and held up by something else, we give in to sleep.

As one author so beautifully states,

“And in the same way, throughout the night as you sleep, Someone else is sustaining you. This is a picture of what it’s like to belong to Christ.”[1]

For me it was in the fall of 1962 when as a child I believed the simple proclamation of the Gospel given me by my mother. I was a sinner, clearly unable to save myself, facing the penalty of God’s wrath for my sin. But in simple and true faith as a child I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and God performed the miracle of salvation inside of me. He took my sins and gave me His life. I began a walk of growing to trust Him more and more, and myself less and less.

Sleep is a gift from God for each of us to get all ready to start over again all refreshed and renewed, tomorrow. It is also a picture of how much we need God, and even more how we

receive His salvation. Sleep should decimate any pride we have in our own power or might and humble us to think how weak and needy we really are.

Tonight as you crawl into your bed, pause to remember as you entrust your body to be held securely through the night—lift your heart in worship to God who holds your soul in the sweet comfort of laying secure in His arms. Tell the Lord you are also resting your life in Him. Whisper that you completely need Him, trust in His care—and ask Him to get rid of any pride you may have built up throughout the day.

That is the supreme peace that David felt as he lay down in the presence of his enemies and slept. So should we. Humbly, and in complete dependence upon our Lord!

Like David—We All Have Problems

Did I mention that one word in this Psalm that weighs heaviest on David? It says in the attribution line, Psalm 3:1-8 (NIV) ‘A psalm of David. When he fled from his **son** Absalom.’

All of this painful abuse, unexpected attack, and life endangerment is because of his own son. What could ever lead to a son that rapes his own sister? Or what would ever incite a son that murders his own brother? Or as we see here, what could drive a son that tries to murder his own father? One word answers all three—sin! It was sin that led Amnon to rape Tamar, that prompted Absalom to murder Amnon, and drove Absalom to seek his father’s death.

But all of these reflect upon David as a father. David’s life situation we are studying opens another subject God’s Word explains to us. David is struggling through one of the greatest challenges in life--raising children.

After years of combing through every verse of the Bible dozens of times, I still haven’t found the perfect family—a family with a godly dad, a godly mom, and children who are submissive their entire time at home, and grow up to move on into godly marriages and homes. **This just isn’t recorded in the Bible.**

What we do find in God’s Word are some godly parents who have both godly and ungodly children; we also find some ungodly parents who have all ungodly children, while other ungodly parents end up with some godly children. **There just doesn’t seem to be a parenting pattern that always works.**

So what is the answer for us as we parent? When God blesses us with children, He asks us to give them back to Him in dedication. That is what Christ’s parents did way back in Luke 2:22. That is also what godly parents have done through the centuries.

When we as parents present our children in dedication back to the Lord, we are declaring: “These children belong to You, Lord.” Dedication is our public acknowledgement of God’s ownership of them (Psalm 127:3). We can then rest in the joyful reality of being stewards of the promises of God’s Word.

But what happens when we dedicate them and they don't turn out as we had hoped and planned? The Bible repeatedly records godly men and women with less than godly children. That is because godliness is a choice; it is an obedient response to the Lord.

Godly children can not be made; nor can godliness be forced upon them. They grow that way, by God's grace, with—or sometimes even without—godly parenting.

The bottom line of Scripture is that **God never holds us responsible for how our children turn out—only for how we raised them.**

Godly Parenting

So let me remind you again of the truths parents affirm when they hold up their precious children to the Lord in dedication of themselves to godly parenting as stewards of their children for the Lord:

- **I will raise the children God gives me** for His glory;
- **I will surrender them** back to Him;
- **I will have His peace** when it is hard, and when they are making their own choices that will shape their future lives;
- **I will always pray for them**, always love them, and no matter what happens—
- **I will have God's peace because I gave them to Him**—and raised them for Him as best as I knew how and could do.

What comfort is there for parents when this happens? When children do not follow the Lord and turn away from Him and sometimes even us? What hope can we have after all the years we loved them, earnestly prayed for them, read God's Word to them, nurtured them in the ways of the Lord, and sought to guide them as best we could? Here are some truths that comfort our hearts—and the hearts of the many parents we have encouraged over the years:

Lessons We See in David's Life As We Reflect Upon Absalom's Rebellion . .

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1. **Absalom's Rebellion was *no surprise to God*.** Every day of our life (Psalm 139) was written in His book—even the darkest of days!

2. **Absalom's Rebellion *was an opportunity for God to see David's response*.** Our response is what matters to God most. He is watching and waiting for what we will do, to whom we will turn—and when we turn to Him, our Lord is glorified.

3. **Absalom's Rebellion must have *driven David to pray*** for what he may have thought impossible—Absalom's return to the Lord and to David.

4. **Absalom's Rebellion *opened to David a situation where only God can encourage him*** in times like that (I Samuel 30:6b)!

5. **Absalom's Rebellion filled David with hope** as he remembered that God wasn't ever through with him as long as he lived—and neither is He ever through with our wayward child.

6. **Absalom's Rebellion reminded David that he had a perfect heavenly Father** as he see our own imperfections reflected by his son.

7. **Absalom's Rebellion must have humbled David** as he remembered how often he also had failed his children (Psalm 130:3), and failed to respond correctly to his perfect Father.

8. **Absalom's Rebellion must have rebuked David** because he expected so much obedience from his imperfect parenting, yet he gave his heavenly Father such imperfect obedience—even though God's parenting was perfect!

9. **Absalom's Rebellion made David believe** more and more each day what only God is able to do: touch their hearts, soften their hearts, and turn their hearts back to Him (Ezekiel 36:26-27)—and to us.

10. **Absalom's Rebellion showed David God's never ending grace** as each wave of fear and sorrow rolls over him, he found his feet firmly planted on the Solid Rock (Psalm 40:1-2)!

I hope that these truths will give you strength when the parenting path gets rough—whether for a moment, or a few weeks or months, or even for the rest of your life. Beloved, God is faithful, so never stop trusting Him—and never cease waiting upon Him! Remember: Faithful prayer, in step with God's plan in His Word, is God's most powerful key to unlock children's hearts as we disciple them for Christ. The battle for our children's souls is won “one prayer at a time”—“Is anything too hard for the Lord? . . . ” (Genesis 18:14a)!

[1] C.J. Mahaney, *Humility: True Greatness*, p. 85.

The Song of a Soul Set Free

DSS: Message Thirty-Eight (971116AM)

The Life of David	The Life of Saul
<p>GOD PICKED DAVID:</p> <p>2 Samuel 7:8 “Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: “I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel.</p>	<p>PEOPLE PICKED SAUL:</p> <p>1 Samuel 10:23-24 So they ran and brought him from there; and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward.24 And Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?” So all the people shouted and said, “Long live the king!” NKJV</p>
<p>DAVID FOLLOWED GOD'S PRAISES:</p> <p>Acts 13:22 “And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.” NKJV</p>	<p>SAUL FOLLOWED PEOPLES PRAISES</p> <p>1 Samuel 18:6-8 Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments.7 So the women sang as they danced, and said: “Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands.” 8 Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?” NKJV</p>
<p>DAVID’S KINGDOM WAS immortalized THROUGH CHRIST:</p> <p>2 Samuel 7:29 “Now therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue forever before You; for You, O Lord God, have spoken it, and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever.” NKJV</p>	<p>SAUL’S KINGDOM WAS DEMONIZED AT HIS OWN HANDS:</p> <p>1 Samuel 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.” NKJV</p>
<p>DAVID WAS KIND AND GIVING:</p> <p>1 Chronicles 19:2 Then David said, “I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me.” So David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father.</p>	<p>SAUL WAS CRUEL AND SELFISH:</p> <p>1 Samuel 20:30-34 Then Saul’s anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, “You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! 33 Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that</p>

And David's servants came to Hanun in the land of the people of Ammon to comfort him. NKJV	it was determined by his father to kill David. 34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully. NKJV
DAVID WAS FORGIVING: 1 Samuel 26:24 "And indeed, as your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the Lord, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation." NKJV	SAUL WAS BITTER: 1 Samuel 18:9 So Saul eyed David from that day forward. NKJV
DAVID ACCUSED HIMSELF: 2 Samuel 12:13 So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. NKJV	SAUL EXCUSED HIMSELF: 1 Samuel 15:21 "But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal." NKJV
DAVID WAS FULL OF BOLDNESS: 1 Chronicles 18:1-2 After this it came to pass that David attacked the Philistines, subdued them, and took Gath and its towns from the hand of the Philistines.2 Then he defeated Moab, and the Moabites became David's servants, and brought tribute. NKJV	SAUL WAS FULL OF FEAR: 1 Samuel 17:11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. NKJV
DAVID WAS AT PEACE WITH GOD: Psalm 4:8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. NKJV	SAUL WAS AT WAR WITH GOD: 1 Samuel 16:14 But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him. NKJV

This morning we need to soberly look at a story of two men. These two men towered over their generations. These two men held the highest offices to be had on earth. Yet from their privileged position one is elevated to heavenly proportions and the other slips hellishly down.

One started a royal line that shall never end. Even to this day his name is spoken and sung with the joys of heaven. The other ended his miserable earthly life apostate, hardened and distant from God. Blinded by bitterness, driven by pride, shackled by fear he spends his last supper with a witch at Satan's side, dines on an ox roasted by a fire that would soon roast his tormented soul.

David and Saul Contrasted

Yes, King Saul and King David are a striking contrast in so many ways.

King Saul was a colossal misfit because he refused to learn God's way to deal with sin. He was a prince of a man and a demon of a man. He was a study in paradoxes. Saul was a total contradiction in God's sight:

- From man's perspective he was tall but, in God's sight he was very short of God's plan;
- Humanly speaking he was quite handsome outwardly, but when his heart was exposed as the Lord sees, he had an ugly heart of sin.
- His body was physically strong but within that body was incredible spiritual weakness.
- As king he was among the richest people of Israel, but his real condition was utter spiritual bankruptcy.
- Saul look healthy on the outside but the cancer of sin was rotting him internally.
- God says who we really are spiritually is far more crucial than what we look like on the outside!

Saul's Trail of Damning Disobedience:

- Saul was presumptuous with God's Grace. He intrudes into office of priest 1 Sam 13:8-10.
- Saul was impatient with God's Timing. There he was alone, his military resources running out, Saul only saw the ritual as important and not the faith that prompts obedience 1 Samuel 13:11-12. To offer sacrifices was not legal for Saul:
- GOD HAD A CHOSEN TIME: 1 Samuel 10:8 "You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do." NKJV The crisis of the moment revealed what Saul was really like on the inside. It revealed his character. His character was one that disobeyed God in the crisis. He was his own boss, the Lord had not become his Master. His goals were more important than the Lord's. His reputation was more important than God's.
- GOD HAD A CHOSEN PLACE Deuteronomy 12:13 "Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; 14 "but in the place which the Lord chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you. NKJV
- GOD DEMANDS OBEDIENCE: Saul had plenty of excuses but Samuel gets to the heart of the problem as he says, 1 Samuel 13:13 And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. NKJV
- Saul was careless with God's truth. he had God's words (he had prophesied under the power of God's Spirit in (1 Samuel 10: ; 19:20) but not His thoughts. Because of this he took everything as a sign for what he had planned to do. He thought (23:7) God had delivered David into his murderous hands. When you are out of touch with the Lord only confusion follows.
- Saul was lacking genuine love. He seeks to kill his own son, Jonathan (14)
- Saul was devoid of a personal relationship with God. Saul was false.
- His obedience to God was false. 1 Samuel 15:8 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.⁹ But

Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. NKJV

- His mercy for God was false. He had compassion on God's enemies (Agag) instead of God's friends (David) 1 Samuel 15:9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. NKJV
- His answer before God was false. He spoke to the Lord's prophet untruthfully. First Samuel 15:13-20 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord."14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"15 And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the Lord said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak on."17 So Samuel said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel?18 "Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.'19 "Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the Lord?"20 And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites." NKJV
- His desire to worship God was false. 1 Samuel 15:21-23 "But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal."22 Then Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king." NKJV
- His confession to God was false. 1 Samuel 15:24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. NKJV
- His repentance to God was false. He had ungodly regret rather than godly mourning 1 Samuel 15:30 Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord your God." NKJV
- His relationship to God was false. Saul actually admits his lack of a personal knowledge God. 1 Samuel 15:30 Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord your God." NKJV
- His heart BEFORE God was false. 1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." NKJV

So dies Saul, an apostate. One who experienced the Word of God, the Spirit of God, the power of God and the leading of God - and willfully turns from it! Apostates know the truth and have received knowledge from God, but then turn from it.

King Saul the apostate refused the new heart the Lord had given him (I Samuel 13:14). Think of his last supper.). Last Suppers are important to God; note the last suppers of 3 men:

- Saul's was a last supper of demons, horrors and the bitterness of death alone in suicide. Driven by fear, dogged by his hatred, led by his pride – he goes to the witches cave (I Sam. 28:25) to eat his last meal.
- Judas' was a supper of deceit, darkness and the bitterness of hell (Matthew 26) as he eats with a heart of darkness as he sat next to the Light of the World.
- But Jesus' was a Last supper of triumph, of blessing, of forgiveness and of hope. . .

From that last supper King Saul completes his despair and defeat by his death. So he dies in his sin, a murderous, wicked, bitter and angry old man. He is slain by one of the very people he was to exterminate, the Amalekites! He like so many others came so close to God and ended so far from God eternally!

What about that other man who sinned? How did David do? Where are the lessons David learned in this horrible pit of sin? Forever recorded in Psalm 32 “The Song of a soul set free”

- David sings with DELIGHT when his SINS WERE CLEANSED v. 1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- David sings in DESPAIR when his SINS WERE CONCEALED v. 3-4 When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah
- David sings of DELIVERANCE when his SINS WERE CONFESSED v. 5-7 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah 6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. 7 You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah
- David sings about his DESIRE that his SINFUL WAYS BE CRUSHED v. 8-11 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. 9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you. 10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him. 11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

David's Song of DELIGHT when his SINS WERE CLEANSED v. 1-2

Three Hebrew Words for Forgiveness in Psalm 32:

1. **PULLED OFF:** “Forgiven” means literally to have our sin lifted off. As Pilgrim it rolls off and into Christ's tomb. "My sin oh the bliss . . .". We are being crushed by any sins we keep around. They suffocate, smother and squish the very life of our soul. But there is a Redeemer who can set us free. And to his only hope, David fled.

2. **SHEILDED FROM:** “Covered” speaks of the strong imagery in the events of the day of atonement. On that day the High priest took the blood of an animal and sprinkled it onto the mercy seat. Above the mercy seat was the presence of God portrayed by the outstretched arms of the cherubim. Beneath the lid of the ark was the tablets portraying God's divine law. In essence, the blood stood between a holy God and the sinners who broke His law, averting His wrath. David cried for joy when the wrath of God was turned away from him. So our sins are covered away by the blood of Jesus shed for us!

3. **CLEARED OUT:** “Not Counted” speaks of a list of debts no longer held against us. David had become utterly bankrupted by his sin. The bills were piling up, mounting like a flood and drowning him. Desire, deceit, cruel deception, cunning craftiness and shameless murder all charged heavy debts to his soul. And now in sheer delight all the mountain of impossible debt is cleared from the ledger. “My sins are gone, and shall not be remembered, God in mercy tenderly forgives.”

- God cleansed David's Sin that smothers: now they were forgiven “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven”
- God cleansed David's Sin that soils: now they were covered by the cleansing blood. “Whose sin is covered”
- God cleansed David's Sin that steals: now they were not imputed to his account as debts. “2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity”
- God cleansed David's Sin that slithers: now there was no guile. “And in whose spirit there is no deceit.”

David's Song of DESPAIR when his SINS WERE CONCEALED v. 3-4

- David's Concealed sin sickened him “v. 3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old”
- David's Concealed sin saddened him “Through my groaning all the day long”
- David's Concealed sin burdened him “4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;”
- David's Concealed sin stifled him “My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah” (like sun parched brown grass)

David's Song of DELIVERANCE when his SINS WERE CONFESSED v. 5-7

- David acknowledged his responsibility for the sin “v.5 I acknowledged my sin to You”
- David acknowledged God's ability to see “And my iniquity I have not hidden”
- David acknowledged God's desire to forgive “I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,”
- David acknowledged God's power to remove sin “And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah”

- David acknowledged his great opportunity.

1. Now he understood the Lord is Approachable “v. 6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found;”

2. Now he understood the Lord is Trustable “; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him.”

3. Now he understood he could Rest in the Lord “v. 7 You are my hiding place”

4. Now he understood he could Delight in the Lord “You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah”

David’s Song of DESIRE that his SINFUL WAYS BE CRUSHED v. 8-11

- David now longs God YOU LEAD ME “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.”
- David now longs God YOU GUARD ME “v. 9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.”
- David now longs God YOU TEACH ME “v. 10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked;”
- David now longs God YOU SURROUND ME “But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him.”
- David now longs God YOU FILL ME “v. 11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!”

David--Living Deliberately

DSS: Message Thirty-Nine (060910AM)

This morning Psalm 31 confronts all of us with a serious question—"Am I seeking the Lord deliberately with all my heart—or just coasting along spiritually"?

Many weeks ago when we began this look at David's life we read God's epitaph for David's life. In nine words God summarizes all that David was on earth.

David ... served God's purpose in his own generation (Acts 13.36, NIV).

As we open to Psalm 31 we find David's personal resolve that marked out why God thought so highly of him.

In You, O Lord, I put my trust (Psalm 31.1a, NKJV)

This Psalm opens with a carefully crafted order of words. Note the Lord comes before David.

David points to the Lord before he speaks of himself. God is the deliberate focus of this opening verse, this Psalm—and David's life.

Psalm 31 is David's reflective song about the dangers and painful consequences of coasting through our spiritual lives.

David crashed when he wasn't careful. David crashed because he had disengaged from following the Lord with his whole heart. David crashed because he was just coasting along in his walk with the Lord.

One of the greatest dangers for a mature believer is to begin coasting spiritually. Coasting is when we slack up on seeking the Lord with all our heart. We begin to feed our souls on yesterday's blessings, last week's devotions, and last month's ministry. Coasting is when we stop engaging our whole mind in worship.

David had carefully lived for the Lord most of his life. He had seen the Hand of God so clearly as a lad facing Goliath. David had felt the Presence of God as a young man fleeing from King Saul. David had felt the blessings of God as a man through all the years of leading the armies of Israel as king.

But somewhere along the way David disengaged his heart. His heart was no longer fixed on the Lord, but surrounded by so many blessings, he could just coast. He went through all the motions, said all the same words, but wasn't careful to guard his heart.

In those unguarded moments coasting through life, he crashed. Then everything in his spiritual life halted abruptly and stayed in neutral for that year following his grievous sin against God involving Bathsheba.

After his repentance and restoration—David had changed. He had learned in the spiritual woodshed of God’s chastening, that sin paid a heavy wage of consequences. His life would never be the same. David realized you can’t live on yesterday’s manna or last month’s spiritual disciplines. He couldn’t just coast!

David was different not because he had lost something; he was changed because now David lived with an acute awareness that God’s forgiveness had given him a second chance. That caused him to live life so much more deliberately than ever before.

The constant danger in our spiritual life is to disengage our engine (our hearts) and just start coasting through our days spiritually; passing up worship, neglecting spiritual disciplines, and slowly drifting away from ministry.

Stop and ask yourself this morning—am I just coasting today? Or, am I seeking God with all my heart?

David in Psalm 31 examines for us how to live life deliberately--how to intentionally live each day in such a way that we live as much as possible of our life for the glory and purpose of the Lord our God.

With David in Psalm 31, this morning we will examine how to live life deliberately--how to avoid coasting and the costly consequences of an unguarded heart.

Scholars are divided as to who wrote this Psalm because it reflects such a kaleidoscope of settings. Most seem to think it was probably David reflecting back across the seasons of his life.

Psalm 31 is a Psalm Written—

- After the events of I Samuel 11-12 (David’s sin and repentance),
- After the year of painful chastisement recorded in Psalm 32,
- After the magnificent prayer of repentance and return of Psalm 51, and also
- After the painful dash to the wilderness by David--away from his rebel son Absalom, recorded in Psalm 3.

Psalm 31 is a reflective Psalm that David wrote to capture his choice to return and deliberately live his life one day at a time; building upon the lessons he has learned in both triumphs and failures. This Psalm is quoted directly by Jesus, Jonah and Jeremiah.[1]

In Psalm 31 David looks back over his life and tries to find when he stopped seeking the Lord with his whole heart. He reflects upon God’s Hand in his life in the past. Then he resolved to once again make intentional choices, careful steps and measured responses to each event he faced.

We saw this so clearly in Psalm 3 in David’s initial response to Absalom’s rebellion. He wept and worshipped, fled and cried to God for help. All that he did was done very carefully.

As we have noted with each of David's Psalms, they are the personal diary of the man God notes is after His heart. David's Psalms are about the experiences of *the man God emphasizes* by writing more about him than anyone else who ever lived.

David learned a strong lesson from his failures and sins and all of that convinced him that he must spend the rest of his days living deliberately for God.

Turn with me to Psalm 31 as we stand and read David's song about how to again wholeheartedly live each day of our life for God.

There is a short chorus we sing from time to time that sums up David's longing in Psalm 31.

“With All My Heart”

*With all my heart I want to love You Lord,
and live my life each day to know You more.
All that is in me is Yours completely;
I'll serve You only, with all my heart.*

After his crash, David was so careful. He guarded his heart, and he harnessed his moments. He was deliberate about his spiritual life, he wasn't coasting. He had a new focus for his life, and it was:

Live deliberately for God—No Coasting Allowed! The dictionary defines that word for us.

De·lib·er·ate·ly *adv.* With careful consideration, or deliberation; circumspectly; warily; not hastily or rashly; slowly; as, a purpose *deliberately* formed; as words and actions said or done on purpose. A life not hurried.

Is that where you are with God today? Or are you coasting?

A Short Definition: intentional

Some Antonyms: A person who does not act deliberately acts--by chance, indeterminately, unintentionally, unmethodically, unsystematically, unwittingly.

In Psalm 3 we saw how David learned to face abuse and danger, and even go to sleep in the face of both—peacefully. That was the first lesson Absalom's rebellion taught him by God's grace.

Today we come to the next lesson God had for him. David learns in this time of consequence was that he must live deliberately. No spiritual coasting through life.

- No more of this boredom stuff like the night he padded out of bed in his slippers and peeked over the rooftops looking for something to interest him.
- No more unplanned situations he walks into defenselessly.
- No more unguarded moments where in an instant of passion he caused a lifetime of heart aches.
- No more! David says, I am renewing my walk with the Lord.

Living deliberately for God means I am going to deliberately plan to neglect anything that hinders my walk as Romans 6 commands.

Living Deliberately for God Means Choices to Live—

- *By careful consideration* as I count the cost as Jesus said in Luke 14.28;
- *Circumspectly* as Paul said in Ephesians 5.15;
- *Warily* of the devil my prowling adversary as Peter said in I Peter 5.8;
- *Not hastily or rashly* as James warned in James 1.19.

So living life intentionally, on purpose, deliberately for God is the theme of Psalm 31, as we see David draw inspired lessons from three eras of his life.

Look down at them in your Bible, and trace them with me. Note that the first 22 verses are David talking to God about running, not running, and again running.

1. Psalm 31:1-8 reflects lessons David learned in his *running from Saul years*.
2. Psalm 31:9-11 reflects lessons David learned in his *not running from Bathsheba year*.
3. Psalm 31:12-22 reflects lessons David learned in his *running from Absalom years*.

Now, let's walk through this Psalm section by section and see the ways that David learned from his troubles; lessons that helped him walk the rest of his days intentionally for the Lord.

First David explains to us the lessons he learned from all those years of running for his life from Saul. Look at Psalm 31:1-8 with me.

Psalm 31.1-4 In You, O Lord, I put my trust; Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in Your righteousness. v. 2 Bow down Your ear to me, Deliver me speedily; Be my rock of refuge, A fortress of defense to save me. v.3 For You are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name's sake, Lead me and guide me. v. 4 Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, For You are my strength. (NKJV)

David seems to start this Psalm by reflecting upon all his years on the run from King Saul, fleeing from one cave to another, from one wilderness fort to another.

That is where David found that God and God alone can be the place where we safely rest. In verse one David says I put my trust (chacah [2620] v. 'to seek refuge; to trust') Then he uses four different nouns to describe how he found the Lord as his place of safety. This security David finds in God is seen in the usage of

- **Rock/Strength** (NKJV 31.2,4 *maowz* [4581] ‘fortress, stronghold, strong’);
- **Refuge** (NKJV 31.2 *tsuwr* [6697] ‘cliff, rock wall’);
- **Fortress of Defense/Fortress** (NKJV 31.2-3 *matsuwd* [4686] ‘fortress’ also word for Masada in Israel today, for any of you that have gone to the Land of the Book and seen that majestic refuge).
- **Rock** <different Hebrew word> (NKJV 31.3 *sehlah* [5553] ‘rock, stronghold’ as in Psalm 18).

So David uses every word in the Hebrew language he could find for rocks, mountain top fortresses, and strongholds to sing of God’s great security that was available. These graphic pictures symbolizing the comfort and help found by David in the Lord, come from his years of running from King Saul. In those years Saul’s vast superiority in both numbers and strength were blunted by David’s ability to hide in and out of the many caves, canyons, and rocks of the wilderness.

As he looks back he draws from that time of intense fear and shares his hope that rests firmly in the Lord. He is intentionally going to walk forward through this time of testing and consequence—not running from the problems.

Remember how David is so clear even in the word order. The “in You, O Lord” precedes the “I put my trust”. God is first, He is the source, the target and the point of all David is doing from now on.

When David stepped out once all on his own, he fell deep into sin with Bathsheba. No more, he is putting the Lord first. As we read this section, have you ever come to this deliberate moment in your life?

- Have you said in your heart and at the center of your will—Lord You are first?
- Have you said in your heart and at the center of your will—Lord You come ahead of me, my plans, my desires, my way?
- If not, as I read David’s words again, why not surrender to Him right now?

Even more specifically it seems that David was reflecting upon one of the darker days of those years. David had asked God if he should rescue the fellow Jews of Keilah a town in Judah, from attack by their enemies. David delivers them but as I Samuel 23.1-13 records, after rescuing them, they betray David to Saul and would have given him over to Saul’s murderous intentions.

David may have wanted to make the city of Keilah his safe fortress against Saul, but it turned out to be a false hope and a worthless refuge.

God wanted David to learn that as those natural outcroppings gave David a safe haven all those years--so the supernatural Presence of the Lord, who was always there and always able to protect, **was the real Rock, Refuge, and Fortress.**

David refers to the Lord in this way often in the Psalms (Psalm 18-19; 28; 61-62; and 71).

David fills the Psalm with statements to the Lord that “**You are...**”, afterward applying those in his time of need by saying to himself by faith—“**...then be...**”.

Why not try that in your life? Carefully go through the Word and declare what God is as revealed by His Word.

In Faith Declare Deliberately—

- God you are a Rock, then be my Rock.
- God you are Strength, then be my Strength.
- God you are a Refuge, then be my Refuge.
- God you are a Fortress of Defense, then be my Fortress of Defense.

And then each time you're in the Word, stop when you find a truth about God. Repeat the truth back to God in the “You are” form. Pause and by faith say, “Then be...”

This is how we can derive the greatest comfort and strength from God's Word. We open to the Lord in His Word and let Him declare that He is something. Then we believe Him enough to declare “You are...then be to me”... and apply what He is to our lives!

Drop down to the next verse. Here is another treasure. See if you recognize v. 5.

Psalm 31:5 “Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.(NKJV)

After three and one half years of public ministry, after six long hours of horrific suffering on the cross—Jesus lifts His head one last time, pulls Himself up on the spikes to let out His final words in Luke 23:46.

Last Words of Saints

David's words in Psalm 31:5 became also Christ's final words; these words found their way into the hearts and lips of many great saints of the past. Those who stood at their bedside as they died tell us that the following saints used these same words as their last words on earth like Christ's:

1. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) “Jesus the Very Thought of Thee” [#79 TBC Hymnal] died quoting this verse;

2. John Hus (1369-1415) who was burnt at the stake in Constance by the RCC for believing in justification by faith alone and preaching it. At the end of the ceremony condemning Hus to death by fire the presiding bishop uttered this chilling condemnation, “And now we commit thy soul to the devil”. To which John Hus calmly was heard to say by those who loved him and stood by him to the end, “I commit my spirit into Thy Hands, Lord Jesus Christ; unto Thee I commend my spirit, which Thou hast redeemed!”

3. Martin Luther (1483-1546) who wrote, “Blessed are those who die not only *for the Lord* as martyrs; not only *in the Lord* as all believers; but likewise *with the Lord*, as breathing forth their lives in these words: ‘Into Thy Hands I commend my spirit.’ (J. J. Stewart Perowne, in loc.) and so on his death bed in February 18th 1546 that great reformer confidently left this world faintly uttering those words of triumph!

If you haven’t yet thought about your last words, maybe you should. Since we never know when we will draw our last breath, why not plan to say something like David, and Jesus, and many other great saints, and breath out the final moments of your life on earth by saying—Into Thy Hand I Commit my spirit!

(Psalm 31.6-8 NKJV) I have hated those who regard useless idols; But I trust in the Lord. ⁷ I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, For You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities, ⁸ And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; You have set my feet in a wide place.

David Expresses His Trust in the Lord by Affirming Four Truths That He Held to in Time of Trouble:

1. David trusted in the fact that **God was well aware of all his trouble** (31.7a “*I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, For You have considered my trouble*”). God was aware and close by in every bit of his agony.
2. David trusted in the fact that **God responded to his anguishing soul** (31.7b “*You have known my soul in adversities*”). When God sees something we are struggling with it is not merely that He just notices it, He also responds and comes to help us in our time of need.
3. David trusted in the fact that **God did not hand him over to his enemies** (31.8a “⁸*And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy*”). God will keep us from falling and is very near to us in time of need. He promises that we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.
4. David trusted in the fact that **God set his feet in a wide place** (31.8b “*You have set my feet in a wide place*”). Since God is faithful, always had been—David knew that all he needed to do was trust in Him! The memory of a past deliverance can bear the fruit of a present confidence.

Next David explains to us the lessons he learned from those not running from Bathsheba year. Look at Psalm 31:9-11 with me.

(Psalm 31.9-11, NKJV) Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; My eye wastes away with grief, Yes, my soul and my body! 10 For my life is spent with grief, And my years with sighing; My strength fails because of my iniquity, And my bones waste away. 11 I am a reproach among all my enemies, But especially among my neighbors, And am repulsive to my acquaintances; Those who see me outside flee from me.

David moans in these verses that it was just not worth it—the moment of stolen pleasure was repaid with months of unbearable tortures. Look at how many different ways David describes all

that he went through: trouble, wasting with grief, years of sighing, strength fails, bones waste away, reproach, repulsive, fled from.

None of these woes are recorded in either II Samuel or I Chronicles where David's biography is written by God. It is only here in the Psalms, his personal diary. David was very aware of sin's high cost. He wanted to avoid any more headlong plunges into sin-- and so should we!

Next David explains to us the lessons he learned from those running from Absalom years. Look at Psalm 31:12-22 with me.

(Psalm 31.12-14, NKJV) I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. 13 For I hear the slander of many; Fear is on every side; While they take counsel together against me, They scheme to take away my life. 14 But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, "You are my God."

The fearsome times of being chased and hunted to the death is described by David using a curious word in Hebrew. He says in Psalm 31.13 'fear is on every side' which is the translation of the Hebrew words **magor mishaviv**. Jeremiah uses this same phrase 6 times to describe those final days as Judah was besieged and destroyed by the relentless Babylonian armies (6.25; 20.3-4, 10; 46.5; 49.29; Lam. 2.22).

(Psalm 31.15-18, NKJV) My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, And from those who persecute me. ¹⁶ Make Your face shine upon Your servant; Save me for Your mercies' sake. ¹⁷ Do not let me be ashamed, O Lord, for I have called upon You; Let the wicked be ashamed; Let them be silent in the grave. ¹⁸ Let the lying lips be put to silence, Which speak insolent things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

David was confident that every part of his life was held by God. This morning each of us, where ever we are on the path of life should affirm this same truth with David.

- This means that the **times of our youth** are in God's hands—when others make decisions for us. He guides, He directs, He protects, and He works all things together for His good.
- This means that the **times of our career** are in God's hands—every choice, every victory, every defeat, all our accomplishments, all our possessions, all our troubles and triumphs. He is guiding them, and if we will just let Him, He fashions all of our life for His glory.
- This means that the **times of our decline** are in God's hands—when our days run out, when our starting of new projects ceases, even then God holds those days and wants to bless them with His presence and power. He cares for us and wants to make those final years the best of all (Psalm 92). Remember that God is never surprised; nothing gets past the boundaries of His good, acceptable and perfect will (Romans 12.2). We just need to see that in all things God works for our good (Romans 8.28) and wants us to be contents in all things He allows to come our way (Philippians 4.11).

(Psalm 31.19-22, NKJV) Oh, how great is Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You, Which You have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of

men! 20 You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence From the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion From the strife of tongues. 21 Blessed be the Lord, For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city! 22 For I said in my haste, "I am cut off from before Your eyes"; Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications When I cried out to You.

George Gallup once found in his studies that “highly religiously motivated” people had a much higher quality of life, had fewer divorces, had less strife with others, and had more involvement helping others. But all those factors only give a tiny reading of what the goodness God gives brings to the lives of His children. Most of what God does is unseen by outsiders. His constant comfort in time of need is unknown to them. So is the indescribable rapture we find in those times we connect with God in worship and praise. Those outside Christ never know the assuring strength of His Presence we feel in the darkest of times and places. They never have felt the strength of seeing immediate and other times long awaited answers to prayer—when we are struck with the fact that God heard us and has responded. But all of this, great as it may seem is nothing compared to what is coming! As David said early on in life in Psalm 23:5-6, what we have now is wonderful, but what is coming is best. Alexander MacLaren (1826-1910) a Baptist pastor in Scotland once wrote these words as he preached on these very verses a century ago:

Here we see, sometimes, the messengers coming with the one cluster of grapes on the pole. There we shall live in the vineyard. Here we drink from the river as it flows; there we shall be at the fountain-head. Here we are in the vestibule of the King’s house, there we shall be in the throne room, and each chamber as we pass through it is richer and fairer than the one preceding. Heaven’s least goodness is more than earth’s greatest blessedness. All that life to come, all its conditions and everything about it, are so strange to us, so incapable of being bodied forth or conceived by us, and the thought of Eternity is, it seems to me, so overwhelmingly awful that I do not wonder at even good people finding little stimulus, or much that cheers, in the thought of passing thither. But if we do not know anything more—and we know very little more—let us be sure of this, that when God begins to compare His adjectives He does not stop till He gets to the superlative degree and that *good* begets *better*, and the better of earth ensures the *best* of Heaven. And so out of our poor little experience here, we may gather grounds of confidence that will carry our thoughts peacefully even into the great darkness, and may say, ‘What Thou didst work is much, what Thou hast laid up is more.’ And the contrast will continue for ever and ever; for all through that strange Eternity that which is wrought will be less than that which is laid up, and we shall never get to the end of God, nor to the end of His goodness.[3]

And then note that the last two verses are different; they are not addressed to the Lord but to all others. In verses 23-24 he is exhorting all who will listen. Up to Psalm 31:23 all 22 previous verses are spoken to the Lord—now David talks to us.

(Psalm 31:23-24, NKJV) Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints! For the Lord preserves the faithful, And fully repays the proud person. ²⁴ Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the Lord.

3. He says *love the Lord like I do* “Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints!” (31:23a). The Lord knows our deepest desires and responds to them.

4. He says *trust the Lord like I do* “For the Lord preserves the faithful” (31.23b). God always looks at our hearts.
5. He says *fear the Lord like I do* because He “fully repays the proud person” (31.23c). Don’t mess with the Lord; He has built into this universe the inescapable laws of the consequence engine.
6. He says *wait for the Lord like I am* “Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart” (31.24a). Fear not is the most repeated negative prohibition in God’s Word and God means it. Fear is the Devil’s playground. Fear disables us, debilitates us, and robs us of joy and peace. Ask for and receive God’s heart strengthening treatments. As much as you would seek the cardiologist for blockages, seek the Great Physician for strength.
7. He says *hope in the Lord like I will* “All you who hope in the Lord” (31.24b). Here David uses that great Hebrew word *yachal* which denotes ‘trusting hope’. This is the hope that Job, David, Ezra and Jeremiah all clung to, trusting God through the darkest days, longest nights, and most uncertain times. May I remind you of their trusting hope once again?

(Job 13.15 KJV) Though he slay me, ***yet will I trust in him***: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

(Psalm 42.5, 11; 43.5 KJV) Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? ***hope thou in God***: for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? ***hope thou in God***: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? ***hope in God***: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

(Psalm 71.14 KJV) But ***I will hope continually***, and will yet praise thee more and more.

(Psalm 119.43, 49, 74, 81, 114, 147 KJV) And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for ***I have hoped*** in thy judgments. ⁴⁹ZAIN. Remember the word unto thy servant, ***upon which thou hast caused me to hope***. ⁷⁴They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because ***I have hoped in thy word***. ⁸¹CAPH. My soul fainteth for thy salvation: ***but I hope in thy word***. ¹¹⁴Thou *art* my hiding place and my shield: ***I hope in thy word***. ¹⁴⁷I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: ***I hoped in thy word***.

(Lamentations 3.21, 24 KJV) This I recall to my mind, ***therefore have I hope***. ²²*It is* of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. ²³*They are* new every morning: *great is* thy faithfulness. ²⁴The LORD *is* my portion, saith my soul; ***therefore will I hope in him***. ²⁵The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him.

• [1] 31.13 terror Jeremiah uses this phrase *magormishb 6x* (6.25; 20.3-4, 10; 46.5; 49.29; Lam. 2.22). Also Jonah quotes 31.6 in Jonah 2.6. David opens Psalm 71 with the same words. But most significantly, Jesus used Psalm 31.5 as His last words on earth in Luke 23.46.
• [2] James Boice, Psalms, vol. 1, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, p. 271.
• [3] <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/maclaren/psalms.ii.xxi.html>

Coming Back to God

DSS: Message Forty (971102AM)

Where have all the songs gone? The ornate halls of Jerusalem's royal palace were strangely silent these days. It seemed as if David had lost his voice. In days past sweet songs of God's power were often heard coming from the throne room of this victorious warrior. The shepherd boy become king had carried his stringed instrument, a harp or lyre, into the daily life of leading God's people. This man who was a living and talking expression of God's heart was always refreshing those he touched with his praises to the Lord.

It became refreshingly a daily treat for the myriads of aides and clerks and military attaches to hear their king rapturously sing great hymns of worship. Down the halls flowed rivers of praise to the Lord passing the conquered treasures taken from fallen kingdoms, past the storehouses overflowing with the consecrated gold and silver heaped for the future temple to God. These songs poured out of David's mouth from a heart filled with the goodness of God. Each song or Psalm sent from God to David were such treasures from heaven.

They have been preserved for three thousand years. Pillaging armies have swept across the Middle East like hordes of locust, fires have burned for weeks behind them, blood has flowed like rivers, earthquakes have leveled cities and towns, floods and storms without number have raced down the hillsides. But God kept His songs. Not one has been lost. Most of us hold a copy of these songs in our Bibles they are called Psalms.

But no more. David fell silent. He had lost his song. No more did the daily business of the Kingdom of Israel flow to the songs of heaven. No more did the good shepherd's peace and joy touch each worker, aide and courier. It was slowly becoming a wasteland. David was quiet, pensive and moody. His face was dark, no longer aglow with joy. His words that used to seem like honey were now more like his sword at his belt - sharp, cutting and bringing death.

Gone was God from daily work. Extinct were the life giving expressions of joyful delight that nourished the government of God's people. What a blessing those songs had been. Songs like:

- Psalm 8: "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens."
- Psalm 9: "I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works."
- Psalm 18: "I will love thee, O LORD, my strength."
- Psalm 21: "The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!"
- Psalm 25: "Unto Thee oh Lord do I lift up my soul; O my God I trust in Thee."
- Psalm 27: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear"
- Psalm 48: "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness."

What Went Wrong in David's Life?

But what went wrong? How can it be? Does God just shut off the rivers of blessing? Yes when we turn away from Him and go our own way. Remember the sequence? Wonderfully by God's power **humble teen aged David** slew God's enemy Goliath. But later in life **a proud David**

- Ignored God's word and
- Allowed another giant to come right into God's city Jerusalem, and
- Welcomed God's enemy into the presence of this man after God's own heart, and
- David was slain by the giant of LUST!

David the giant killer, killed by the giant of lust. We noted six dreadful steps down in II Samuel. Join me in II Samuel 5:

- David Desensitized his conscience by incomplete obedience II Sam 5:13
- David Relaxed his grip on personal purity II Sam 11:1
- David Fixated his heart on physical desires v. 2
- David Rationalized his mind about wrong decisions v. 3
- David Decended his life into lustful sin v. 4
- David Destroyed his testimony by the sin of a moment of stolen pleasure. Death, deceit, murder, immorality and spiritual oppression, poverty and famine of the soul are only a few offspring of this act of momentary pleasure.

What a horrible thing sin is. It deceives with all those glittering promises. It destroys with the precision of a surgeon.

How Can We Get Back on Track?

How do we get back on the track? I think the key is of course in the Word. Let's close in Psalm 51. When you have been defeated by the giant of lust David is inspired of God to tell us four steps we can take to come back to God.

WE MUST - Focus on God's Character: He is Exalted even in our sin (51:1-4)

- The Lord can RENEW OUR RELATIONSHIP v. 1
- The Lord can WASH US CLEAN v. 2

William Cowper once wrote:

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains;
Lose all their guilty stains;
Lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

- The Lord can REMOVE THE ROADBLOCK v. 3
- The Lord can UTTERLY FORGIVE v. 4

Horatio G. Spafford once penned these blessed words:

My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

WE MUST - Focus on our Character: We are sinful (51:5-9)

- As Sinners we show our nature, our choice and confirm God's declaration. v. 5
- As Sinners we destroy inner truthfulness v. 6
- As sinners we are defiled internally v. 7
- As sinners we lose our joy v. 8
- As sinners we lose fellowship with our God v. 9

WE MUST – Focus on God's Work: He is renewing (51:10-13)

- God is washing our hearts v. 10 [Heb 9.14; 10.22]
- God is restoring our walk in the Spirit v. 11
- God is renewing the fruit of the Spirit v. 12
- God is preparing us for further ministry v. 13

WE MUST – Focus on our work: We must repent (51:14-19)

- Call sin what it is v. 14 (David murdered Uriah)
- Talk to God v. 15 (Psalm 32 David had dried up spiritually)
- Experience true contrition not mere externalism v. 16-17
- Begin zealous worship anew and afresh v. 18-19

If we neglect fleeing lust and rooting out what can we do right now to get us started back to God's path or keep us on that path? Let me give you three choices we need to make:

1. Make yourself look at the final result or ultimate form (mature plant) of the momentary choices of (or seeds you are planting) today.

- If your parents knew what you have been hiding from them, would it crush them and grieve their hearts?
- If your husband or wife knew about the area you have surrendered to lust, would it rob your relationship of joy and trust?
- If you keep on in this path what will it do to your body, your family, your reputation and your heavenly reward?
- Is it really worth as much as it will eventually cost you? FLEE YOUTHFUL LUSTS. Because soon they will -

1. HABITUATE your lusts
2. CRIPPLE your conscience
3. SOIL your mind
4. DESENSITIZE your warning system
5. MISUSE your body, mind and eyes
6. SPOIL your ability to give
7. LESSEN your desires for a godly husband or wife

2. Choose to cultivate new and godly choices that will become habits of holiness for old and ungodly patterns. Cut cable or online service for a few months and join an accountability group or Bible study; take a fast from TV watching (even sports) and start a Scripture memory plan like our “108 verses”.

3. Remember it will only be harder to stop tomorrow. Every wrong choice we make sets in motion a wave of consequence and growing bondage throughout our mind and body. Every obedient choice we make set in motion a wave of liberating blessing and spiritual strength.

Numbers 33:50-56 Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho, saying,⁵¹ “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan,⁵² ‘then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places;⁵³ ‘you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess.⁵⁴ ‘And you shall divide the land by lot as an inheritance among your families; to the larger you shall give a larger inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give a smaller inheritance; there everyone’s inheritance shall be whatever falls to him by lot. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers.⁵⁵ ‘But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.⁵⁶ ‘Moreover it shall be that I will do to you as I thought to do to them.’ ”

David--Ending Well

DSS: Message Forty-One (061008AM)

Jesus gave all of us something to look forward to. He told us what He would like to say to each of us when we arrive safely home to dwell with Him forever--"Well done good and faithful servant"!

Christ's well done is what any of us would call, ending well.

As you open to the 71st Psalm, you are opening to the words of someone who ended well. God's prompts them to pause and look back over their life. They are old, have already lived through so much pain—and now are facing the weaknesses of old age, its challenges, blessings and curses.

But the key to finishing life, or ending well is the long term cultivation of godly habits.

Life is a constant stream of choices. Each choice we make has a consequence. The consequences of godly habits are good, the consequences of ungodly habits are bad. Life is really that simple and David in our Psalm this morning knows that.

Reading Psalm 71 is probably listening to the voice of God pointing out David's resolves for life.

But if it isn't David the only other authors that may be the ones God used are Samuel and Jeremiah. If it was Samuel then again it was most likely David who captured these thoughts from his wonderful mentor and friend and put them down on parchment to sing of God's Great Faithfulness. If it was Jeremiah then there is also a hint of the troubles Jeremiah confesses in Lamentations combined with the hope Lamentations 3:23 which declares Great is Thy Faithfulness.

David is the strongest case for authorship and almost universally agreed upon from ancient times. The Bible of Christ's day called the Septuagint says so, as do most Jewish sources. In the Hebrew Bible Psalm 71 is joined to Psalm 70 also written by David. Also the first three verses of Psalm 71 are taken directly from Psalm 31 which David wrote while fleeing from Absalom.

Most amazing though is the fact that Psalm 71 quotes over 50 times from 26 other Psalms, 18 of which are Psalms that David wrote. This Psalm quotes Psalms 3, 5, 7, 18, 22, 23, 31, 32, 34-36, 40, 51, 56, 57, 60, 63, and 86. So we would conclude it is written by David.

So no matter what channel God chose to deliver this Psalm, it is a powerful testimony to the God we can trust in all seasons of life. And even at our weakest times, when age, infirmity and incapacity are mounting—even then our great God is faithful and will not fail us even when we fail Him.

But there is even more than just a strong comfort for the years ahead in this Psalm, Psalm 71 is also the distillation and crystallization of some underlying resolves or purposes that David had learned to live by in his long and eventful life.

Much like the books written by the titans of business and finance that give the leadership “secrets” and principles that drove these men and women to great successes in their careers—Psalm 71 is David’s testimony guided by the Mighty Hand of God, through the Infinite Spirit of God of what in life is worth repeating.

David distills the purposes of his life. David confesses those underlying truths that guided him well and keep him strong no matter what else he faces to the end of life.

So even if you are young and the weaknesses of old age are far away—this Psalm has something for you too. It is the call to live life intentionally, to live each day purposefully so that when the days speed by and life is getting short you and I can say that we are ending well because we have lived purposefully.

Please stand with me as we read the first half of Psalm 71 verses 1-13 and then pray.

We live in an aimless culture driven by the latest fads and events. We also can see trends in the church by the fads and events that we as believers reflect. One trend that I watch is what books make big splashes. If you step back, best selling books among Christians are indicators of needs and desires that permeate the personal lives of believers. That is why some mega-selling Christian books point to deeper needs being expressed.

Just for example let me point out five of the biggest selling books, written by believers, of the last thirty years. No matter what you may think about the authors or their books—they do reveal where believers are in their spiritual pilgrimages.

- In 1971, Ken Taylor’s ***Living Bible*** selling over 40 million copies, was a big statement that many people really wanted to understand the Bible.
- The same year, Hal Lindsey’s ***Late Great Planet Earth*** that sold 28 million copies was an indicator that many believers also wanted to understand the future as God had laid it out in His Word.
- In 1995, Tim La Haye’s ***Left Behind*** Series was a renewed statement of a new generation of people wanting to know what God’s Word says about the future, selling over 62 million copies and counting.
- Likewise the surprise of the year 2000 was Bruce Wilkinson’s book ***The Prayer of Jabez*** that overnight sold over 13 million copies; those sales were a cry from many believers that they really wanted to experience prayer. This summer at a Bible conference I spoke at a woman stood at the final meeting and gave a public testimony. She said I have been praying the Prayer of Jabez over my family for years but now I have verses from the Bible to use to focus my prayers for my family.
- And finally, in recent years Rick Warren’s ***Purpose Driven Life*** released in 2002 and selling an astonishing 24 million copies is a statement that many people are really interested in finding out how to live life for what matters to God.

And the best selling book in all the history of the world, God's Word the Bible gives us the truth we need to answer these and any other of the deepest cries of our hearts.

The 71st Psalm first of all contains some of the realities that come with life on planet earth. Life has a collection of problems or troubles that are always with us. Either we are just getting through some, just in the middle of some, or just headed into some—troubles! Man is born for troubles as sure as the sparks in a campfire rise up in the smoke and heat, Job told us almost five thousand years ago.

So every day we have a choice to either focus on ourselves--my troubles, my problems, my misfortunes, my woes (and there will always be some); or to focus on God--His plans, His promises, His purposes and His Faithfulness to guide our lives to the end.

Someone has well said that life is not really mountains and valleys where we have all good times (mountains) and all bad times (valleys); rather life is more life a parallel line of railroad tracks. One side is my own personal set of burdens, weakness, problems, and troubles. The other side is all of God's goodness, His promised faithfulness, His perfect plans and purposes He is working out in my life.

God wants us to look at life with all its struggles, through the lens of His Word. He wants us to see Him and His plans being worked out in our life as we go through each day. That is exactly what David shows us in this Psalm.

So this morning, in Psalm 71 David first surveys the challenges that will face each of us as we get older. He reflects these problems of getting older in a series of verses that blend together God's Faithfulness and promises with each of those troubles.

Unending Struggles That Lie Ahead

David begins this Psalm noting the unending struggles that lie ahead for most of us.

First, in Psalm 71:1-2 David reminds us that as we get older *confusion increases*. The older we get, the slower our minds, the easier it is to get confused. Life moves fast, we are slowing and our minds and bodies can't keep us the pace at times. This prompts confusion. Too many choices, too fast a pace and too short a period to process all of the above makes for a freezing up of the ability to make a decision and thus confusion as to what to do.

When confusion increases what should we do? David declares his unwavering choice, his godly habit.

- **David had learned to flee to the Lord instead of living in confusion.** Psalm 71:1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.
- **David had learned to cry to the Lord before giving up to troubles.** Psalm 71:2 Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; Incline Your ear to me, and save me.

Secondly, another challenge of growing older David points out is in Psalm 71:3-8 where he reminds us that ***insecurity increases***. Like confusion, insecurity shows up here and there from childhood, it just gets bigger and bigger the older, weaker we get. Older people feel like they are no longer needed, and often that they are in the way. Combined with all the weaknesses of life that breeds increased insecurity.

David warns us that God will not allow us to persist in the enticing sins of old age: a lust for comfort and convenience, a greed for recognition and covetousness for security. God uses David to remind us that the sins of old age can erase Christ's well done. We should remember Solomon who started well and failed in the end because he refused to obey God at the end of his life.

All of these increasing insecurities of old age are prompted by fears. Like the Fear of Pain, the Fear of Abandonment or Rejection, the Fear of Death, the Fear of Losing Control, the Fear of Failure, the Fear of the Future, the Fear of Shame and Embarrassment, the Fear of Strangers, the Fear of Loss, the Fear of What People Think of You, and the Fear of Aging.

How does God deliver us from fear? God wants to deliver us by a greater fear—the Fear of God. And what is the fear of the Lord? Below is a description of what the fear of the Lord means, distilled from references to the fear of the Lord that appear throughout Psalms.

1. Having reverence and respect for God as the all-powerful Leader of all else.
2. Having certainty of inescapable accountability for behavior to God.
3. Practicing the personal awareness of the presence of a Holy God.
4. Humbly following His leadership by obeying His Word. [1]

What Should We Do When We Are Insecure?

When insecurity increases what should we do? David declares his unwavering choice, his godly habit.

- **David had learned to resist fear by running into God's Refuge - thus trusting God's Word more than his fears.** Psalm 71:3 Be my strong refuge, To which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, For You are my rock and my fortress.
- **David had learned to ask for God's help before he became bitter.** Psalm 71:4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.
- **David had learned to keep remembering the faithfulness of God.** Psalm 71:5 For You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth.
- **David had learned to remember to praise God that He had a plan for his life.** Psalm 71:6 By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You.

- **David had learned to let his life be a testimony for the Lord.** Psalm 71:7 I have become as a wonder to many, But You are my strong refuge.
- **David had learned to praise God so much -- no time was left for complaints.** Psalm 71:8 Let my mouth be filled with Your praise And with Your glory all the day.

Thirdly, David also notes in Psalm 71:9 that *weakness increases* as we grow older. How true this is. Finances decrease and deplete as does physical strength, emotional strength, mental strength. Our senses dim, our minds dull, and our hopes diminish. Everything in our physical world weakens from bones to teeth, from circulation to stamina, and sight to hearing. There is nothing in our physical world that escapes the slow or rapid decline.

John Wesley (1703-1791) a giant among the 18th century's servants of the Lord, wrote this on his 86th birthday in a diary he kept for most of his adult life:

June 28. This day I enter on my eighty-sixth year. I now find I grow old:

1. My sight is decayed, so that I cannot read a small print, unless in a strong light.
2. My strength is decayed, so that I walk much slower than I did some years since.
3. My memory of names, whether of persons, or places, is decayed, till I stop a little to recollect them.

What I should be afraid of, is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness, by the increase of bodily infirmities; But thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God. John Wesley.

Another realm David mentions in Psalm 71:10 is that he sees that *trouble increases*. David notes that his enemies were as much present at the end of his life as they were at the start and throughout. So we also discover the older we get. From troubles with mobility to troubles with relationships, life just fills with troubles. It becomes hard to get up, hard to get around, hard to sleep, hard to hear, hard to remember and hard to trust.

Anxiety seems easily accessed, bitterness seems near at hand, and fears seem to multiply. Enemies imagined and enemies experienced all run together.

There are emotional troubles (some struggle with life long depression), financial troubles (some have constant financial needs and hardships), family troubles (some have hurtful children or burdensome and ungrateful parents for many years)—all of these troubles are heavier to bear the weaker we get.

What Should We Do When Trouble Increases?

When weakness and trouble increases what should we do? David declares his unwavering choice, his godly habit.

- **David had learned he could trust God to the end of life.** Psalm 71:9 Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength fails.
- **David had learned to take his fears to God in prayer (“do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer. In His arms He’ll tend and shield thee – thou shalt find a solace there!”)** Psalm 71:10 For my enemies speak against me; And those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together, 11 Saying, “God has forsaken him; Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him.” 12 O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me!” In a modern sense David trusted God as much as in 911!

Finally David notes in Psalm 71:11-13 that *aloneness increases*. In younger years there seems to be endless avenues to pursue. Time flies, friends flow around us and plans are laid out far into the future for this and that. Life is filled with classrooms, bus and car rides, work meetings, gatherings as parents, as members and participants and we just can’t keep up with it all.

But slowly the calendar clears, the friends decrease, the travel abates and we find ourselves increasingly alone. Being alone is a lifelong condition, but it seems to sting more when coupled with troubles increased, insecurities increased, weaknesses increased, and confusion increased.

Some people as they age choose to look back on *their past* life and only remember what they had and lost or never had and wanted. That is such a debilitating choice. Some aged people look on *their present* life as a basis to complain and bewail their aches, pains, and problems. That is also such a debilitating choice. And others in their elderly years choose to not look at *their future* because they fear death and are afraid of dying. That is such a debilitating choice.

In Psalm 71, David *looks back at the past* and sees God’s Hand of faithfulness and power; he *looks around in the present* and sees God’s Plans for him and starts anew and afresh declaring that is what he will do; and then he *looks ahead to the future* and sees all that God wants him to do until he goes home to dwell in the house of the Lord forever. That is the way to end well by living purposefully!

What Should We Do When Aloneness Increases?

When aloneness increases what should we do? David declares his unwavering choice, his godly habit.

o **David had learned to never give up – even when alone, neglected, sick, ignored, rejected, maligned, and forgotten by everyone in the world ----- EXCEPT GOD!** Psalm 71:13 Let them be confounded and consumed Who are adversaries of my life; Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor Who seek my hurt. 14 But I will hope continually, And will praise You yet more and more.

This evening we will see that in Psalm 71:14-24 David shifts his focus from his troubles of life and turns the spotlight on that other track of life. In the first 13 verses David uses the present tense 23 times[2]. But in those final verses David uses the future tense 12 times in 11 verses! He declares his intentions in a “from now on I will” form saying—I will trust, I will rest, I will

believe in the God who has promised to care for me. God is faithful in the past, for the future and most of all in this present moment.

But what does it mean to end well? Is it being healthy to the last breath? No. Does it mean being surrounded by comforts to the last moments? No. Does it mean getting everything done that we wanted to do? No.

Ending well is defined by David as being able to keep that focus on the other rail that we travel through life upon—God’s plans for us that are good, God’s promises that are sure, and God’s Presence that is real.

May I remind you of a fellow believer who ended well? David Livingstone (1813-1873) had come to the end of his life. He was deep in the swamps of Africa, alone with a few native carriers. His feet were covered with bleeding ulcers, his body was completely exhausted, he was bleeding internally and as a doctor he knew his end was near. In his journal his last entry was simply: “Knocked up quite”. But he was not alone and he knew it. A lifetime of godly habits led him to still end his day in prayer no matter how ill he felt.

As the darkness fell over that swamp that night, the shadow of a sixty-year-old man was silhouetted against the canvas of his tent. The flickering candle cast a golden aura inside as he knelt beside a small wood and canvas cot. Rhythmic tropical rain lightly pelted the tent as he prayed beside his bed. The prayer was one he had written out in his journal the many years before. If you were able to hear that night what God heard it would have sounded much like this:

O Lord since Thou hast died, To give Thyself for me,
No sacrifice would seem to great, For me to make for Thee.

I only have one life, and that will soon be past;
I want my life to count for Christ, What's done for Him will last.

I follow Thee my Lord, And glory in Thy Cross;
I gladly leave the world behind, And count all gain as loss.

Lord send me anywhere, Only go with me;
Lay any burden on me, Only sustain me.
Sever any tie, Save the tie that binds me to Thy heart.
Lord Jesus my King, I consecrate my life Lord to Thee!

Outside the native porters, guides and cooks who had followed this man for nearly 20 years through the jungle heard the low sound of his voice communing with God as he always had done before bed. Then the candle flickered out and they also retired to sleep through the rainy night.

The next morning the cold and stiff body of David Livingstone was still kneeling beside the cot when his beloved native brothers found him. He was so thin from the countless bouts with malaria, his skin darkened by the years of Equatorial African sun was loosely draped over the bones of his earthly tent now vacant. His spirit had soared immortal, making its flight from the

darkness of a disease ridden, weak and failing body to the realm of light and life in the presence of Jesus his King to whom he had consecrated his life.

Ending Well

It has nothing to do with comfort, health or security. It has everything to do with godly habits empowered by the Holy Spirit. Had God let David Livingstone down by allowing him to die alone, sick, and in such desperate conditions? No, a thousand times no! Into that tiny tent as Livingstone weakly knelt by his tiny cot the Good Shepherd had come to take His faithful servant home. As David Livingstone prayed those gentle everlasting arms had wrapped around him, and into his ears were whispered I will never leave you or forsake you. And then David Livingstone heard Him say, it is time for you to come home. I'll carry you there, we'll go through that valley of darkness, but don't fear any evil because I am with you. You are coming to dwell in my house forever. Well done My good and faithful servant!

David Livingstone looked at life through the lens of Scripture. He believed God, trusted His Word and found both to be true every time he tested them. Livingstone looked at all his pains and struggles as part of God's plan. That's why after his faithful friends, the native porters, carried his body 1,500 miles to the coast and sent it by steamer back to England. That is why one of them stood at his funeral in Westminster Abbey. And that is why these words were engraved upon Livingstone's tomb stone:

"For thirty years his life was spent in an unwearied effort to evangelize the native races, to explore the undiscovered secrets, to abolish the desolating slave trade of Central Africa."[3]

So we conclude that Psalm 71 is David's prayer and testimony of how to be a godly servant of the Lord to the end of life.

We don't know how long before our Master returns. Jesus said we must do His work until He comes. The best way to do that is to start living right now the way we want to have Him find us at the end when He comes (rapture) or calls (death). I call this some specific Plans for Growing Old in Godliness. These can all be found in Psalm 71. Let's conclude there.

Ending well by living purposefully means that I make some choices, and in the power of God's Spirit, form some holy habits like these. Here are the nine resolves found in the first half of Psalm 71. Think of them as saying—"I will..."

1. **Flee to God for hope** as my troubles threaten to drown me.
2. **Cry out to God for help** before I give in to temptations.
3. **Trust God's Word over my fears** before I get paralyzed by them.
4. **Seek the Lord about my hurts** before I get bitter.
5. **Keep reminding myself** of God's faithfulness for all of my life to this moment.
6. **Seek God's plan** for my life each day.
7. **Use my mouth so often for praise**, no room will be left to complain.
8. **Trust in the Lord's ability to rescue me** more than EMS, the doctors, or calling 911.

9. **Never give up** even when all alone, forgotten by most and out of circulation for the rest of my days.

Psalm 71	Other Psalms
v. 1-3	Psalm 31:1-3 1 In You, O Lord, I put my trust; Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in Your righteousness. Bow down Your ear to me, Deliver me speedily; Be my rock of refuge, A fortress of defense to save me. 3 For You are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name's sake, Lead me and guide me.
v.3 Psalm 71:3 Be my strong refuge, To which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, For You are my rock and my fortress.	Psalm 90:1 A Prayer of Moses the man of God. 1 Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Psalm 91:9 Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place, Psalm 7:6 Arise, O Lord, in Your anger; Lift Yourself up because of the rage of my enemies; Rise up for me to the judgment You have commanded! Psalm 42:8 The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song shall be with me—A prayer to the God of my life. Psalm 18:2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
v.4 Psalm 71:4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.	Psalm 140:1, 4 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. 1 Deliver me, O Lord, from evil men; Preserve me from violent men, 4 Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; Preserve me from violent men, Who have purposed to make my steps stumble.
v.5 Psalm 71:5 For You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth.	Psalm 39:7 “And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You. Psalm 22:9 But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts.
v.6 Psalm 71:6 By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You.	Psalm 22:9-10 But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts.10 I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God. Psalm 34:1 A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed. 1 I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
v.7 Psalm 71:7 I have become as a wonder to many, But You are my strong refuge.	Psalm 61:3 For You have been a shelter for me, A strong tower from the enemy.
v.8 Psalm 71:8 Let my mouth be	Psalm 63:5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. Psalm 96:6 Honor

<p>filled with Your praise</p> <p>And with Your glory all the day.</p>	<p>and majesty are before Him; Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. Psalm 104:1 Bless the Lord, O my soul! 1 O Lord my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty,</p>
<p>v.9 Psalm 71:9 Do not cast me off in the time of old age;</p> <p>Do not forsake me when my strength fails.</p>	<p>Psalm 92:14 They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing,</p>
<p>v.10 Psalm 71:10 For my enemies speak against me;</p> <p>And those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together,</p>	<p>Psalm 56:6 They gather together, They hide, they mark my steps, When they lie in wait for my life. Psalm 31:13 For I hear the slander of many; Fear is on every side; While they take counsel together against me, They scheme to take away my life. Psalm 83:3 They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.</p>
<p>v.11</p> <p>Psalm 71:11</p> <p>11 Saying, "God has forsaken him;</p> <p>Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him."</p>	<p>Psalm 3:2 Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." Selah Psalm 7:2 Lest they tear me like a lion, Rending me in pieces, while there is none to deliver.</p>
<p>v.12 Psalm 71:12 O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me!</p>	<p>Psalm 10:1 Why do You stand afar off, O Lord? 1 Why do You hide in times of trouble? Psalm 22:11, 19 Be not far from Me, For trouble is near; For there is none to help. 19 But You, O Lord, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! Psalm 35:22 This You have seen, O Lord; Do not keep silence. O Lord, do not be far from me.</p> <p>Psalm 38:21-22 Do not forsake me, O Lord; O my God, be not far from me! 22 Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation! Psalm 40:13 Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me!</p>
<p>v.13 Psalm 71:13 Let them be confounded and consumed Who are adversaries of my life; Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor Who seek my hurt.</p>	<p>Psalm 35:4, 26 Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor Who seek after my life; Let those be turned back and brought to confusion Who plot my hurt. 26 Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion Who rejoice at my hurt; Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor Psalm 40:14 Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion Who seek to destroy my life; Let them be driven backward and brought to dishonor Who wish me evil. Psalm 109:29 Let my accusers be clothed with shame, And let them cover themselves with their own disgrace as with a mantle. Who exalt themselves against me.</p>

<p>v.14 Psalm 71:14</p> <p>14 But I will hope continually, And will praise You yet more and more.</p>	<p>Psalm 130:7 O Israel, hope in the Lord; For with the Lord there is mercy,</p> <p>And with Him is abundant redemption.</p>
<p>v.15 Psalm 71:15 My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness</p> <p>And Your salvation all the day, For I do not know their limits.</p>	<p>Psalm 35:28 And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness And of Your praise all the day long. Psalm 96:2 Sing to the Lord, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.</p> <p>Psalm 40:5 Many, O Lord my God, are Your wonderful works Which You have done; And Your thoughts toward us Cannot be recounted to You in order; If I would declare and speak of them, They are more than can be numbered.</p>
<p>v.16</p> <p>Psalm 71:16</p> <p>16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God;</p> <p>I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.</p>	<p>Psalm 106:2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can declare all His praise? Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.</p>
<p>v.17 Psalm 71:17 O God, You have taught me from my youth; And to this day I declare Your wondrous works.</p>	<p>Psalm 26:7 That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, And tell of all Your wondrous works. Psalm 40:5 Many, O Lord my God, are Your wonderful works Which You have done; And Your thoughts toward us Cannot be recounted to You in order; If I would declare and speak of them, They are more than can be numbered.</p> <p>Psalm 119:27</p> <p>Make me understand the way of Your precepts; So shall I meditate on Your wondrous works.</p>
<p>v.18</p> <p>Psalm 71:18</p> <p>18 Now also when I am old and grayheaded,</p> <p>O God, do not forsake me,</p> <p>Until I declare Your strength to this generation,</p> <p>Your power to everyone who is to come.</p>	<p>Psalm 32:11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart! Psalm 78:4, 6 We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. 5 For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel,</p> <p>Which He commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to their children; 6 That the generation to come might know them,</p> <p>The children who would be born, That they may arise and declare them to their children,</p>

<p>v.19</p> <p>Psalm 71:19</p> <p>19 Also Your righteousness, O God, is very high,</p> <p>You who have done great things;</p> <p>O God, who is like You?</p>	<p>Psalm 36:6 Your righteousness is like the great mountains; Your judgments are a great deep; O Lord, You preserve man and beast.</p> <p>Psalm 57:10 For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, And Your truth unto the clouds. Psalm 126:2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." Psalm 35:10 All my bones shall say, "Lord, who is like You, Delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, Yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?"</p>
<p>v.20</p> <p>Psalm 71:20</p> <p>20 You, who have shown me great and severe troubles,</p> <p>Shall revive me again,</p> <p>And bring me up again from the depths of the earth.</p>	<p>Psalm 60:3 You have shown Your people hard things; You have made us drink the wine of confusion. Psalm 80:18 Then we will not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. Psalm 85:6 Will You not revive us again, That Your people may rejoice in You? Psalm 119:25 My soul clings to the dust; Revive me according to Your word. Psalm 138:7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand Against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me. Psalm 86:13 For great is Your mercy toward me, And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.</p>
<p>v.21</p> <p>Psalm 71:21</p> <p>21 You shall increase my greatness,</p> <p>And comfort me on every side.</p>	<p>Psalm 18:35</p> <p>35 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation;</p> <p>Your right hand has held me up,</p> <p>Your gentleness has made me great.</p> <p>Psalm 23:4</p> <p>4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,</p> <p>I will fear no evil;</p> <p>For You are with me;</p> <p>Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.</p> <p>Psalm 86:17 Show me a sign for good, That those who hate me may see it and be ashamed, Because You, Lord, have helped me and</p>

	comforted me.
v.22 Psalm 71:22 Also with the lute I will praise you— And Your faithfulness, O my God! To You I will sing with the harp, O Holy One of Israel.	Psalm 33:2 Praise the Lord with the harp; Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Psalm 81:2 Raise a song and strike the timbrel, The pleasant harp with the lute. Psalm 144:9 I will sing a new song to You, O God; On a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You, Psalm 147:7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; Sing praises on the harp to our God, Psalm 78:41 Yes, again and again they tempted God, And limited the Holy One of Israel. Psalm 89:18 For our shield belongs to the Lord, And our king to the Holy One of Israel.
v.23 Psalm 71:23 23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed.	Psalm 5:11 But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You. Psalm 32:11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart! Psalm 132:9, 16 Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, And let Your saints shout for joy. 16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation, And her saints shall shout aloud for joy. Psalm 34:22 The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned. Psalm 55:18 He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me, For there were many against me. Psalm 103:4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,
v.24 Psalm 71:24 24 My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long; For they are confounded, For they are brought to shame Who seek my hurt.	Psalm 35:28 And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness And of Your praise all the day long.

- [1] Jan David Hettinga, Follow Me: Experience The Loving Leadership of Jesus, (Colorado Springs, Co: NavPress, 1996, Pages 193-194 and 218-219.
- [3] Douglas, J. D., Comfort, Philip W. & Mitchell, Donald, Editors, Who's Who in Christian History, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1992, electronic edition, in loc.

David--Living Life Purposefully

DSS: Message Forty-Two (061008PM)

The older we get, the harder it is to hide what is really going on inside our hearts and minds. We become more and more transparent with our feelings and fears. God designed it that way so that as this clay pot, this tent we live in cracks and tears—the treasure within us should spill out. What spills out of our life when we weaken and struggle is what is really--on the inside.

Paul refers to this when he explained the struggles of life that he faced as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Writing to the church at Corinth he says—

- *2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*

God wants the treasure that He is within us to spill and shine out from our lives. That of course is humanly impossible. That is why David spoke of the power of the Holy Spirit within him (II Samuel 23:2) in his final words; so we echo Paul's words of the precious Spirit of the Living God within us. It is God's grace and power through His Spirit that is our only source of strength to live and die this way. Even when life is rough, as rough as Paul's explanation that follows that treasure verse.

- *2 Corinthians 4:8-18 On every side being in tribulation, but not straitened; perplexed, but not in despair;9 persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;10 at all times the dying of the Lord Jesus bearing about in the body, that the life also of Jesus in our body may be manifested,11 for always are we who are living delivered up to death because of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our dying flesh,12 so that, the death indeed in us doth work, and the life in you.13 And having the same spirit of the faith, according to that which hath been written, 'I believed, therefore I did speak;' we also do believe, therefore also do we speak;14 knowing that He who did raise up the Lord Jesus, us also through Jesus shall raise up, and shall present with you,15 for the all things are because of you, that the grace having been multiplied, because of the thanksgiving of the more, may abound to the glory of God;16 wherefore, we faint not, but if also our outward man doth decay, yet the inward is renewed day by day;17 for the momentary light matter of our tribulation, more and more exceedingly an age-during weight of glory doth work out for us—18 we not looking to the things seen, but to the things not seen; for the things seen are temporary, but the things not seen are age-during. (Young's Literal Translation, 1862)*

This evening as we turn to the second half of Psalm 71, let me share a contrast between two women at the end of their lives.

The first looked only at herself. As she ended life she remembered what she had and lost and was drowned by her own troubles, grief, and losses. The second had just as many troubles and sorrows and losses—but saw each of them through the lens of God's Word. What a difference it makes to see our life as God's plan that we willingly submit to day by day.

Look with me first at a woman who looked back on life and saw only what she lost or never had and lost the blessing David and all of us in Christ are offered.

The following poem was found among the personal possessions of an elderly woman who had died in a nursing home in Great Britain in the 1940's. A nurse, packing up her possessions, found this poem. The quality so impressed the staff that copies were distributed to all the nurses in the hospital.[1]

~ Grumpy OLD WOMAN ~

What do you see nurse, What do you see?

What are you thinking When you look at me?

A grumpy old woman, Not very wise,

Uncertain of habit With far away eyes.

Who dribbles her food And makes no reply;

Then you say in a loud voice, "I do wish you'd try."

Who seems not to notice The things that you do,

And forever is losing A stocking or shoe...

I'll tell you who I am, As I sit here so still,

As I move at your bidding, As I eat at your will.

I'm a small child of ten With a father and mother,

And brothers and sisters Who love one another.

A girl of sixteen, With wings on her feet;

Dreaming that soon, A lover she'll meet.

A bride soon at twenty My heart gives a leap;
Remembering the vows That I promised to keep.

At twenty-five, I have young of my own,
Who need me to build A secure and happy home.

A woman of thirty, My young now grow fast,
Bound together with ties That forever should last.

At forty, my young ones Have grown up and gone;
But my man is beside me To see I don't mourn.

At fifty, once more...Babies play 'round my knees;
Again we know children, My loved ones and me.

Dark days are upon me, My husband is dead
I look at the future, I shudder with dread;
For my young are all rearing, Young of their own,
And I think of the years And the love I have known.

I am an old woman now, Nature is cruel,
'Tis her jest to make old age Look like a fool.

The body, it crumbles, Grace and vigor depart,

There is now a stone Where I once had a heart...

I think of the years All too few, gone too fast,

And accept the stark fact That nothing can last...

A touching poem, but more than that—a life with the wrong focus; now see a second woman we meet early in the spring of 1905. Songwriter Civilla D. Martin (1869-1948) writes,

"my husband and I were sojourning in Elmira, New York. We contracted a deep friendship for a couple by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle—true saints of God. Mrs. Doolittle had been bed-ridden for nigh twenty years. Her husband was an incurable cripple who had to propel himself to and from his business in a wheel chair.

Despite their afflictions, they lived happy Christian lives, bringing inspiration and comfort to all who knew them. One day while we were visiting with the Doolittles, my husband commented on their bright hopefulness and asked them for the secret of it. They read us this verse:

- *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father in heaven. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than sparrows.* (Matthew 10:29–31)

Then, Mrs. Doolittle's reply was simple: "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me." The beauty of this simple expression of boundless faith gripped the hearts and fired the imagination of Dr. Martin and me.

The hymn "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" was the outcome of that experience.

1. Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come, why should my heart be lonely and long for Heav'n and home, when Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He: His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me; His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
2. "Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear, and resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears; tho' by the path He leadeth but one step I may see: His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me; His eye is on the sparrow, and I know we watches me.
3. Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise, when songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies, I draw the closer to Him; from care He sets me free; His eye is on

the sparrow, and I know He watches me; His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

Refrain: I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free, for His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.[2]

Twenty-seven hundred years ago when Israel was in a steep decline and headed for national ruin, defeat and deportation to Babylon—the prophet Habakkuk wrote one of the most hope filled paragraphs in the Bible:

Habakkuk 3:17-18

Though the fig tree may not blossom,

Nor fruit be on the vines;

Though the labor of the olive may fail,

And the fields yield no food;

Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,

And there be no herd in the stalls—

18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,

I will joy in the God of my salvation.

This evening we remember that Jesus gave all of us something to look forward to. He told us what He would like to say to each of us when we arrive safely home to dwell with Him forever--“Well done good and faithful servant”!

Christ's well done is what any of us would call, ending well.

As we open again to the second half of the 71st Psalm, you are opening to the words of someone who ended well. God's prompts them to pause and look back over their life. They are old, and have lived through much--facing the weaknesses of old age, its challenges, blessings and curses.

But the key to finishing life, or ending well is the long term cultivation of godly habits.

Life is a constant stream of choices. Each choice we make has a consequence. The consequences of godly habits are good, the consequences of ungodly habits are bad. Life is really that simple and David in our Psalm this morning knows that.

Please stand with me as we read the last half of Psalm 71 verses 14-24.

Last time we saw the list of unending struggles that lie ahead for most of us.

- In Psalm 71:1-2 David reminds us that as we get older ***confusion increases***.
- Another challenge of growing older David points out is in Psalm 71:3-8 where he reminds us that ***insecurity increases***.
- David also notes in Psalm 71:9 that ***weakness increases*** as we grow older.
- Another realm David mentions in Psalm 71:10 is that he sees that ***trouble increases***.
- Finally David notes in Psalm 71:11-13 that ***aloneness increases***.

This morning we noted the 23-present tense requests David makes in Psalm 71:1-13, that flow from living each day aware that God is working out His plan through the struggles of life.

But here in Psalm 71:14-24 David shifts his focus from his troubles of life and turns the spotlight on that other track of life.

He declares his intentions in a “from now on I will” form saying—I will trust, I will rest, I will believe in the God who has promised to care for me. God is faithful in the past, for the future and most of all in this present moment.

David’s Twelve Resolves

Tonight note in your Bible these 12-future tense resolves in Psalm 71:14-24.

1. v.14a But ***I will hope continually***,
2. v.14b And ***will praise You yet more and more***.
3. v.15 ***My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness*** And Your salvation all the day, For I do not know their limits.
4. v.16a ***I will go in the strength of the Lord God***;
5. v.16b ***I will make mention of Your righteousness***, of Yours only.
6. v.17 O God, You have taught me from my youth; And to this day I declare Your wondrous works. 18 Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, Until ***I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come***. [Note Psalm 92:13-15]
7. v.19 Also Your righteousness, O God, is very high, You who have done great things; ***O God***, who is like ***You***? O You, who have shown me great and severe troubles, ***Shall revive me again***, And bring me up again from the depths of the earth.
8. v.21 ***You shall increase my greatness, and comfort*** me on every side.
9. v.22a Also with the lute ***I will praise you***—And Your faithfulness, O my God!
10. v.22b To You ***I will sing with the harp***, O Holy One of Israel.
11. v.23 ***My lips shall greatly rejoice*** when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed.
12. v.24 ***My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long***; For they are confounded, For they are brought to shame Who seek my hurt.

Okay, how do you get a handle on all those truths? How about by just taking them one at a time and making them action statements to grab hold of and not merely hear—but start by God’s grace to DO!

David had learned to never give up – even when alone, neglected, sick, ignored, rejected, maligned, and forgotten by everyone in the world ----- EXCEPT GOD!

- *Psalm 71:13 Let them be confounded and consumed Who are adversaries of my life; Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor Who seek my hurt. 14 But I will hope continually, And will praise You yet more and more.*

David had learned to never stop finding ways to bring God into the conversation.

- *Psalm 71:15 My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness And Your salvation all the day, For I do not know their limits.*

When is the last time you brought up the subject of the things of God—into a conversation? That is what genuine Spirit prompted fellowship is focused upon doing!

David had learned to humbly depend on the Lord.

- *Psalm 71:16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.*

What would keep us from living purposefully like David and ending well? Here are some **attitudes** that steal our fruitfulness and rob us of rewards:

- We won’t end well unless we resist the attitude of **exceptionism**. This is when I think my life, my situation, my current struggles are an exception to God’s Word. Thus I can excuse myself from doing anything for Heaven because of my past, or my pain, or my poverty, or my poor self-image. The problem of exceptionism can erase Christ’s well done. _
- We won’t end well unless we resist the habit of assuming **our own superiority**. This is when we constantly think that we are more right than anyone else. God will not tolerate any habits we maintain of building up ourselves by tearing others down.
- We won’t end well unless we resist the constant **impulses to promote ourselves**. Just as God must resist the proud, so He resists our tendency to take credit for things that were really the ideas or the work of others—and most of all were for God’s Glory and not ours!
- We won’t end well unless we resist the ease with which **we hold a grudge** over slights that we’ve been guilty of committing ourselves.
- We won’t end well unless we resist our **uncanny ability to rationalize**, justify, and excuse what we do and say while at the same time, and even over the same issues, being unsympathetic and judgmental with others.

- We won't end well unless we resist the all **the un-mortified pockets of pride in our lives**. What do pockets of pride look like? They are when I am proud of my intellect, or proud of my achievements, or proud of my giftedness, or even proud of my goodness. Pockets of pride in my life can erase Christ's well done. Remember Lot who was righteous yet lost it all because he thought he could stand and he fell into sin. [3]

David had learned to have a lifetime commitment to the Lord!

- *Psalm 71:17 O God, You have taught me from my youth; And to this day I declare Your wondrous works.*

David had learned to serve God even when he was out of season, past his prime, and old and gray--by finding young people to invest his life into.

- *Psalm 71:18 Now also when I am old and gray headed, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.*

I know of few people that try this, but those that do never cease to find the joys that God brings when you intentionally seek out young people and try to influence them to seek and follow the Lord. Just like one of our dearest veteran missionaries here at TBC named Bill Eddy!

David had learned to never stop experiencing God daily.

- *Psalm 71:19 Also Your righteousness, O God, is very high, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You?*

Just like Howard Smith at 96 and still learning a new verse each week as he had since the Lord got a hold of him in his late sixties!

David had learned to see affliction as a blessing.

- *Psalm 71:20 You, who have shown me great and severe troubles, Shall revive me again, And bring me up again from the depths of the earth.*

Just like Ezra, Job, Joni Erikson Tada, Phillip Yancey, and many sweet saints suffering this morning!

David had learned to let the Lord be in charge of his life.

- *Psalm 71:21 You shall increase my greatness, And comfort me on every side.*

David had learned to never stop using music in his personal worship.

- *Psalm 71:22 Also with the lute I will praise You— And Your faithfulness, O my God! To You I will sing with the harp, O Holy One of Israel.*

John Piper writes of using the simple singing of a song over and over again to deliver a demonized woman in his congregation. He also affirms:

“The Holy Spirit is our great hope against Satan. But how does the Holy Spirit fill and empower us? Ephesians 5:18-19 says, “Be filled with the Holy Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody to the Lord with all your heart.” The fullness of the Holy Spirit is experienced as a heart filled with singing. So if we fight Satan by the fullness of the Spirit, we fight him with song.

If you have read Dick Eastman's book, *The Hour That Changes the World*, you may recall Mary Slessor who worked in China for many years. She used to say, “I sing the Doxology and dismiss the devil.” And Amy Carmichael said, “I believe truly that Satan cannot endure it and so slips out of the room—more or less—when there is a true song.”[4]

David chose to stay enthusiastic for the Lord.

- *Psalm 71:23 My lips shall **greatly rejoice** when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed.*

David had learned to let God invade all of his life.

- *Psalm 71:24 My tongue also shall talk (hagah = meditate) of Your righteousness **all the day long**; For they are confounded, For they are brought to shame Who seek my hurt.*

So, looking forward to Christ's well done means pointing my life at ending well. Living purposefully means that I make some choices, and in the power of God's Spirit, form some holy habits like these.

Here are all the resolves found in both halves of Psalm 71. Think of them as saying—“**I will...**”

1. **Flee to God for hope** as my troubles threaten to drown me.
2. **Cry out to God for help** before I give in to temptations.
3. **Trust God's Word over my fears** before I get paralyzed by them.
4. **Seek the Lord about my hurts** before I get bitter.
5. **Keep reminding myself** of God's faithfulness for all of my life to this moment.
6. **Seek God's plan** for my life each day.
7. **Use my mouth so often for praise**, no room will be left to complain.
8. **Trust in the Lord's ability to rescue me** more than EMS, the doctors, or calling 911.
9. **Never give up** even when all alone, forgotten by most and out of circulation for the rest of my days.
10. **Never stop looking** for people to share a testimony of God's goodness in my life.
11. **Humbly depend** on the Lord.
12. **Seek out** younger people and pass on to them my testimony of God's goodness and great faithfulness.
13. **Never stop pursuing God** in a deepening experience of knowing Him daily.
14. **Welcome pain and suffering** as God's perfect tools for shaping my life.

15. **Forsake the stereotypes the uselessness of ‘old timers’.**

16. **Let God invade my whole day**, not just the start or finish, but all of it!

As I have often told you a pastor from the last century by the name of Thomas Obadiah Chisholm wrote two of my all time favorite hymns. The first in 1917 while unemployed and struggling to find work at age 51 he wrote out a hymn he sang as he plodded along selling things door to door to stay alive. That hymn is in our hymnbooks and is entitled “Living for Jesus”.

I love those works of they man who was weak in body but mighty in spirit. But I love it even more because this hymn has a sequel. After writing these words, unemployed, sick and at the bottom when age 51--

- Living for Jesus a life that is true, striving to please Him in all that I do, yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free—this is the pathway of blessing for me.
- Living for Jesus who died in my place, bearing on Calv’ry my sin and disgrace—such love constrains me to answer His call, follow His leading and give Him my all.
- Living for Jesus thru earth’s little while, my dearest treasure the light of His smile, seeking the lost ones He died to redeem, bringing the weary to find rest in Him.
- **Chorus:** O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee, for Thou in Thine atonement didst give Thyself for me. I own no other Master—my heart shall be Thy throne: My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.

Thomas Obadiah Chisholm wrote hymn # 43 six years later.

I like to say that the conclusion to Living for Jesus a life that is true is to be able to tell everyone that we meet for the rest of life, “Great is Thy Faithfulness O God my Father”!

Would you join me by turning to #372 and reading the refrain and then singing #43 as a start for each of us

[1] This poem then later appeared in the Christmas edition of "Beacon House News," a magazine of the Northern Ireland Mental Health Association by Phyllis McCormack.

[2] Osbeck, Kenneth W., *Amazing Grace—366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications) 1997.

[3] Adapted from Jan David Hettinga, *Follow Me: Experience The Loving Leadership of Jesus*, (Colorado Springs, Co: NavPress, 1996, Pages 191-192.

[4] http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1985/474_Ambushing_Satan_with_Song/

David--Dying Gracefully

DSS: Message Forty-Three (061015AM)

The Impact of ONE Life

It is hard to fully comprehend how much lasting impact one single human life can accomplish. Think of just David's brief lifetime. Three thousand years ago he lived and died—yet today millions and millions of people read, quote, memorize, gather comfort and hope, and sing the words he wrote in the Psalms.

Three thousand years ago he lived and died—yet today billions and billions of people think about, revere, love, and want the city he founded and built as the capitol city of God's people. Jerusalem, David's city, is in most newspapers and TV news reports and on the web daily!

In fact the two final wars on this planet (Revelation 16 and 20) will both be fought over control of David's city that is also God's city named—Jerusalem!

So David's life has accomplished something that touches most people on earth daily! That is astounding, and just one more reason we have spent this year seeing David's life through the lens of Scripture.

Today we begin to look at the conclusion of David's life. When David comes to the end of his long and event filled life, it was not a worn out body that caused his death, nor was it the lack of medical care. It was God's appointed time.

Listen to the words of Job who lived nearly 5,000 years ago, recorded perfectly for us by God in His Word, the Bible. Job 14:1-5

- *"Man who is born of woman Is of few days and full of trouble. 2 He comes forth like a flower and fades away; He flees like a shadow and does not continue. 3 And do You open Your eyes on such a one, And bring me to judgment with Yourself? 4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one! 5 Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass. Job 14:1-5*

Our life time is not set by how carefully we guarded our health through diet and exercise (yet God commands us to be disciplined and not reckless in our physical lives); nor is our lifetime extended by physicians (though God commends to us proper health care). Our length of days has been determined by God alone.

As we open to 1 Kings 2:1-2 we will begin to see the elements David models in what I am calling, "Dying Gracefully". *Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: 2 "I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man.*

The first element we find as we look at David's final recorded moments is that ***David is gracefully unafraid of death because he was saved, redeemed, and thus prepared spiritually.*** He was open and exemplary in his instruction to his son. David is unafraid to initiate talk about his death. He had taken time to prepare for death, and then he talked about it clearly with his son (and probably many others) and by God's Spirit even to us!

How did David come to this place of spiritual preparation for death? He was sure about the destination of his soul.

Remember what we saw back in Psalm 31:5?

- Psalm 31:5 *Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*

David knew he was redeemed—bought and paid for by God. Because of that confidence, he declares his life is held by God's Hands.

The key to dying gracefully is to be certain that our immortal spirit is safely sealed and kept by God. Our future destiny is in His Hands, not a doctor's, not a terrorist's, and certainly not in ours. So a secured spiritual life is the first key to dying gracefully.

Jesus reflects this certainty as he went to the cross. And calmly at His final moment He says in Luke 23:46 those same words of David.

- Luke 23:46 *And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last.*

Spiritual certainty like David's is faith in what Christ's work on the cross accomplished. Jesus defeated death; Jesus delivered us who trust in Him. The writer of Hebrews notes that part of Christ's work on the cross was to deliver us who come to Him from the fear of death.

Please turn with me back to Hebrews 2:14-18 and this morning review again what happened at Christ's cross.

- Hebrews 2:14-18 *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death **He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,** **and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.** ¹⁶ For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.*

If you have been born again, Jesus has released you from the fear of death. Christ's work is finished, the power of death is destroyed, the price of sin is paid, the power of an endless life is yours and mine in Christ. Have you come to the place in your spiritual life that you know that

you are His? That your soul is held by God? That your spirit clothed immortal will make its flight to realms of Glory? That is dying gracefully

Fanny Crosby's (1820-1915) words often flow through my heart as I think of this reality. That blind poet, hymnist and saint triumphantly affirmed her hope in Christ as resurrection and life!

All the Way My Savior Leads Me

*All the way my Savior leads me;
Oh, the fullness of His love!
Perfect rest to me is promised
In my Father's house above.*

*When my spirit, clothed immortal,
Wings its flight to realms of day,
This my song thro' endless ages:
Jesus led me all the way;*

*This my song thro' endless ages:
Jesus led me all the way.*

So first, David made the most important preparation, he was spiritually certain of his salvation. As we turn back to I Chronicles 22:14 we will find the second element of David's graceful preparation for death--**David surrendered to God the ownership of all his material possessions before his death.** By that I mean David had made sure that none of the normal things that tie most people down to the earth were tying him.

- 1 Chronicles 22:14 *“Indeed **I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the Lord one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them.***

One of the most amazing elements of David's life is how he viewed his immense wealth. As we studied many months ago in the message called “David's Legacy—what he left behind” we saw that David was perhaps the wealthiest person who has ever lived. He very well may have surpassed all the Pharaohs and other ancient kings in sheer magnitude of wealth. But that is not the key. What amazes me and instructs me is what David did with his wealth.

He carefully gathered it, safely stored it and very consciously gave it away to God. The record of that final gifting to God by way of his son Solomon is very touching in and of itself. But seen in the light of all that David experienced and then captured in the Psalms we see a pattern.

I am often reminded that wealth is like stored time from the past. My present use of wealth saved from the past is a way to give part of those years now gone—to the Lord. Look at 1 Chronicles 22:14 again. Note that David took much trouble to prepare. This was the premeditated murder of any materialistic desire in his heart.

He wanted his stored up time of his life, measured by his wealth to reflect his great love for God. So he was very careful to direct his wealth while he was alive, into the hands of God.

David had learned what Jesus spoke so forcefully about in His Sermon on the Mount. Money is the monitor of our heart. At any time in life, our view of our money reflects the condition of our heart. The entire section of Matthew 6:19-24 is all about one area of life. Who owns our material possessions—us or God.

- Matthew 6:19-24 ***“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;20 “but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.21 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.23 “But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.***

This graceful preparation of our personal wealth before our death is a real challenge to each generation of Christ's Church throughout the ages. Once, a wealthy Christian plantation owner invited John Wesley (1703-1791) to his home. The two rode their horses all day, seeing just a small part of all the man owned.

At the end of the day the plantation owner proudly asked, "Well, Mr. Wesley, what do you think?" After a moment of silence, Wesley replied, "I think you're going to have a hard time leaving all this." The plantation owner was attached to the world he was in. Wesley was attached to the world he was going to.

It is very hard for a believer to die when they have wealth that is not surrendered to Christ's control. Jesus told us that believers who lay up treasures on earth spend their life backing away from their treasures. To them, death is loss.

Jesus also told us that believers who lay up treasures in heaven look forward to eternity; they are moving daily toward their treasures. To them, death is gain.

Any believer who spends their life moving away from their treasures has more and more reasons to despair. Those who spend their life moving toward their treasures have more and more reasons to rejoice.

How are you doing with all of your physical, material, earthly possessions? Are they surrendered as tools given back to God's control? Or are they treasures held tightly?

David died gracefully because he took much trouble to surrender the control of all his material possessions to God as tools in God's Hands.

Is the passing of time causing you and me to despair or rejoice? God's ownership of everything is the reference point for all of us who serve the Lord. Century by century the greatest servants of God in Christ's Church have said nearly the same thing about their wealth. They have each battled with materialism and put it to death by conscious obedience to Christ's claims upon their lives and material possessions—whether little or much. Listen to their voices affirming Christ's words and David's.

And so it is that when a man walks along a road, the lighter he travels, the happier he is; equally, on this journey of life, a man is more blessed if he does not pant beneath a burden of riches. ~Tertullian (155-230 AD)

Let temporal things serve your use, but the eternal be the object of your desire. ~ Thomas A Kempis (1380-1471)

I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all. But whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess. ~Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Whatever good thing you do for Him, if done according to the Word, is laid up for you as treasure in chests and coffers, to be brought out to be rewarded before both men and angels, to your eternal comfort. ~ John Bunyan (1628-1688)

I value all things only by the price they shall gain in eternity. ~ John Wesley (1703-1791)

I place no value on anything I possess except in relation to the kingdom of God. ~ David Livingstone (1813-1873)

And finally, from modern times, we often miss something in the 29 year old missionary martyr Jim Elliot's (1927-1956) famous words, "*He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.*" We focus on his willingness to go to the mission field. That willingness started when he surrendered all of his material possessions into Christ's Hands, and thus relinquished his hold on things as no longer MINE!

God's kingdom and control over all of life was the reference point for David and these saints mentioned. Paul in Acts 13:36 (David's Epitaph) reminds us that David wanted to fulfill God's purposes and did. So David and these heroes of the faith saw all else in light of the kingdom. They were compelled to live as they did not because they treasured no *things*, but because they treasured the *right things*.

David had paid a high price to prepare materials for the advancement of God's Kingdom. In his lifetime he was generous with his wealth. He gave, encouraged and supported many in his realm. But behind all that he did was this long term strategy to be involved in what God was doing that would extend beyond his lifetime. He distilled down moments of his life into wealth that would be used as he directed in the promotion of God's goals. He amassed building materials for Solomon.

An application for us remains--if we diligently prepare the materials, others after us may build. God asks all of us to live obediently in this life. But within that obedience come choices and David's choices blessed the Lord and brought an endless reward. The fact that David wrote and sang these 71 plus worship Psalms for the Lord is so powerful.

David's whole life was involved with worship and praise, singing and teaching of God's wonders. So should ours.

So how can David's spiritual preparation impact our view death? In I Kings 2 we saw that David calls death "the way of all the earth"—it was a reminder to even young Solomon that death is universal and inevitable.

David was saved or redeemed, the first element of his life we see at death. Then he surrendered the ownership of his life and treasures back to God. There is one final element that made David unafraid to end well and die gracefully. Death was the way out of earth for him and into the dwelling God had prepared for him. It was early in his life, most likely as a shepherd boy that the real foundation for dying gracefully was laid.

Turn with me there to the last half of the 23rd Psalm. Death to David was not an unknown, it was not a mystery—it was an appointment. The third element we find as we look at David's final recorded moments is that ***David sees death as an appointment with his Good Shepherd, who we know is Jesus.***

Even the greatest enemy—death, was disarmed before David. He could dine (a wonderful picture of his fellowship with the Lord) even in the presence of death, the end of all we know of this earthly part of life.

Psalms 23:4-6

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil;

For You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil;

My cup runs over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord

Forever.

David had reservations in Heaven. It was where his God lived, and a place was prepared for him and he was following his guide through life into the valley, through the shadows and safely home,

Many times over the years I have stood at bedsides in hospitals, emergency rooms, and hospice arranged homes—and shared these same words.

Death is an appointment for all who know Jesus, with their Good Shepherd. Jesus comes to take us through the valley of death's shadow. We have an appointment already set by Him (Hebrews 9:26) and neither we nor He shall ever be early or late.

When a loved one dies whether we make it there in time or not—the Good Shepherd does make it. He arrives exactly on time and takes His beloved by the hand and walks them safely home.

So David was not afraid of death, he spoke openly about his appointment with His Good Shepherd Jesus who was coming to get him. But such hope and confidence does not removed from us the pains associated with death—just the fear is removed by faith and trust in Jesus.

All the Way My Savior Leads Me

*All the way my Savior leads me;
Oh, the fullness of His love!
Perfect rest to me is promised
In my Father's house above.*

*When my spirit, clothed immortal,
Wings its flight to realms of day,
This my song thro' endless ages:
Jesus led me all the way;*

*This my song thro' endless ages:
Jesus led me all the way.*

David--Ending Well by Fearing No Evil

DSS: Message Forty-Four (061022AM)

Ecclesiastes 12

When God describes what happens as we age, he calls it difficult times or even "evil" days. Old age can become a time when life is hardest, strength is least, and evil is most pressing—but that is not how it has to be! David shows us by his life that ending well by fearing no evil is possible through our Good Shepherd Jesus Christ.

Life is short, time flies, death is inescapable—but without Christ life becomes a wearying chase for something good enough to keep their mind's off thinking this all may be over soon.

In God's Word the Bible, two old men sat down and wrote their summary of life. One was the father, the other his son.

- Both wrote under the inspiration of God's Spirit.
- Both had suffered through many afflictions.
- Both knew the Lord in an unusual way.

For one life is looked back upon almost bitterly, speaking of the emptiness or vanity of life. His name was Solomon. His summary is a Book called Ecclesiastes.

The other looks back and sees a life long growth in experiencing God. His name was David, father of Solomon. His summary was still the song he wrote to his Good Shepherd called Psalm 23.

When life winds down, strength gets exhausted, and the end is in sight for you--which summary will fit your life?

- Will you look back on life like Solomon? Ending with bitterness, seeing all as vanity, and ending in emptiness?
- Or will you look back on life like David? Ending well by fearing no evil, in hopefulness, with life long growth in experiencing God?

The choice is completely yours this morning--you are each day writing the script that will be your life's summary! The key is who you are following, where are you headed, and whether or not you have started down the right path.

God's desire is that you know Him; He wants you to start early and remember your Creator when you are young—and then never forget Him.

As a youth, David remembered His Creator. In fact I believe that's why a weary and exhausted Solomon—who had chased every pleasure the human mind could conceive, came to the conclusion that his dad was right.

Solomon, perhaps too late, realized that the only way to live and the best way to die--is to do so reflecting on the plans that God had for us in the first place. Solomon found out after his restless pursuit of all the world had to offer--that nothing but God satisfies, and that life and death can be quite empty when God is left out.

Do you remember Solomon's inspired look at the pains, fears, and troubles of old age? Ecclesiastes 12 is a remarkable portrait of what we have to face someday. It is not a nice picture when life is empty and meaningless; but it is the best and most exciting time imaginable when life is full of God.

Please follow along with me in Ecclesiastes noting the regret filled wisdom of an empty life, as Solomon the wisest man who ever lived--remembers what he foolishly neglected.

Stand as we read Ecclesiastes 12:1-14 (NKJV)

- *Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult [**“evil” in KJV, NAS**] days come, And the years draw near when you say, “I have no pleasure in them”: 2 While the sun and the light, The moon and the stars, Are not darkened, And the clouds do not return after the rain; 3 In the day when the keepers of the house tremble, [**probably legs**] And the strong men bow down; [**probably shoulders**] When the grinders cease because they are few, [**teeth**] And those that look through the windows grow dim; [**eyes**] 4 When the doors are shut in the streets, And the sound of grinding is low; [**probably hearing loss**] When one rises up at the sound of a bird, [**sleeping difficulties**] And all the daughters of music are brought low; 5 Also they are afraid of height, And of terrors in the way; [**growing fears**] When the almond tree blossoms, [**white hair**] The grasshopper is a burden, [**weakness**] And desire fails. [**appetites gone**] For man goes to his eternal home, And the mourners go about the streets. [**death**] 6 Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, [**nerve problems**] Or the golden bowl is broken, [**brain problems**] Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, [**lung problems**] Or the wheel broken at the well. [**heart problems**] 7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it. 8 “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “All is vanity.” 9 And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs. 10 The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and what was written was upright—words of truth. 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd. 12 And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh. 13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.*

When life winds down, strength gets exhausted, and the end is in sight for you--which summary will fit your life?

- Will you look back on life like Solomon? Ending with bitterness, seeing all as vanity, and ending in emptiness?

- Or will you look back on life like David? Ending well by fearing no evil, in hopefulness, with life long growth in experiencing God?

David ended well and feared no evil because he remembered his Creator. He sang to Him from many quiet and remote hillsides as he sat under the glistening stars. One of David's songs is perhaps the most well known song in the world. We call it the 23rd Song or Psalm. But it may really have been David's 1st song. It is certainly his most beloved song.

FEARING NO EVIL

Though he was but a youth the content of Psalm 23 is so profound. David pictures life as a long walk behind a Good Shepherd heading to spend the night with the shepherd, in His house, safe and secure.

Life is walking *behind the Shepherd*, the end of life is secured *by the Shepherd*, and eternity is spent *with the Shepherd*.

Now turn again to the fourth verse of Psalm 23 and see the truth lived out by David as he breathes his last.

- Psalm 23:4 *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

David had remembered His Creator in the days of his youth—and he reaped a harvest of promised blessing.

For any young person listening today, David is a model of how to please God when young. He is also a great example of the benefits of right choices as a youth. But whether young or not, the truth remains that David ended well fearing no evil. And Psalm 23:5-6 explains how David was so secure, so serene and so blessed.

Death to David was not an unknown, it was not a mystery—it was an appointment. As we look at David's final recorded moments is that ***David sees death as an appointment with his Good Shepherd, who we know is Jesus.***

Even the greatest enemy—death, was disarmed before David. He could dine (a wonderful picture of his fellowship with the Lord) even in the presence of death, the end of all we know of this earthly part of life.

- Psalm 23:5-6 *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.*

David had reservations in Heaven. Heaven was where his God lived; Heaven was a place God prepared for him and he was following his guide through life into the valley, through the shadows and safely home,

Many times over the years I have stood at bedsides in hospitals, emergency rooms, and hospice arranged homes—and shared these same words. Death is an appointment for all who know Jesus, with their Good Shepherd. Jesus comes to take us through the valley of death's shadow. We have an appointment already set by Him (Hebrews 9:27) and neither we nor He shall ever be early or late.

- Hebrews 9:27 *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*

When a loved one dies whether we make it there in time or not—the Good Shepherd always makes it. He arrives exactly on time and takes His beloved by the hand and walks them safely home.

THE FEAR OF DEATH IS DESTROYED

Fearing death, as we saw last time in Hebrews 2, was something we were born with; as Paul reminds us in Romans 7—it is part of our flesh that we all struggle with through every day of life.

But the more we focus on the character and promises of God—the more peaceful the ride to the end of life becomes. From our early American history comes this touching letter in the **Autobiography of John Todd**.

In October 1800 John Todd was born in Rutland, Vermont. Soon afterward his parents moved to Killingworth, Connecticut. When John was six years old, both his parents died. A kind-hearted aunt in North Killingworth agreed to take John and give him a home. He was brought up by her and lived in her home until he left to study for the ministry.

In middle life his aunt became seriously ill and feared she would die. In great distress she wrote John Todd a pitiful letter in which she asked what death would be like. Would it mean the end of everything, or is there beyond death a chance to continue living, loving and growing? Here is the letter John Todd sent his aunt in reply:

It is now thirty-five years since I as a little boy of six was left quite alone in the world. You sent me word that you would give me a home and be a kind mother to me. I will never forget the day when I made the long journey of ten miles to your house in North Killingworth. I can still remember my disappointment when instead of coming for me yourself, you sent Caesar to fetch me.

I well remember my tears and anxiety as perched high on your horse and clinging tight to Caesar I rode off to my new home. Night fell before we finished the journey, and as it grew dark, I became lonely and afraid. "Do you think she'll go to bed before we get there?" I asked Caesar anxiously. "Oh, no," he said reassuringly. "She'll stay up for you. When we get out of this here woods, you'll see her candle shinin' in the window."

Presently we did ride out into the clearing, and there, sure enough, was your candle. I remember you were waiting at the door, that you put your arms close about me and that you lifted me--a

tired and bewildered little boy--down from the horse. You had a fire burning on the hearth, a hot supper waiting on the stove. After supper you took me to my room, heard me say my prayers, and then sat beside me till I fell asleep.

You probably realize why I am recalling all of this to your memory. Someday soon God will send for you to take you to a new home. Don't fear the summons, the strange journey or the dark messenger of death.

God can be trusted to do as much for you as you were kind enough to do for me so many years ago. At the end of the road you will find love and a welcome awaiting and you will be safe in God's care. I shall watch you and pray for you till you are out of sight and then wait for the day when I shall make the journey myself and find my Savior and you waiting at the end of the road to greet me[1].

This evening we are going to look at Psalm 116, but for just a moment let me remind you of one verse in that special Psalm.

*“Precious in the sight of the Lord **Is the death of His saints**”* (Psalm 116:15, Emphasis added).

HOW TO END WELL BY FEARING NO EVIL

❖ THINK OF THE WONDER OF ENTERING HEAVEN

When your appointment with death arrives, the Lord Jesus Himself will wondrously take you by the hand and usher you instantly into heaven. At the moment you are absent from the body you will forever be in His presence! Jesus Christ, who has guided you through the valley of the shadow of death, will continue to guide you as He takes you by the hand and leads you up past the marshaled ranks of the angels!

Do you remember how you will be clothed? In a white robe! If you will recall, when Jesus was transfigured, He pulled back the veil of His flesh to let us see what He's really like as God in His eternal divine state. Scripture tells us that His clothing began to glow so white that it was whiter than anything ever seen on earth. His face also began to shine. In fact, when John saw Him He was shining like the sun! And you, too, will have a glowing white robe because you will no longer be terrestrial, but celestial!

Psalm 104:2 tells us that Jesus is clothed *“with light as with a garment.”* Because you will see Him as He is, you will look like Jesus—as white and bright as the day, and pure as light. What a reward it will be to have that robe draped around your shoulders and be invited to walk the shining paths of glory!

The Scriptures talk about what God's throne looks like. It is raised up, and sits in the sides of the north; in front of it is a glassy sea; surrounding it in concentric circles are the angels. When Daniel saw them, he said there were myriads of myriads—ten thousands of ten thousands. What does “ten thousand times ten thousand” equal? Hundreds of millions of standing angelic beings! How powerful are angels? Just one angel slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night! They are

very powerful—and hundreds of millions of these super powerful angelic creations stand by God's throne.

So then, you will walk by the marshaled hosts, the ranks of the angels, up through the golden boulevards of glory, up towards the cherubim.

When you get closer to God's throne, you will see creatures with four faces and six wings surrounding His throne. Hovering, they constantly say, "*Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord.*" The seraphim, which means "*burning ones*," join them. So these burning, holy creatures are speaking about God.

Finally, Christ will lead us up to the Throne; it is the nail scarred Hand of Jesus holding our hand; it is the nail scarred feet of Jesus walking us to at last face-to-face meet and see God the Father. It is at that moment Jesus will confess our name before His Father and the angels (Revelation 3:5). He will introduce us saying, "Father, I would like You to meet one for whom I died—one whom I bring to You as My beloved, as one whom I purchased. I now present to You, My child ..."

Then you will hear Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, actually say *your* name! Talk about the most unbelievable moment of your existence! Seeing Heaven and all its splendor is amazing; hearing the millions of voices, thunders and chants of the angels is awesome--but the greatest and richest part will be to hear Jesus Christ confess that you are His good and faithful servant!

What a wondrous entrance into heaven we each have to look forward to and fix our hopes upon!

❖ **MAKE A CHOICE TO END WELL BY FEARING NO EVIL**

G. Campbell Morgan, a great Bible teacher in Britain a hundred years or so ago, wrote of this moment also, and he said:

"You are to remember with the passion burning within you that you are not the child of today. You are not of the Earth, you are more than dust; you are the child of tomorrow, you are of the eternities, you are the offspring of Deity.

"The measurement of your lives cannot be circumscribed by the point where blue sky kisses green earth. All the facts of your life cannot be encompassed in the one small sphere upon which you live. You belong to the infinite.

If you only make your fortune on the Earth—poor, sorry, silly soul—you have made a fortune, and stored it in a place where you cannot hold it. Make your fortune, but store it where it will greet you in the dawning of the new morning."^[2]

Since Jesus is going to usher us into heaven and take us to meet our Father sitting on the throne, we should also think about what we want to send ahead. All that we do on earth is going to

follow you to heaven! Some will burn and we will suffer loss, but some can last the fire and will be ours to give as our love gift to Him.

A few years back I once ordered a small computer memory upgrade over the Internet and received an e-mail asking me to track it. I had never done this sort of thing, so I hit the proper key and got this message: “Your package was put in a truck in Philadelphia and headed for the airport at 7:31.” I thought: *Oh, that’s great!*

I checked later in the day, and this time it said: “Your package has now arrived at the Philadelphia airport.” I tracked that package’s whereabouts each day until finally, as I checked it for the last time, the doorbell rang and the delivery man was actually dropping it at the door.

I then thought to myself, *We think nothing of tracking packages, but God says:*

I have sealed you with My Spirit;

I have written My Name upon your heart;

I have addressed your soul with the very address of Heaven.

When the time comes for you to go home—I am sending My Son to come and pick you up and bring you safely home.

Also, I’m tracking everything you’ve done on earth, and the part that is eternal is going to follow you—it’s going to arrive with you in heaven.”

The question for each of us this morning should be:

- Are you getting ready to meet Jesus?
- Do you know Him as your Good Shepherd?
- Are you trusting Him to deliver you from all evil? If so—you will end well!
- What are you sending ahead to heaven?
- When you come face to face with Jesus, what will you bring with you to offer the Lamb of God?

When life winds down, strength gets exhausted, and the end is in sight for you--which summary will fit your life?

- Will you look back on life like Solomon? Ending with bitterness, seeing all as vanity, and ending in emptiness?
- Or will you look back on life like David? Ending well by fearing no evil, in hopefulness, with life long growth in experiencing God?

The choice is completely yours this morning--you are each day writing the script that will be your life’s summary! The best way to live is like David—loving, following, trusting the Good Shepherd.

My Jesus, I Love Thee [#364]

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;

For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;

My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;

If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me,

And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree;

I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;

If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,

And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath;

And say, when the death dew lies cold on my brow;

If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

—William R. Featherston, 1846-1873

[1] -From the autobiography of John Todd.

[2] G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (New York: Revell, 1929), pp. 64-65.

David--Ending Well by Going to the House of the Lord Forever

DSS: Message Forty-Five (061022PM)

David ended well because his whole life was built around heading towards his eternal home.

I would like to begin this evening where every verse in the Bible ends—with Jesus Christ. God's Word ends with Jesus inviting us to join Him in Heaven.

- Revelation 22:20-21 *He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

His voice can be heard--from Creation, as He spoke all things into existence (Colossians 1)--to the end of Revelation, where He delivers back the Universe to God the Father (John 19)—because Jesus is the Word of God. Jesus is the subject and the theme of the Bible, just as He said in John 5:39.

- John 5:39 *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*

Whenever you read God's Word always remember that the writers of the Bible were listening to the Spirit of Christ that was in them.

- 1 Peter 1:11 *searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.*

So from cover to cover Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

- John 10:11-14 *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 14 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.*

Jacob confessed that the Lord was his Shepherd and that was his only hope as he died.

- Genesis 48:15 *And he blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,*

David started as a boy singing about his Shepherd; he remembered that hope through all his hard days—and in the end he never took his eyes off from the home with Jesus he believed was his. So David followed his Shepherd through life and then as the night began to fall—he went home with Him to dwell in His House.

- Psalm 23:6 *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.*

David began to follow Christ's voice early in life. Jesus said that His sheep recognize His voice.

- John 10:27 *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*

Though he was but a youth, David pictures life as a long walk behind a Good Shepherd heading to spend the night with the shepherd, in His house, safe and secure. Life is walking *behind the Shepherd*, the end of life is secured *by the Shepherd*, and eternity is spent *with the Shepherd*.

As we turn to Hebrews 11 this evening, we need to be sure that our life is pointed in the right direction and that we are truly heading towards our home. This is so beautifully explained in Hebrews and that is where we are going to read this evening.

- Hebrews 11:1-16 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. 4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. 7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. NKJV*

This morning we saw from David's life that the way to die was looking forward to Heaven—that is also the best way to live.

How to Live: Looking Forward to Heaven

*It is **appointed** ... to die once, but after this the judgment.* —Hebrews 9:27, emphasis added

None of us knows the exact date of our appointment with Jesus Christ to take us home to heaven, but we do know that what lies ahead is far superior to anything we could ever envision. Even now Jesus is preparing a mansion for us so that we can be with Him (John 14:2). What will it be like there?

Heaven will be a joyous and satisfying place! The joy of heaven's inhabitants is pictured by the scenes of praise in the book of Revelation, the white-robed conquerors waving palm branches (Revelation 7:9), and the guests at a wedding supper (Revelation 19:1-9). This is buttressed by the imagery of some of Jesus' parables where attaining heaven was compared to attending a banquet (Luke 14:15-24) or entering into the joy of one's Master (Matthew 25:21, 23).

From the perspective of life in this world, heaven is the object of human longing and the goal of human existence. The book of Hebrews employs the imagery of quest to express this reality: *"These all died in faith, not having received what was promised. ... For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland"* (see Hebrews 11:13-14).

In addition to being the goal of a quest, heaven is the reward for earthly toil, as in Paul's picture of himself as having *"finished the race"* and looking forward to *"the crown of righteousness"* (2 Timothy 4:7-8). We see this imagery again in Peter's vision of *"the chief Shepherd"* conferring *"the unfading crown of glory"* on those who have served faithfully (1 Peter 5:4). There is also the glorious picture of believers having come to *"Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God"* where thousands upon thousands of angels are in joyful assembly (Hebrews 12:22 NIV).

Images of satisfaction emerge from the pictures in Revelation of saints being guided by a divine Shepherd to springs of living water (Revelation 7:17), and having access to "the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month" (see Revelation 22:2).

Heaven is also portrayed as a rest after labor: those who die in the Lord *rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them* (see Revelation 14:13). Similarly, "there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God," which believers *strive to enter* (see Hebrews 4:9-11).

JESUS IS THE SON OF DAVID

David came to this hope by trusting and following the Good Shepherd. One of the first things we notice when we open to the New Testament is that Matthew 1:1 opens with a reference to David our subject of study for these many months.

- Matthew 1:1 *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:*

The "Son of David" later (Matthew 1:21), named Jesus--is Christ's introduction in Matthew, which opens our New Testament. The parallels between David's life and the Son of David—Christ the Lord's life, are very striking.

We have often noted Christ's last words were David's (Psalm 31:5 and Luke 23:46).

- Luke 23:46 *And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last.*
- Psalm 31:5 *Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*

And that Son of David who came to die for us uses the words of David as He prepared to die in our place. At the end of his life David said in 2 Samuel 22:5-6:

- *'When the waves of death surrounded me, The floods of ungodliness made me afraid. 6 The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me.*

Those very words are what Christ Jesus used in the description of His pathway to death in our place.

- Matthew 26:38 *Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."*

But, the lessons from Christ's death do not stop there. Many of us miss a wonderful insight the Gospels capture. We actually know the last song that Jesus is recorded as having sung in preparation for His death. If you ever want to learn how to face death in a practical way—note the content, the lyrics of the songs that Jesus used as He marched to the Cross.

WHAT DID JESUS SING AS HE FACED DEATH?

First look at the Psalm songs mentioned in the Gospels by Matthew and Mark.

- Matthew 26:30 *And when they had **sung a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*
- Mark 14:26 *And when they had **sung a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

This translates one Greek word which means, literally, "hymning." But since this was the Seder, we can know the hymn being sung must have been one of the Hallel or ("praise") Psalms recited at festivals, Psalms 113–118 or 136[1].

Throughout the Last Supper Passover Seder, God's Word tells us that Jesus must have led the disciples in singing the seven Psalms (113-118 and 136) which the Jews of Christ's day called the Halell which in Hebrew means "Praise God".

Traditionally Psalms 113 and 114 were sung before the meal and the rest afterward. At different points of the Passover Feast these psalms were sung in sections; and at the very end there was sung *The Great Hallel*, which is Psalm 136. That was the hymn they sang before they went out to the Mount of Olives.

At Passover seven Psalms were sung in praise called the Halell. The fourth of the Hallel Psalms, or the middle of the seven (which is the place of importance in the Hebrew mind when listing seven items) is Psalm 116.

During the evening we know that they sang all seven. So one thing we know is, that they heard Jesus lead them in the middle one; the one that structurally is emphasized. So instead of going through them all, we will just focus on that middle Psalm, the 116th Psalm.

Ending well, fearing no evil means that we die gracefully—and no one died more gracefully than Jesus. What makes this insight about preparing to die even more special is that Jesus Christ Himself sang and filled with ultimate meaning to His very own disciples. That makes these words and truths even more powerful to us.

This word for "singing" describing what Jesus and His disciples did as they headed out and began walking to Gethsemane--is the same word that Paul uses for singing from the depths of the jail in Philippi.

- Matthew 26:30 *And when they had **sung a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*
- Acts 16:25 *But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and **singing hymns** to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*
- Hebrews 2:12 *saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will **sing praise** to You."*

Jesus sang as he walked to the cross, Paul and Silas sang as they suffered for the cross and Hebrews 2:12 says that Christ is present as we sing celebrating His death for us on the cross.

DYING GRACEFULLY PSALM 116

Now let's go to Psalm 116 and find that Christ is our Refuge even for Death.

As David sang of the Good Shepherd walking him through the Valley of Death's shadow in Psalm 23—so the Good Shepherd sang of God's power and grace as He also Himself headed to die the death of deaths as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.

The first truth we can learn from what Jesus said and did that night is that the pains of death are **very personal**. It was only Jesus who couldn't sleep as He faced death—the disciples couldn't stay awake. So we also notice in Psalm 116 is that it is a very personal Psalm; the 1st person pronoun is used 37x and the Lord's Name 15x.

The second truth we find in Psalm 116 is that death is a time about which we must be **very intentional**. As David, and as Christ—we must intentionally choose to do and say what pleases God.

Eight times the Psalmist says "I will" in Psalm 116:1-19:

1. I love the Lord, because He has heard My voice and my supplications. 2 Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore **I will call upon Him as long as I live**. 3 The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. 4 Then I called upon the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I implore You, deliver my soul!" 5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful. 6 The Lord

preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. 7 Return to your rest, O my soul, For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. 8 For You have delivered my soul from death, My eyes from tears, And my feet from falling.

2. 9 ***I will walk before the Lord In the land of the living.*** 10 I believed, therefore I spoke, “I am greatly afflicted.” 11 I said in my haste, “All men are liars.” 12 What shall I render to the Lord For all His benefits toward me?
3. 13 ***I will take up the cup of salvation,*** And
4. ***call upon the name of the Lord.***
5. 14 ***I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people.*** 15 Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His saints. 16 O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds.
6. 17 ***I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving,***
7. ***And will call upon the name of the Lord.***
8. 18 ***I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people,*** 19 In the courts of the Lord’s house, In the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

The 116th Psalm also reminds us of Christ's favor that lasts for a lifetime. Note that the past, present, and future are all covered by Christ's grace.

In the past he “prayed” (v.1, 4); and in the present he “loves” (v. 1); and in the future he “will call” (v.2).

Jesus also may have used Psalm 116:13 in the Last Supper Communion as He said in the words of this Psalm, “I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the Lord.” The 3rd cup of the Passover meal may have been this cup.

We only drink the cup of salvation because Christ already drank the bitter cup for us taking my sin, my cross, my shame and rising again we bless His name as we drink the cup of blessing.

- 1 Corinthians 10:16 *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*
- John 18:11 *So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?”*

Finally, here are the lessons we can draw from the song Jesus sang as He headed towards death. These lessons are for us and can become such a precious source of preparation now and hope as that day draws near!

- ***We are not lonely at death if we always remember He hears us.*** Psalm 116:1 I love the Lord, because He has heard My voice and my supplications.
- ***We are not lonely at death if we pour out our fears and needs.*** Psalm 116:2 Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.
- ***We are not lonely at death if we always remember that troubles and sorrows are neither wrong nor avoidable.*** Psalm 116:3 The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. Every great saint since the Garden of Eden

(except two) have died in pain of one form or another. Jesus died most painfully. It is not wrong or sinful to have troubles and sorrows—it is normal and also a part of God’s plan.

- ***We are not lonely at death if we seek the Lord’s aid when life hurts.*** Psalm 116:4 Then I called upon the name of the Lord: “O Lord, I implore You, deliver my soul!”
- ***We are not lonely at death if we praise Him for His mercy and goodness that have followed us all through our life.*** Psalm 116:5-7 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful. 6 The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. 7 Return to your rest, O my soul, For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.
- ***We are not lonely at death if we make it a habit to walk with God each day we live.*** Psalm 116:8-10 For You have delivered my soul from death, My eyes from tears, And my feet from falling. 9 I will walk before the Lord In the land of the living. 10 I believed, therefore I spoke, “I am greatly afflicted.” The same One who walks through life with us keeps walking and takes us through the Valley of Death’s shadows. And shadows of death are all we get—not death. Jesus said who ever lives and believes in Him will never die.
- ***We are not lonely at death if we drink from the cup of salvation.*** Psalm 116:12-13 What shall I render to the Lord For all His benefits toward me? 13 I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the Lord. Believers never die!
- ***We are not lonely at death if we seek to obey Him during life.*** Psalm 116:14 I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people. Jesus said His sheep hear His voice, follow Him—and He gives them endless life, even when their body dies!
- ***We are not lonely at death if we serve Him in life.*** Psalm 116:15-16 Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His saints. 16 O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds. Serving God is what saints are going to be doing forever!
- ***We are not lonely at death if we thank Him through life.*** Psalm 116:17-19 I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, And will call upon the name of the Lord. 18 I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people, 19 In the courts of the Lord’s house, In the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

One last area we need to consider and that is the question—does all this work? The answer resounds through the centuries, yes! This is the best way to live and the best way to die, is what we saw in Hebrews 11.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR AS WE PREPARE TO GO HOME

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. —Hebrews 11:13, emphasis added

Remember the precious truth about the church at Smyrna—the saints who experienced martyrdom for Christ’s sake in Revelation 2? Their faithfulness unto death was such a sweet-smelling savor unto God. Unless Christ returns soon, all of us face the inevitability of death. Are you ready? Have you planned for the testimony you’d like your funeral to be?

By a few simple preparations, you can really bless your family and friends who stay behind after you’ve gone home to be with Jesus. If you have never done this, I encourage you to take out a

sheet of paper and label it: “My Home Going Celebration.” Write out a brief description of how you came to Christ, and of your hope in His salvation. Then share some of your favorite verses, songs, and hymns—and even a word to bless those you leave behind. Do this and, like Abel, you will “speak” even after you’ve died (Hebrews 11:4). To further prepare, consider once more the seven godly examples in Scripture of how to die with grace.

Jacob looked for the Land of Promise to the end of his life. When he was close to death, Jacob called Joseph to his side and said, *“Now if I have found favor in your sight, ... deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers ...”* (Genesis 47:29-30). When Jacob was a young man, God had promised that his people would someday have a Land of Promise, but Egypt was not that land. Jacob therefore asked to be laid to rest in the actual land God was giving to his descendants. He had followed his Shepherd all the way, and trusted his Redeemer to save him from his sins (Genesis 48:15-16). Have you thanked the Lord lately for His grace that is greater than all your sins?

Joseph died pointing to the faithfulness of God. He told his brethren, ... *“I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob”* (Genesis 50:24). In the ancient world, when someone was failing in health and was coming to the end of life, the family would gather around and listen to their last words. Inheritances were then divided up. Joseph died pointing his family to the Lord’s promises: “God will surely come to your aid, for He is faithful and will do what He said.”

David died exhorting his family to follow God. When he was about to die, David charged Solomon his son saying: *“I am about to go the way of all the earth,” he said. “So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go”* (1 Kings 2:2-3, NIV). David earned the right to exhort his family spiritually because he had lived a godly life. Lot, however, did not. His family laughed and mocked him, saying that he was scoffing (Genesis 19:14). To make our last moments on earth really count, it is so important that we get ready to die by *first* living for Christ.

Stephen died praising God. While he was being stoned, he prayed, ... *“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep* (Acts 7:59-60, NIV). What an incredible testimony of dying faith! Stephen was radiant, worshiping, and offering his spirit into the presence of the Lord!

Peter died reminding the saints about the Word of God. He said, *“I will always remind you of these things, even though you ... are firmly established in the truth you now have. ... It is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside ...”* (2 Peter 1:12-14, NIV). Jesus had told Peter that some day his hands would be stretched out, and he would be crucified (John 21:18). History tells us that he was crucified upside down because Peter had declared that he was not worthy to die like Jesus did.

Paul died finishing the plan laid out for Him by God. When death was near, he said, ... *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord ... will award to me on that day—and ... to all who have longed for his appearing”* (2 Timothy 4:6-8, NIV). Paul faithfully followed the course that God had laid out for him. His last days were spent in the maximum security Mamertine Prison in Rome. He did not protest or try to get out; he placidly sat there and wrote letters, knowing that he had faithfully completed what God asked him to do, and was prepared to go to heaven.

Christ died pointing the way for another to come to God. Jesus told one of the criminals being crucified, *“Today you will be with Me in Paradise”* (Luke 23:43). Is Jesus *your* hope? If you died today, would you be with Him in paradise? Are you ready to die?

As we ponder the direction of our life and seek to point it towards our home in Heaven—you might regretfully say, “I wish I could do that over and start my life pointed the right way sooner.”

In Philippians 3:13-14, Paul said to forget what is behind and live for the Lord from today on.

- Philippians 3:13-14 *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*
NKJV

If you have not been as faithful as you need to be, start *now*.

- Philippians 3:20 *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

Choose to like Paul (II Timothy 4:7-8) to finish the course Christ has laid out for you, and you will experience a great calm as you follow God’s will daily. This is the very best approach to being ready to go “home” any day—and not just when your “to do” list is complete. Consistently living like this is a wonderful way to die!

Remember that David ended well by heading towards home—and so should we. Then we can echo the words of John as he closes God's Word when he says—

- Revelation 22:20-21 *He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*
Amen.

[1] *The Jewish New Testament Commentary*, (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications) 1996.

David--A Long Obedience in Seeking God

DSS: Message Forty-Six (061105AM)

As we open to Psalm 18 this morning, I have been praying that maybe this Psalm will become the most meaningful and precious of all the Psalms we have studied. We walked through David's life for many months; from his childhood and all its struggles, through the triumphs of the battle field to the defeats of those unguarded moments—all through the inspired record God gave to us.

The reason I have loved this study of David's life is because of the way God's grace is brought so visibly forward in David's life--the grace that saves, the grace that forgives, the grace that gives new beginnings each day and every hour. Especially when we gather around the Table celebrating Christ's Cross these truths are closest and dearest.

Grace says God is committed to finishing what He started in my life; Christ says I am going to keep cleansing you as often as needed; I am going to love you no matter what you do and nothing can make me love you any more or any less. That means all of us must be...

SEEKING GOD WHEN IMPERFECT

David's life declares that it doesn't take perfection to please God.

One of the reasons that we need so long to go through David's life is that it takes us so long to realize that God does not demand nor expect perfection.

- You don't have to be **fearless** to please God—*David was often afraid and had to flee to the Lord*. Remember that next time you are afraid!
- You don't have to be **perfect** to please God—*David was smitten by guilt and confessed his sins to the Lord*. Remember that next time you are stained by sin!
- You don't have to have a **perfect marriage** to please God—*David had marriage problems he gave to the Lord*. Remember that next time you are weeping inside or outside over the stress and pain that you feel at your partner!
- You don't have to have **perfect children** to please God—*David has no recorded children who followed the Lord to the end of their life*. Remember that next time you feel the harsh blast of their disobedience, disrespect or ingratitude!
- You don't have to be **constantly serene** to please God—*David was often depressed and had to sometimes crawl back to the Lord*. Remember that next time you are too discouraged to even get out of bed, or go to work, or look another person in the eye!

But we do have to experience God's grace to please Him.

We gather as Christ's Body to praise God for grace—and David's life is covered with grace. God looks upon David not always as he was but always as he would be. God saw his heart, knew his deepest desire and forgave all the rest.

David was imperfect, sometimes failing, fearful, sad, and troubled—and through it all, in spite of it all, and in it all—David says from start to finish, all of his life--I love the Lord.

When we stopped at David's deathbed, we witnessed his hope and peace as he walked through that valley of death's shadow and feared no evil.

God's Word notes that Psalm 18 contains the last recorded words of David. I hope that Psalm 18 will become a part of your long term spiritual investment strategy—a pattern for how to love the Lord, trust the Lord and seek the Lord for a long time of your life.

So stop with me and look back over David's life and see the life long patterns that made him such a man that God used and loved.

This Psalm of praise to God is actually recorded twice in the Bible here and in II Samuel 22. It is repeated intentionally for emphasis. In II Samuel 22 it is set as the *historical record* of David's final words. In Psalm 18 it is captured as the *personal testimony* of this life long, God seeking servant of the Lord.

Look with me at just the first six words of Psalm 18.

I will love You, O Lord, my strength.

These final words of David are his personal testimony of the love that drew him into a life long habit of seeking God.

David begins, and his first words are where we also should always begin--a full hearted expression of love to Him who is more than life to us.

Hebrews 11 summarizes God's saints by saying that God loves to reward those that diligently seek Him. And that is what David did. He sought God while facing giant enemies like Goliath, through protracted battles with foreign armies, and even fleeing his own son.

During all his personal struggles and fears—One person never left him and that was the Lord. David always knew God's love and Presence. Seeking the Lord and loving Him was a life long pursuit for David.

Psalm 18 contains David's final words that distill his whole spiritual pilgrimage into one chapter. That first line of this Psalm sums up his life long habit. David explains that he had a life long habit of—

EMBRACING GOD

This word used by David for love is a rare verb form of a word group that expresses tender intimacy. David's choice of words intended to express very strong devotion, like Mary on Resurrection morning that just wanted to hug Jesus (John 20:17).

In the Bible this Hebrew word for love (*racham* # 7355 used 47x) is always used in a positive sense about God and by God for His love for His people. This word speaks of love that draws someone close and hugs them. It is a love that yearns for someone, and is seen when someone has been away for a period and those who love them are so glad to see them back they hug them.

Here in Psalm 18:1 is the sole time in the entire Bible that this term for a hugging, embracing love--is used by a person describing their love for God.

David is the only person in the entire Old Testament to take this word for God's love of His children and turn it around and use it for his own personal love for God. This is very much a part of the reason that God says that David had a heart for Him.

David says I love you so much Lord that I am drawn to you, I want to run and throw my arms around you and express that love for you. That is embracing love, seeking love—and that is David's heart after God.

Psalm 18 records David's last words, looking back over life. A recounting of the depth of love David confesses that he has felt for the Lord.

We have gathered this morning as a group of imperfect people, knit together by love for a perfect Savior, Jesus Christ.

Because we LOVE the Lord this morning, holding your Bible open to Psalm 18, would you **stand with me** and lift your heart, your face and your voice up to Him and sing that chorus "I Love You Lord" with me as a personal love gift of worship to Jesus?

With that preparation, follow along as we read this incredible chapter.

Read Psalm 18, Pray and then sing again "I Love You Lord"!

Psalm 18 is one long testimony to God's great faithfulness as a shelter, a stronghold, and a sure foundation to all who would trust in Him. And I call this final aspect of David's life his long obedience. That is what is most evident about David—he sought the Lord for almost all of his life. And--

SEEKING GOD BUILDS A LIFE GOD REWARDS

- A life that God rewards is a life that personally seeks the Lord.
- A life that God greatly rewards is a life that has a long history of personal pursuing or seeking God.

The sheer volume of information God has given to us about David offers us an incredible opportunity to sift through these chapters and see what a long obedience looks like, and should be like. This is perhaps the greatest way that David's life can impact us—by calling us to walk in the power of the Spirit to also have a long obedience in seeking God.

Psalm 18 is an investment record, recorded by God, of the deposits in David's account. We know from life that a long term investment strategy with our money is the best way to go. Money like time is given to us not merely to spend—but also to invest.

Jesus spent much of His public ministry talking about money. Of His 30+ parables, more than half speak about money. Money is all around us; it drives the economy of our world, motivates most of the workers of this country and is the target that most people use to measure their success and happiness.

One of the secrets that those who obtain great wealth always talk about is the power of long term, compounded investments.

When we lived and served at a church in New England we saw the reality of that long term wealth growing power.

For six years we lived in a lovely New England parsonage. A house built in the early 1800's specifically for the pastor of the Quidnessett Church. The family that donated the money to build that house were part of the E.I. DuPont family.

After the house was built they gave one \$25 share of stock in the DuPont Company; they requested that the dividends be reinvested and that the house be maintained on an allocation made annually from that account's value. That was sometime around 1828.

When we moved into that home 160 years later in 1988, the house was lovely, the acre of grounds looked like a botanical garden--and the maintenance account was worth nearly \$1,000,000.00!

The unbroken compounding of the dividend yield, stock splits, and appreciation of each share through the ups and downs of the Civil War, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the Korean and Viet Nam Wars and onward--turned \$25 into a million dollars, even after all the expenses were paid for that house.

What an amazing power there is in compounded investment in the long haul of American financial history. Financial planners tell us that the real wealth is long term. Even Proverbs said that 3,000 years ago when Solomon said that wealth "hastily gained" is elusive (Pr. 28:20)

So Psalm 18 is the investment record by God of the deposits in David's account. It was written after a lifetime of facing enemies at every turn. First David had faced enemies in the form of the wolves and lions of those shepherding years. Then he had to face the Philistines of both the Valley of Elah (Goliath) and those that surrounded him when on King Saul's staff. So for all those years before his marriage enemies abounded.

Then as the King's sin-in-law the enemies grew greater as the King and the armies of Israel were hunting David to kill him. Later when David was crowned King, the enemies he faced were the Philistines plus the combined armies of all the pagan nations surrounded the Land of Israel.

Finally, when older and nearing the end of life all the pagan nations were joined by those of his own children who sought his throne and thus became his enemies and endangering his life. It seems that David never stopped facing enemies. At the end of his life he wrote this Psalm extolling the Faithful God who delivered him from murderous Saul, pagan armies and even wayward sons.

So in the midst of a hard life, a life of stress, a life of constant demands, a life on the run and a life of endless struggles—David chose to make regular, long term investments in seeking God. A long obedience in seeking God means--

SEEKING GOD THROUGH ALL OF LIFE

David compounded his investment in God. David cultivated a life long desire to seek the Lord in every avenue of life. So should we. A great way to start is to do what David did. Have you ever thought of where David was when he made one of his greatest discoveries about God? He was young, alone, and at work!

As a boy, David decided to seek God while at work each long day and night. From his earliest days on the hillsides as a shepherd David sought God. He looked at life, even a life as lonely, monotonous, and mundane as watching sheep—with such a God heartedness that just his reflections on seeking God as a shepherd are immortal.

Who could ever look on the lowliest job of the day (being a shepherd) in the same way as before once David showed how he viewed his job? To David the seeker of God, **the Lord** became his **[my] shepherd**. He looked at himself and saw that he was just like a weak, helpless and often confused lamb. And if he a mere human child could care for sheep and meet all of their earthly needs—how much more would the Lord be sure that **David shall not want**.

From the desolation and barrenness of the arid desert David could believe that he could have so much provision that he could **lie down in green pastures**. Instead of anxiously eating as if there would never be enough, he could quietly rest satisfied.

Facing the deadly thirst of the wilderness, David saw that seeking God meant that he would always be **led by waters that are stilled** and drink in peace and safety. As a boy he saw that an anxious sheep was prone to sickness and injury so he always made his sheep feel safe and secure so the Lord as he entrusted his life into His care **restored his soul**.

In the Psalm we just read David becomes the third and final person in the Old Testament to be described as “the servant of the Lord”.

*Psalm 18:1-2 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of **David the servant of the Lord**, who spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said:*

We will consider that longest of all superscriptions this evening, but now look at this string of possessive statements. David's relationship with the Lord is not theoretical, it was real and it was HIS and he knew it and said it—to the end!

David is very possessive in his description of his life long walk with the Lord. He describes his relationship by saying—the Lord is my...

David's expressions, "My strength, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my shield, the horn of my salvation..." are a set of seven metaphors to describe God as He aided David in the military times as "Shield, Strength, and Horn"; and from David's days on the run God was to him "Rock, Fortress, Deliverer, and Stronghold". God is not distant if in your relationship with Him you--

MAKE IT PERSONAL

David was very personal in his seeking of God. Nine times in this Psalm he expresses his life long seeking the Lord in those terms using "my":

*1 I will love You, O Lord, **my strength**.*

*2 The Lord is **my rock** and **my fortress** and **my deliverer**;*

***My God, my strength**, in whom I will trust; **My shield** and the horn [means 'power'] of **my salvation, my stronghold**.*

When David described the Lord, as we have seen he was possessive.

God wasn't distant to David he is "my" God.

Then after David tells the Lord that he loves Him so much he wants to hug Him—he goes on in the 50 verses to exhaust the Hebrew language in an attempt to explain all that God has been to David throughout his life.

But most of those expressions surround the way David related to God as his "Rock". Four times in this Psalm the Lord is My Rock, David declares.

- v. 2a **The Lord is my rock** and my fortress and my deliverer;
- v. 2b My God, **my strength** (Heb. Lit. 'rock'), in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
- v. 31 For who is God, except the Lord? And **who is a rock, except our God?**
- v. 46 The Lord lives! **Blessed be my Rock!** Let the God of my salvation be exalted.

When David calls the Lord his Rock it was drawn from the life of the desert when the fragile life of desert plants and animals was often clustered in the areas of shade around the rocks. Travelers also knew that to survive the heat of the desert Sun there must be places of shade to rest and renew before going on.

David confessed that he had only made it through the dangerous deserts of his life by the shadow of God as his Rock of protection and shade. When fleeing from enemies like Saul and Absalom, God was the Rock that he found refuge and safety. And when everything around him was unstable, God was the Rock solid foundation he could always feel beneath him.

In England around the year 1763, while Ben Franklin was busily flying kites in thunderstorms over here in America, a young pastor by the name of Augustus Toplady was traveling home when a violent thunderstorm struck. Here is the popular recounting of the birth of the great hymn “Rock of Ages” [#204 in our books].

LIGHTNING briefly illuminated the primitive, rock- hewn landscape of Burrington Combe in Somerset. It was followed by a deep growl of thunder, and then rain lashed mercilessly down, pouring bubbling streamlets down the craggy sides of primeval cliffs which rise up some 250ft. to the Mendip Heights on one side, and into Cheddar Gorge on the other.

The curate of Blagdon, a nearby village, had been travelling along the road near the cliffs when the storm struck and dashed into a cave for shelter. He had been fortunate to find this hiding-place so quickly, and while waiting for the storm to pass he began to muse on the idea of the “*rock of faith*” being a shelter from the “*storms of life*”.

The words for a hymn began to form in his mind but, according to the legend that still persists, he had no paper in his pocket to write down the words. Looking down he saw a playing card, considered a sinful thing by the young cleric. Nevertheless, he picked it up and began to write one of the world’s best-loved hymns which was first published in the Gospel Magazine in 1775, some 12 years after Toplady wrote it.[1]

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and pow’r.

Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil thy law’s demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,

Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy Cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress;
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar through tracts unknown,
See thee on thy judgment throne;
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

[1] <http://www.ensignmessage.com/archives/rockofages.html>

David--A Rock Solid Life

DSS: Message Forty-Seven (061105PM)

David had a lifelong love for God that drew him to seek the Lord. He was drawn toward the Lord with an embracing kind of love. He is a model placed before us in God's Word of what pleases the Lord.

Start with me at the beginning of Psalm 18, where we saw the last recorded words of David. David's relationship with the Lord was not theoretical, it was real and it was HIS and he knew it and said it—to the end!

DAVID WAS A BONDSLAVE OF GOD

In the Psalm we read this morning, David becomes the third and final person in the Old Testament to be described as "the servant of the Lord". This is the powerful word "bondservant" we know from the New Testament. So David's life has many examples for us.

Note again the first verse in Hebrew, the little paragraph before the first verse.

*Psalm 18:1-2 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of **David the servant of the Lord**, who spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said:*

Among the verses of God's Word only Moses and Joshua are given this familiar title from the New Testament.

In Deuteronomy we are introduced to Moses as 'the servant of the Lord' (17x):

Deuteronomy 34:5 So **Moses the servant of the Lord** died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

Then Joshua (2x) is also given that title in Joshua 24:29.

Joshua 24:29 Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, **the servant of the Lord**, died, being one hundred and ten years old.

Then in our opening section of Psalm 18 as well as Psalm 36 we find David being granted this honorable title. Look at the superscription of this Psalm.

- Psalm 36:1 *To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David **the servant of the Lord**.*

So David was a servant of the Lord. We need to always remember that—

WE ARE BONDSLAVES OF GOD

Now, there is one last place these words appear in all of God's Word. Look at II Timothy 2:24 for one of the most challenging verses about what God expects from us as his servants.

Timothy 2:24 *And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,*

In this verse God says His servants are to first flee something; they as a true servant of God must **not to be** characterized as those who “quarrel”. Here is the page out of the Greek dictionary of New Testament Words.

#3164 machomai: “to fight (of armed combatants, or those who engage in a hand to hand struggle); of those who engage in a war of words, to quarrel, wrangle, dispute”.

As much as we are to speak boldly for the Lord without compromise, we are to do so with the attitude of meekness, gentleness, and humility. We are never to be harsh, abusive, overbearing, unkind, thoughtless, or pugnacious. There is to be a softness in the authority of a godly Christian, just as there was in Jesus when He said:

- Matthew 11:29 *“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*Then Paul explains in quick succession three positive attributes to pursue. Christ's bondservant must also be **able to teach**. The term does not refer so much to possessing vast knowledge or understanding as to having notable ability to communicate effectively the knowledge and understanding of God's Word.*

*The godly leader who is an honorable vessel must be **patient when wronged**, which is perhaps the hardest qualification mentioned here.*

*When we are faithfully witnessing and living for the Lord, it is not easy to graciously accept unjust criticism. In addition to being our example, Jesus is also our resource for being **patient**. Patience is a fruit of Christ's own Holy Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22), who will provide the strength we need for bearing His fruit.[1]*

So David in a real sense gives us New Testament era servants of the Lord so much of an example. And that is what we see in—

Psalm 18: DAVID'S CONFESSION ABOUT SEEKING GOD

Psalm 18 is the record of David's heart and his deep affections and love for the Lord throughout his life. No matter how often David stumbled and fell—he was sheltered, secured, and sought by the God who can always be trusted. There are some simple lessons about his life we can see.

1. God hears our cries. In Psalm 17 listen to David's pleadings to God as he requests:

- Psalm 17:1 *Hear a just cause, O Lord, Attend to my cry; Give ear to my prayer which is not from deceitful lips.*

2. God responds to our cries. Psalm 18 is God’s answer; an incredible description of the God who responds. So because of that David saw the Lord (18:3) as worthy of praise.

3. God delivers us from evil. David expressed his life as the Lord delivering him from his enemies. “He delivered me..” (Psalm 18:16) This is what we need today—a personal deliverer who knows just where we are at all time, and who is strong enough to deliver us from even the strongest of enemies. Think of what you know about the Cross of Jesus. Christ has already defeated all our enemies once and for all. He is only waiting to make that real and true in our lives today. If you need help right now—He is available and able to deliver you right now from any fear, any bondage, any addiction, any abuse induced hatred or debilitating shame.

4. God wants to walk with us. Do you need a partner or friend today? May I recommend Jesus? He is waiting, walking beside you even now and wanting to share your thoughts and actions. Jesus will never leave you, He will never forsake you or dump you for someone else. He promises that “...I am with you always...” (Matthew 28:20). That is why I depend on Him more and more each year of my life. And that is what should be happening to all of us.

5. God will not be mocked. In v. 26 God is shown as the One who repays man according to his deeds. The law of sowing and reaping and the unstoppable wheels of the consequence engine is reflected by the last line of this verse.

Much like Haman who was hung on the very gallows he built for innocent Mordecai; and Laban cheating the same Jacob who has already cheated his own brother Esau; and David who reaped murder and adultery from his sons after he had himself adulterated and murdered Uriah for Bathsheba—we serve a God who warns us to not be deceived, God is never mocked—for whatever a man sows, that is what he will reap (Galatians 6:7).

God is worthy of our worship. The word used for “God” in Psalm 18:31 is Eloah—the God who is to be worshiped.

6. God is all we could need. And in v. 32 the word for “God” is EL—the Almighty God of Omnipotence in His Power.

7. God is worthy of our life long praise. Especially note his life long praise to God in Psalm 18:46 The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted.

This Psalm of praise to God is actually recorded twice in the Bible here and in II Samuel 22. It is repeated intentionally for emphasis. In II Samuel 22 it is set as the *historical record* of David’s final words. In Psalm 18 it is captured as the *personal testimony* of this life long, God seeking servant of the Lord.

This evening please join me in your Bibles at II Samuel 22:1-23:7. This morning we saw these words made into David's personal song in Psalm 18. This evening we are going to see some life long disciplines or habits that made David have a rock solid life even under stress. I call this a--

A GOD SEEKING LIFESTYLE

At the end of his life, in his last words David gets to look back. II Samuel 22 is that summary. When David does look back--all he sees is grace. God has covered the sins, and left the record of David's life long pursuit of seeking the Lord.

There are some given names that stick and stay. Take for instance how many people still Xerox documents although they have never seen a Xerox copier; the same for 'hand me a Kleenex', even though it is far from being made by Kleenex. But the use of that name has spread to the entire usage of that action. We see something similar when God puts a title on people.

- When I say the Friend of God many of us may want and hope to be—but that is what God calls Abraham.
- Similarly the Apostle John will always be the one that Jesus loved. That is his special title given in God's Word, and what God says sticks.
- Moses was the one that we know got to know God face-to-face and he was also the meekest man on earth. It is hard to shake such a handle when God puts it on you.
- As we come to the end of David's life God identifies him by a special title, he says that David was a man after God's own heart.

As far as we know David didn't hear that title; that is just how God saw his life long obedience. What do you have in your life that God sees? What life long habits does He admire about you?

In these next few weeks look back on David's and see what God saw in him. David practiced a long obedience in **seeking God** as we have seen in Psalm 18 and II Samuel 22 today. This was that unusual habit David had to look for God wherever he was.

Next time we will see David's long obedience in—

- **Worshipping God** (that incredible heart that gushed up rivers of worship even from the parched ground of difficult days);
- **Trusting God** (that amazing way David turned his fears into opportunities to trust God even more. So what we find in David--

So in the midst of a hard life, a life of stress, a life of constant demands, a life on the run and a life of endless struggles—David chose to make regular, long term investments in seeking God. A long obedience in seeking God means--

SEEKING GOD THROUGH ALL OF LIFE

David compounded his investment in God. David cultivated a life long desire to seek the Lord in every avenue of life. So should we.

A great way to start is to do what David did. There are three general areas David sought the Lord—while at work, when in danger and fear, and when he was discouraged and depressed. Let's start with seeking God at work since most of us spend a long time each week working.

- Seeking God when at work is Psalm 23.

Have you ever thought of where David was when he made one of his greatest discoveries about God? He was young, alone, and at work! What does Samuel tell us was his job? He was a shepherd boy. So he worked outdoors with sheep.

Seeking God all through life would mean that David would have to start on the job looking at what he did through the eyes of God, and seeing God's Hand in all he did. What I just described is maybe the best known of all the Psalms, the 23rd!

As a boy, David decided to seek God while at work each long day and night. From his earliest days on the hillsides as a shepherd, David sought God. He looked at life, even a life as lonely, monotonous, and mundane as watching sheep—with such a God heartedness that just his reflections on seeking God as a shepherd are immortal.

Who could ever look on the lowliest job of the day (being a shepherd) in the same way as before once David showed how he viewed his job? Through Psalm 23 we find that to David the seeker of God, **the Lord** became his **[my] shepherd**.

He looked at himself and saw that he was just like a weak, helpless and often confused lamb. And if he a mere human child could care for sheep and meet all of their earthly needs—how much more would the Lord be sure that **David shall not want**.

From the desolation and barrenness of the arid desert David could believe that he could have so much provision that he could **lie down in green pastures**. Instead of anxiously eating as if there would never be enough, he could quietly rest satisfied.

Facing the deadly thirst of the wilderness, David saw that seeking God meant that he would always be **led by waters that are stilled** and drink in peace and safety. As a boy he saw that an anxious sheep was prone to sickness and injury so he always made his sheep feel safe and secure so the Lord as he entrusted his life into His care **restored his soul**.

When tempted to displease the Lord or dishonor Him David thought about how he led his sheep so he asked the Lord to **lead him in paths of righteousness for the sake of God's Name**. Even in the narrow canyons where a sheer vertical drop meant certain death for any sheep and so there was no place to go in a predator showed up, the sheep could completely trust the shepherd who was guarding as well as guiding them so that **yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for Thou are with me**.

Thinking about God at work also made David look down at his tools and see that God's **rod and staff** could **comfort** him, just as his tools were used for the protection and correction of his flock.

Even when enemies were prowling all around the shepherd kept them at such a distance by his sling and staff that a weak and timid lamb could be confident enough to put its head down in the grass where it couldn't see what was going on—and just trust the shepherd. So David accepted that **God prepared a table** for David so that even in the most anxious times David could resort to trusting God and eat **in the presence of my enemies**.

Although his enemies never left him alone for his entire life time, David had his eyes opened so that as he looked back at life he saw in every trouble, every struggle and every pain was covered with God's tracks because **surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life**. Most sheep never realize how much the shepherd does for them—but David decided he was going to look back and see just how great it was to have God always directing and leading in each situation for the glory and good of God.

And finally just as David for all those years always had a safe and secure place prepared each night for his flock to rest in complete security and comfort. So David as the years passed swiftly by he could also rest assured that at the exactly perfect moment—he also would head home and **dwelt in the House of the Lord forever**.

David had a life long pursuit of God and he started by seeing God while he was at work. Have you started looking for the Lord in His Word and carrying Him in your heart and mind all day long?

So in the midst of a hard life, a life of stress, a life of constant demands, a life on the run and a life of endless struggles—David chose to make regular, long term investments in seeking God. A long obedience in seeking God means--

SEEKING GOD THROUGH ALL OF LIFE

David compounded his investment in God. David cultivated a life long desire to seek the Lord in every avenue of life. So should we.

- Seeking God when in danger and distress is Psalm 59, 56, and 34.

Have you ever gone on a vacation, or stayed with friends, or headed off to school or a conference--and found that all of your normal spiritual routines go all messed up?

How would you like to live on the go? Sleeping in a cave one night, by a stream the next and staying up all the next running for your life? How would your spiritual life do under those circumstances? David lived like that for much of his life in danger, yet he made it. How did he do that? He was seeking God when in danger and fear, in struggles and pain, and in discouragement and depression. Let me just sketch a few of these ways we can also learn to seek the Lord.

In I Samuel 19:11 **David faces family conflict and danger**. Just after Saul tries to murder him, David writes **Psalms 59**. His prayerful responses to these tough times are captured and show a pathway through conflict and danger to the One who is closest of all.

David finds an *unshakeable trust in God's protection*. Some key truths from this Psalm are:

- David **turns to God** in his fearful times v.1.
- David **trusts God** in his fearful times v.9.
- David **triumphs through God** in his fearful times v. 16.

Remember when Paul was in similar times? 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

2 Corinthians 2:14-17 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.¹⁵ For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.¹⁶ To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?¹⁷ For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

Soon after, David is captured and goes from fear to terror to nearly a complete breakdown because of fear.

In 1 Sam. 21:10-12 when David is captured at Gath he writes about this in **Psalm 56**. In this Psalm David is confident (Ps. 56:9)! Why! “THIS I KNOW THAT GOD IS FOR ME”. He confesses a **distinct impression God is on his side!**

- **Seek God.**
- **Cry out to Him.** Four times in three verses (v. 4, 10-11) David cries to Elohim—the Creator of the dove and everything else!
- **Remember His closeness in alone times.** This Psalm was very popular. Psalm 56 is quoted by the writer of Hebrews 13:6 (Psalm 56:4, 11); by Paul in Romans 8:31 (Psalm 56:9); and most of all by Jesus Himself in John 8:12.
- **Remember that God cares.** The tears in the bottle phrase speaks loudly of God's promise to never leave us, never forget us, a

But as the time goes on his confidence fades and in 1 Sam. 21:13-15 we see him go into a terrible time of fear. Yet as he looks back on this dark hour he writes **Psalm 34**. In this Psalm we see David magnifying God. Because of his **unwavering awareness God was watching**.

- Psalm 34:3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. [*he gives glory to God*]
- Psalm 34:4 I sought the LORD, [*even in tough times he always sought for God*]
- Psalm 34:6 This poor man cried out, [*During tough times he had a proper view of himself; he was poor in spirit as Christ would later say.*]
- Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD [is] good; [*he had a personal experience of God*] Blessed [is] the man [who] trusts in Him!
- Psalm 34:9 Oh, fear the LORD, [*During tough times he practiced the presence of God, acknowledging Him is to fear him. it changed his behavior. If we believe right we will behave right!*]

- Psalm 34:15 The eyes of the LORD [are] on the righteous, [*During tough times he knew he was in touch with God*]
- Psalm 34:22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned. [*During tough times the cross is the ultimate refuge*] (NKJV)

So in the midst of a hard life, a life of stress, a life of constant demands, a life on the run and a life of endless struggles—David chose to make regular, long term investments in seeking God. A long obedience in seeking God means--

SEEKING GOD THROUGH ALL OF LIFE

David compounded his investment in God. David cultivated a life long desire to seek the Lord in every avenue of life. So should we.

- Seeking God when in doubt and discouragement is Psalm 13, 40, and 70.

David left Gath and was so alone that he despaired. And now David feels abandoned as moves to a new location that is very foreign to him. David wrote *Psalm 13*—how to overcome the feelings of despair, abandonment and loneliness when we are in a very dark situation that seems hopeless.

1. My life feels like an endless struggle. *Psalm 13:1a How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?* By repeating himself four times he shows how deep this feeling runs. **What David says is, “I just can’t go on.”**

2. My life seems to have lost God’s blessing. *Psalm 13:1b How long will You hide Your face from me?* David saw a lack of the apparent blessing on God. **My family doesn’t seem blessed anymore. My work doesn’t seem blessed anymore. My ministry doesn’t seem blessed anymore. My spiritual life doesn’t seem blessed anymore.** **What David says is, “I don’t SEE YOU anymore in my home, my work, or my life.”**

3. My mind seems so troubled. *Psalm 13:2a How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart daily?* David said that he had dark thoughts and uncontrolled emotions. **What David says is, “I can’t stop these feelings of dejection and abandonment.”**

4. My life seems to have lost God’s victory. *Psalm 13:2b How long will my enemy be exalted over me?* **What David says is, “I am constantly defeated.”**

David feels intensely alone as moves to a new location that is very foreign to him. In First Samuel 21:11 as he fled from Saul to the Philistine city of Gath, David wrote *Psalms 40 and 70*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in a new situation that is very foreign situation. And in these Psalms he gives the pathway out of the pit that end with praising from the pits and praying from the pits. **The Pathway out of the Pits**

1. LIKE DAVID--REMEMBER GOD’S WORK IN YOUR LIFE. David first notes the five ways God had worked in his life. Here is God’s grace directed towards David—*Psalm 40:1-3*

The first step out of the pits is to remember God's work in our lives. Like David, we need to remember God's work of grace in our lives.

2. **LIKE DAVID--REAFFIRM YOUR TRUST IN GOD.** *Psalm 40:4-5* David *verbally* says that he trusts God. Like David, we need to reaffirm our trust in the Lord.

3. **LIKE DAVID—RENEW YOUR SUBMISSION TO GOD.** *Psalm 40:6-8* What a beautiful way to look at hard times! God is tunneling a well of water to refresh me; God is making room to bury into my life His greatest treasures.

4. **LIKE DAVID--REPEAT TRUTHS ABOUT GOD—**He is Righteous. *Psalm 40:9-12.* Like David, we need to repeat truths about the Lord.

5. **LIKE DAVID--REJOICE IN GOD EVEN IN THE PITS.** *Psalm 40:13-17 (=Psalm 70:2-5)* Like David, we need to rejoice in the Lord.

6. **LIKE DAVID--PRAY FOR OTHERS WHILE YOU GO THROUGH THE PITS.** *Psalm 40:16-17*

So in the midst of a hard life, a life of stress, a life of constant demands, a life on the run and a life of endless struggles—David chose to make regular, long term investments in seeking God. A long obedience in seeking God means--

SEEKING GOD THROUGH ALL OF LIFE

David compounded his investment in God. David cultivated a life long desire to seek the Lord in every avenue of life. So should we.

[1] Adapted from MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; II Timothy*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983, electronic edition, in loc.

David--A Long Obedience in Worshipping God

DSS: Message Forty-Eight (061112AM)

This morning as we listen to his voice in Psalm 63—David is an old man, all alone, staying in the Judean Wilderness (code for the Dead Sea area) one of the most desolate spots on earth, and on the run from his own son Absalom. That is the context that God uses to write for us one of the most powerful invitations to a life of worship.

Psalm 63 shows us how David chose to turn his lonely hours into times of worshipping God. Loneliness was as real then, as it is today.

We have come to the place in human history when people are lonely—yet surrounded by crowds. Life in the 21st century is very lonely for many people.

Though there are more humans than ever before alive and around us—many find less fellowship, companionship, and fulfillment each year. We move past, around and by, more and more people each day—but know fewer and fewer.

We often move faster—but not closer. We often have more contact—but less touch. We have more and more relationships—but less and less depth. And all of this leads to that aching hollow of the soul known as loneliness.

This common condition links Adam in the Garden before God made Eve, Ruth the widow, Job sitting in the ashes of misery, Elijah in the desert (I Kings 19), the Apostle Paul in prison (II Timothy 4), and Christ from Gethsemane to the Cross—for all were painfully alone.

DAVID WAS OFTEN ALONE

This morning in Psalm 63, we find David in that state that often characterized his life—and what he did when he was alone reflects what was deepest within him.

Long and lonely hours are often reflected from the record God has given us of David's life. Even when surrounded by a nation, an army, and his own family—David often feels alone. Most of his Psalms come from that reference point. Think of David's greatest Psalms that we have walked through.

- Psalm 23: alone a shepherd boy;
- Psalm 9: alone facing Goliath;
- Psalm 132: alone in his home as a boy;
- Psalm 142: alone fleeing King Saul, and hiding in a cave;
- Psalm 34 & 56: alone as a prisoner at Gath;
- Psalm 101: alone on the Throne as he assumed the kingship of Israel;
- Psalm 31: alone on the battle field as he fled Absalom;
- Psalm 32 & 51: alone before God facing his own sinfulness.

Much of David's life was spend alone. But, we must also never confuse solitude with loneliness. Solitude is a chosen state to stimulate contemplation and meditation; but loneliness is an unwelcomed, unsought, and undesired visitor.

One doctor has written: "Acute loneliness seems to be the most painful kind of anxiety which a human being can suffer".[1]

Not much has changed in 3,000 years, has it? One of the sociological phenomenons of the 21st century is that the more the population increases, and travel and communication explode, conveniences and comforts abound, and the increasing freedom and security of financial independence multiplies—loneliness floods our world.

About the time of the Civil War, a noted American writer and philosopher named Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), described cities as "places where people are lonely together."

THE LONELY PLANET

If Thoreau's observation was true in the past, it has become increasingly true in the present, and the prediction is that it will become alarmingly more so in the near future. We live on a very lonely planet.

- In 1950 there were only seven cities in the world with more than five million people. Only two of these were in the Third World.
- Today there are 34 cities with more than five million people, 22 of which are in the Third World.
- And by the middle of the 21st century, there will be nearly 100 cities with at least five million people, with 80 of these in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Most of the world's population will be living in cities and the slums and squatter settlements of Third World countries[2].

People are *alone* in high rise buildings that house tens of thousands; people are *alone* on transits systems that shuttles millions each day; people are *alone* in houses that are the size of castles as well as apartments that are the size of closets. Loneliness is no respecter of economics or status. Loneliness is not a stranger to more and more people around this city and across the world.

Charles Reich wrote in his impacting book a generation ago called *The Greening of America*, "Modern living has obliterated place, locality and neighborhood, and has given us the anonymous separatedness of our existence. The family, the most basic social system, has been ruthlessly stripped to its functional essentials.

Friendship has been coated over with a layer of impenetrable artificiality as men strive to live roles designed for them. Protocol, competition, hostility and fear have replaced the warmth of a circle of affection which might sustain man against a hostile environment. America has become one vast, terrifying anti-community."[3]

So what are we to do the next time we see or feel the pangs of loneliness swirling around us?

Think of the most described lonely person in God's Word—his name was David, his discoveries about the Lord in the midst of piercing loneliness are recorded as testimonies in the book of Psalms. Let's read one of the most powerful in Psalm 63.

Loneliness is a spiritual opportunity; when God allows all of my normal companions to be out of my life—He can become closest to me. This means that loneliness can be a tool in God's hand, an opportunity for a right response by us His children. Don't let loneliness abuse you, use it to draw close to the Lord!

LONELINESS IS AS OLD AS MANKIND

Loneliness is as ancient as mankind, in fact the very first recorded words of God to Adam were on that very subject when he said in *Genesis 2:18*

- *And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."*

God solved that problem with Eve, and Adam was no longer alone. But soon after, sin arrived as Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Then came the sting of the most dreadful form of loneliness—alienation from God.

Because we are all fallen in Adam, we now experience loneliness in all of its many forms; none of them are good. Loneliness appears at times as that sense of emptiness, like we have a vacuum inside of us. Other times it is a feeling of desolation or of unsatisfied longings. Probably the most acute form of loneliness is when we lose someone close to us through disagreement, distance or death.

But Jesus came as Emmanuel, God with us (Matthew 1). He wants to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13). He promises to be with us always even to the end (Matthew 28). He meets us where we are in each of the lonely times life will bring.

Loss of a life partner is a deep void; moving away from cherished places also cuts deeply. The loss of the comfortable and familiar can leave gaps in our hearts and painful voids. And as we see all around us, everyone involved in a divorce—the marriage partners, friends, family, and children—all are touched with an aching void and begin down a pathway of loneliness.

Loneliness is a tool to glorify God, turn to him in trust and triumph, and to make some great discoveries about God. In every phase of life there is loneliness; and in every phase of life find out what Jesus says is true—*I am always with you!*

Are you feeling the loneliness of youth? Are you feeling the loneliness of life facing family conflict and danger? Are you feeling the loneliness of job loss, and family separation? Are you feeling the loneliness of moving to a new location that is very foreign to you? Are you feeling the loneliness of living and working with a tough crowd? Are you feeling the loneliness of unemployment and unsettled home life? Are you feeling the loneliness of betrayal by friends?

Are you feeling the loneliness of being wronged in a business deal? Are you feeling the loneliness of the complete loss of his family, friends, and finances? Are you feeling the loneliness of temptation and failure? Are you feeling the loneliness of chastisement and restoration? Are you feeling the loneliness of old age? *Jesus says I am always with you!*

Loneliness—if you ever feel it, know that Jesus felt it.

- If you ever suffer feeling friendless—know that Jesus is the friend who will stick closer than a brother.
- If you ever feel forsaken—remember Jesus said that He would never leave you or forsake you.
- If you feel alone—trust the One who said I am with you always, to the end! Like David shows us in Psalm 63.

DAVID SOUGHT GOD THROUGH HIS LONELINESS

Look with me at the first verse in Psalm 63. Alone in the bleak wilderness of Judea that we know as the Dead Sea region, David starts out by declaring he would pursue the Lord. “Seek” in Psalm 63 is an unusual verb that can be either rendered as 'seek early' [KJV/NKJV] or 'seek earnestly' [NIV/NASB].

Which ever way your Bible renders that word, the question remains—is that your heart?

God shows us in the lives of everyone from Moses and Joshua, through David and right down to the life of Jesus—the immense benefit of a regular, early, daily seeking after God. Do you have a desire like that for Him? Most of us probably can't say that we always do. But as you sit and listen to God's Word, isn't that what we all want?

This attitude and desire for God is cultivated and part of spiritual disciplines. What ever we feed regularly grows. If we feed our body, it grows. If we feed our mind it grows, and if we feed our spirit with seeking after God times—we grow more and more to longingly seek Him. There is no better way to live a day for eternity than to start it with a personal, earnest seeking of God through His Word in personal Bible reading, study, meditation and devoted prayers.

David again uses every tense of life to describe his pursuit of the Lord. He says this has been my **past pursuit**:

- Psalm 63:2 *So I **have looked** for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.*

And even in the hot, empty, lifelessness of the bleak and hostile desert seeking God was his **present pursuit** even as he was being chased by Absalom (most likely the context of this Psalm):

- Psalm 63 :1-8 v.1 *O God, You **are** my God; Early will I seek You; My soul **thirsts** for You; My flesh **longs** for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. v.3 Because Your loving kindness **is** better than life, My lips shall praise You. v. 6 When I **remember** You on my bed, I*

meditate on You in the night watches. v.8 My soul **follows** close behind You; Your right hand **upholds** me.

Then as David always looks ahead, he declares that desiring God will always be his **future pursuit**:

- Psalm 63:1-11 v.1 *O God, You are my God; Early **will I seek You**; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.* v. 3 *Because Your loving kindness is better than life, My lips **shall praise You**.* v.4 *Thus **I will bless You** while I live; **I will lift up** my hands in Your name.* v.5 *My soul **shall be** satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth **shall praise You** with joyful lips.* v. 7 *Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings **I will rejoice**.* v.11 *But **the king shall rejoice** in God; Everyone who swears by Him shall glory; But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.*

DAVID USES EVERY MEANS HE HAD TO PURSUE GOD

Even a quick glance at this Psalm in your English Bible shows an ancient Hebrew pattern; David uses seven different means to praise and worship God (seven as in an complete set). Glance down and note with me each of them:

- First, David uses *his lips* to speak of God's love that is kind and true in v.3 "Because Your loving kindness is better than life, **My lips** shall praise You".
- Second, he harnesses *his tongue* to bless the God he loves in v. 4a "Thus **I will bless You** while I live..."
- Third, he uses *his hands* to point to the God he seeks and loves in v.4b "...I will lift up **my hands** in Your name."
- Fourth, David uses *his will* to intentionally make a declaration of God worthiness in v.5a "**My soul** shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness..."
- Fifth, he again speaks with *his mouth* to lift praises to the God he loves v.5b "...And **my mouth** shall praise You with joyful lips."
- Sixth, David uses *his mind* to remember in v.6a "6 When **I remember** You on my bed..."
- Seventh, he uses *his intellect* to meditate upon God's character in v. 6b "... **I meditate** on You in the night watches.

David is saying I am using all the faculties that God gave me in seeking Him. Is that pursuit of God echoed in your heart this morning?

Since childhood we have been taught that we have far more capacity in our brains than we ever use. Most doctors say the average human barely uses 10% of their brain.

We are challenged by our culture to never stop learning to use a few extra percentage points through life; but in a vastly more strategic way, God is saying through David— **why not start employing more and more of your capacity to worship God?** Regularly use your lips, your tongue, your hands, your will, your mouth, your mind, and your intellect *to the max* in seeking to offer worship to God.

ONLY GOD CAN SATISFY

One of the most fundamental truths from this Psalm is that God can satisfy us to the very core of our existence and being. That is David's 3,000 year old testimony. He was as human as anyone can get.

David reflects every virtue and every vice. He struggles with fear, depression and lust; yet he sings with abandon, worships with a passion, and meditates into the very Throne Room of God. We can each identify with his struggles—and we can each learn from his pursuit of God.

David is showing us the lifelong opportunity we can have of pursuing God. God is an exhaustless supply of new satisfaction; He is a well that never runs dry, a spring that always wells up with fresh and life giving waters. Every desire, even the deepest can be satisfied by Him. And as Augustine said those well remembered words 1600 years ago, "Our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee." [4]

David says that he is *completely satisfied by God, with God, and in God*. David experienced what God has offered and promises—God can't hold Himself back from those who seek Him. God is always looking throughout the Earth for anyone who focuses their heart's desires upon Him. God said He is found by those who seek Him with all their heart. And David says—yes, that is what I have experienced.

Look at v.3 again. Note what David says: **Life is good; God is better!**

- Psalm 63:3 *Because Your loving kindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.*

Now there is something all of us can relate to and decide upon. David states that life is good. Now most of us would agree. In reality life is so good that people cling to it with a tenacity that surpasses all other desires. We will do anything to save our self from death humanly speaking. At gun point we will give up every dollar we have to not be killed. With cancer we will agree to the most painful surgical and procedures to try to stave off cancer's advance, to the point of amputation of parts of our body if that will give us hope of more days to live.

Satan's assessment with Job reminds us that this is always the case with us humans.

- Job 2:4 *So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.*

So for almost every person on this planet, their life is their most precious and treasured possession. But this verse tells us that life is good, God made it wonderful; but God is better. Why? Because no matter how carefully we guard our life, it can be lost.

Our body wears out or gets ravaged by some disease or trauma—and it dies. Life as good as it is, ends. But God never will end; His love never fades away or gets traumatized or diseased. David says God is better because of His loving kindness—that is His faithful, steady, and unwavering

love. That is the love of God He has covenanted to us. It is safe, sure, and reliable. God's love is inseparable from us who receive it.

Remember the great words of Paul? God has told us as clearly and forcefully as is possible in human language—nothing can remove His promised 'better than life' love!

- Romans 8:38-39 *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

When we stop and think about it, like we are at this moment—isn't it hard to believe that we neglect and spend so little time cultivating something that is 'better than life'—and spend the majority of all our time pursuing, protecting, and seeking to prolong what is a distant second?

ENJOYING GOD

God offers endless satisfaction, completion on a supreme level for each of us to enjoy and enlarge on a daily basis. Maybe this morning we need to pause and like David with our lips, tongue, mouth, mind and will express how much we want to just enjoy the Lord Himself right now.

One way I do that, when struck by thoughts like these, is to break right out in song; whether I am in the study before my open Bible, or riding in the car listening to the Dramatized Bible on my iPod, or walking and meditating on memorized verses—I just right then grab for that reality of endless joy in His Presence. I often sing:

More Precious Than Silver Words and Music by Lynn Deshazo © 1982 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

- Lord, You are more precious than silver.
Lord, You are more costly than gold.
Lord, You are more beautiful than diamonds,
And nothing I desire compares to You.
- Lord, Your Love is higher than mountains.
Lord, Your Love is deeper than seas.
Lord, Your Love encompasses the nations,
And yet, You live right here inside of me!
- Lord, You are more precious than silver.
Lord, You are more costly than gold.
Lord, You are more beautiful than diamonds,
And nothing I desire compares to You.

Have you come to the place where you say, "...and nothing I desire compares with You..."?

❖ [1] Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, *Pain: The Gift Nobody Wants*, (NY: Harper Collins, 1993), p. 164-165.
❖ [2] Osbeck, Kenneth W., *Amazing Grace—366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications) 1997.
❖ [3] Charles Reich, *The Greening of America: The Coming of a New Consciousness and the Rebirth of a Future* (NY: Bantam Books, 1971), p. 7.
❖ [4] C.H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, vol. 2, Psalms 58-87 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1968), p. 65.

David--Turning Lonely Hours Into Worship Time

DSS: Message Forty-Nine (061112PM)

A life long personal pursuit of worshiping God is not only what God came seeking for (John 4), and what we will be doing forever as Revelation 4 onward teaches us—it is what we are to be now. The definition of true believers as worshipers is at the heart of the church. Look for a moment at

Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

But with all that truth, reality is often much less, isn't it? We often move deeper in our studies—but not closer to the Lord.

We often have more contact with the truth—but less touch with God's power in our own personal lives.

We have more and more relationships at church, in groups, and in activities—but less and less depth.

And outside the church, the world is going faster, life is getting harder and spiritual lives need deepening. Could it be that the three thousand year old secret of David still works today?

DAVID SOUGHT GOD THROUGH HIS LONELINESS

We need a new generation of God hearted, Spirit empowered, Christ seeking worshipers.

Believers like David who used every tense of life to describe his pursuit of the Lord. He says this has been my **past pursuit**:

*Psalm 63:2 So I **have looked** for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.*

And even in the hot, empty, lifelessness of the bleak and hostile desert seeking God was his **present pursuit** even as he was being chased by Absalom (most likely the context of this Psalm):

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MY FAITH LOOKS UP TO THEE

Ray Palmer, 1808–1887

Hymn # 410 “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” was written in 1832 by Ray Palmer, a 22-year-old school teacher. Several months after his graduation from Yale University, Palmer wrote the text for this hymn. He had experienced a very discouraging year in which he battled illness and loneliness.

The words for these stanzas were born out of my own soul with very little effort. I recall that I wrote the verses with tender emotion. There was not the slightest thought of writing for another eye, least of all writing a hymn for Christian worship. It is well-remembered that when writing the last line, “Oh, bear me safe above, a ransomed soul!” the thought of the whole work of redemption and salvation was involved in those words, and suggested the theme of eternal praises, and this brought me to a degree of emotion that brought abundant tears.

Two years later, while visiting in Boston, Palmer chanced to meet his friend, Lowell Mason, who stated: “Palmer, you may live many years and do many good things, but I think you will be best-known to posterity as the author of ‘My Faith Looks Up to Thee’.”

Lowell Mason composed a melody for this text. Soon the hymn appeared in its present form in a hymnal edited by Mason. And from that time on this musical expression has had an important place in nearly every hymnal that has been published:

My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine; now hear me when I pray, take all my sin away; O let me from this day be wholly Thine!

May Thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire; as Thou hast died for me, O may my love to Thee pure, warm and changeless be—a living fire!

While life’s dark maze I tread and griefs around me spread, be Thou my guide; bid darkness turn to day, wipe sorrow’s tears away, nor let me ever stray from Thee aside.

When ends life’s transient dream, when death’s cold sullen stream shall o’er me roll, Blest Savior, then, in love, fear and distrust remove—O bear me safe above, a ransomed soul.i

Jesus often talked about the satisfying ability of knowing Him. He said things like ‘never hunger’ and ‘never thirst’. He talked about eternal life becoming like an endless spring gushing up from within us. To the woman by the well Jesus said it most directly—

John 4:14 “but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

In Psalm 63 we find that David had also started drinking from that well of everlasting life; David had experienced the unbreakable covenant lovingkindness of God; and David was satisfied forever come what may in life or at death.

And what is the normal result of experiencing such life satisfying, soul filling realities? David shows us—he starts praising God.

Remember how he praises God with all he has (that list of seven parts of his faculties) he praises God. Twice he declares why he is doing that:

*Psalm 63:3 **Because** Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.*

*Psalm 63:7 **Because** You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.*

David is our example and model that shows us that when a soul gets satisfied by God they can't hold it in. We sing, we share, we talk, and we think about the surpassing satisfaction that Christ has become to us; as the songwriter of yesteryear said, 'And the things of earth ...grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace...'. Christ saves, and to all of us who seek Him with all our heart—Christ satisfies. Life is good—but God is BETTER!

That is what motivates us to also go and speak for Him who loves, saves and satisfies us. Another hymn birthed in times of loneliness is very powerful.

SO SEND I YOU

E. Margaret Clarkson, 1915–

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"
And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)*

Hymn # 310 was written by a woman isolated from Christian fellowship and feeling very lonely; Margaret Clarkson was a 23-year-old school teacher in a gold-mining camp town in northern Ontario, Canada. Her friends and family were many miles away. As she meditated on John 20:21 one evening, God spoke to her through the phrase "So send I you."

She realized that this lonely area was the place to which God had sent her. This was her mission field. As she quickly set down her thoughts in verse, one of the finest and most popular missionary hymns of the 20th century was born.

Miss Clarkson has authored many articles and poems for Christian and educational periodicals. For more than 30 years she was involved in the Toronto, Canada, public school system in various educational capacities.

Because of a physical disability, Miss Clarkson has been unable to fulfill her early desire of going to a foreign mission field. Yet her distinguished career in education, her many inspiring writings, and this challenging missionary hymn have accomplished much for the kingdom of God, even though she has remained in Canada.

These words have been greatly used by God to challenge many to respond to God's call for service with the words of the prophet Isaiah, "Here am I ... send me!"

So send I you to labor unrewarded, to serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown, to bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing—So send I you to toil for me alone.

So send I you to bind the bruised and broken, o'er wand'ring souls to work, to weep, to wake, to bear the burdens of a world a-weary—So send I you to suffer for My sake.

So send I you to loneliness and longing, with heart a-hung-'ring for the loved and known, forsaking home and kindred, friend and dear one—So send I you to know my love alone.

So send I you to leave your life's ambition, to die to dear desire, self-will resign, to labor long and love where men revile you—So send I you to lose your life in Mine.

So send I you to hearts made hard by hatred, to eyes made blind because they will not see, to spend—tho it be blood—to spend and spare not—So send I you to taste of Calvary. "As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you."ii

PURSUING GOD

One final note about this satisfying work of God's grace is seen in verse 8. Notice what happens when you find something you never dreamed even existed; something too good to be true, and too good to lose.

Psalms 63:8 My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.

David not only experienced the supreme satisfaction God gives, and couldn't stop singing and talking about it—he also clung to the Source, the Lord Himself. The Hebrew word cling is used of the bonding that comes when a husband truly loves his wife and their souls as well as bodies are 'glued' together.

In Genesis God describes marriage as a man and a woman that find that they complete each other so wonderfully that they become glued together. That is God's design for marriage. That is also God's attraction to our souls and spirits.

David became glued to God. That is exactly what v. 1 means. When you earnestly seek something you get glued to it. David wanted to stay as close as possible to the Lord. His heart, his mind, his will all had a target and that was the source of deepest satisfaction.

Now that again pauses us and makes us ask—if we are not clinging to the Lord, if our hearts and desires are less than glued upon Him, perhaps we are saying that we have not learned how to seek Him early enough, or earnestly enough, or completely enough to get satisfied. For once we get truly and deeply satisfied—we cling to Him. Are you clinging? Are you glued to God? Is He better than life? Or are you still clinging to what you are going to never be able to hold onto, and what you will lose sooner or later?

That is the message of Psalm 63—the God who supremely satisfies us and makes us long for unending, daily, moment-by-moment satisfaction!

DOWN TO EARTH REALITIES

One last thought—after this Psalm of communion in the very Throne Room with the Almighty God of the Universe, it seems strange to drop back to earth and end on such a human note in the last three verses. That is how some commentators (liberal ones) take the Psalm. They say that there is an addition by some scribe that “ruins” this Psalm.

But the opposite is true. This is by God’s design. When David writes v. 9-11 he is reminding us that the real world we face every day, like the harsh realities of the Judean desert—do not go away. David began and ends this Psalm in the desert. He is saying that God can satisfy and captivate our hearts and minds here and now. We do not have to live in some imaginary world or hope for a never-never land where we can at last get what God has promised.

David found the supreme joy and complete satisfaction from God right in the place where his fears, struggles, disappointments and problems faced him. In the context of this Psalm in David’s life, at the very same time that he was feeling the murderous hatred of his own son, he was also experiencing the deep peace and satisfaction that only God can give. Right where we are God wants to work; not after the storm rolls by—but in the midst of it.

What are the requirements to get something like this in our lives this morning? David shows us that there are only two prerequisites. First we must experience the Lord in an intimate and personal way. Like David we must be able to truly say:

Psalm 63:1a “O God, You are my God...”

And then the choice that makes all the difference, we must choose the second half of this equation. Like David God must become what we want and seek with all our heart!

Psalm 63:1b “...Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.”

Have you come to the place as we sang earlier that you regularly say, “...and nothing I desire compares with You...”?

Now we need to get practical. David demonstrates this type of a life long, God seeking, worship that leads to endless satisfaction. Not perfection, just supreme satisfaction.

But how do we tap into this type of life? How do we experience this kind of power? Each of David’s Psalms are inspired, breathed out by God. Each of them are profitable for doctrine (what God wants us to be doing); and for reproof (what God wants us to stop doing); and for correction (what God wants us to start doing); and for instruction in righteousness (what God wants us to keep doing).

David's testimony of how God is close to all who are lonely is captured by the Psalms. In fact, David wrote Psalms or testimonies to God's faithfulness from each of the three stages of his life—from his youth or growing years, from his peak or his strong years, and from his old age or his waning years.

EXPERIENCING GOD'S CLOSENESS ALL OUR YEARS

It is amazing but true according to researchers, that the most acute loneliness is thought to be felt by teenagers. Teens feel neither old nor young. They feel between both worlds and can't seem to connect with either, so they desperately try to find the acceptance and approval of their fellow teens. Loneliness is unexpected by teens when it comes, they are taken off guard and are ill prepared for its fierceness. Unlike the elderly who have felt the sting of being alone often, teens often haven't. So David's testimony from his teen years is especially powerful.

David found God was with him while alone as a young shepherd boy writing Psalms 19 and 23. He had many a lonely night in the fields, the woods, and the hill sides of Judea. Instead of hating and fleeing those lonely times, he turned them into meditations upon the faithfulness of God.

Psalm 19 has three basic choices we each need to make:

1. **Learn to meditate on God's Character when you're alone.** v. 1-6 explains that David meditated upon the character of God when he was alone.;
2. **Learn to listen to God's Voice when you're alone.** v. 7-11 explains that David listened to the Word of God when he was alone;
3. **Learn to fear God's Disapproval when you're alone.** v. 12-14 explains that David feared the disapproval God (heeded His Word) when he was alone.

Remember that one of the prime characteristics of teens is their incredible need for acceptance and approval? David was a teen, he felt this need deeply—yet he chose to focus that desire towards God. He wanted to have God's approval and acceptance of all that he did and said. Psalm 19:14 is a clear cry from a teen who was after God's own heart.

Psalm 23 is the testimony of what you can learn about God in times of loneliness.

As I read this familiar passage and you hear these well known truths—stop—and ask yourself, “Have I experienced this, or is it just a fact that I carry around in my head and not my heart?” Here we go, listen to David's testimony of what he experienced, what he clung to from his long dark nights, and long lonely days. As you listen, ask the Lord to give you the same desire, then echo each of David's affirmations and make them your own testimony. Confess these loneliness lessons and find them true!

Psalm 23:1-6

- v. 1a The Lord is my shepherd; *(Lord, when I'm alone--shepherd me.)* Think of Jesus who said—I am the Good Shepherd John 10.

- v. 1b I shall not want. (*Lord, when I'm alone--satisfy me.*) Think of Jesus who said—
Whoever comes to me will never hunger or thirst John 6.
- v. 2a He makes me to lie down in green pastures; (*Lord, when I'm alone--rest me.*) Think of
Jesus who said—*And I will give you rest Matthew 11.*
- v. 2b He leads me beside the still waters. (*Lord, when I'm alone--lead me.*) Think of Jesus
who said—*I am the Way John 14.*
- v. 3a He restores my soul; (*Lord, when I'm alone--restore me.*) Think of Jesus who said—I
am come that you may have life abundant John 10.
- v. 3b He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. (*Lord, when I'm alone--
sanctify me.*) Think of Jesus who said—I will sanctify you through My Word John 17.
- v. 4a Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, (*Lord, when I'm alone--
walk with me.*) Think of Jesus who said—Lo I am with you even to the end Matthew 28.
- v. 4b I will fear no evil; (*Lord, when I'm alone--protect me.*) Think of Jesus who said—Fear
Not.
- v. 4c For You are with me; (*Lord, when I'm alone--remind me.*)
- v. 4d Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (*Lord, when I'm alone--comfort me.*)
- v. 5a You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; (*Lord, when I'm alone--
calm me.*) Think of Jesus who said—*Let not your heart be troubled John 14.*
- v. 5b You anoint my head with oil; (*Lord, when I'm alone--empower me.*) Think of Jesus
who said—I am sending My Spirit.
- v. 5c My cup runs over. (*Lord, when I'm alone--fill me to overflowing.*) Think of Jesus who
said—*Out of them shall flow rivers of living water John 7.*
- v. 6a Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; (*Lord, when I'm
alone--surround me.*) Think of Jesus who said—*And of His fullness we have received
grace upon grace John 1.*
- v. 6b And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (*Lord, when I'm alone--point me
heavenward.*)

So in the midst of a hard life, a life of stress, a life of constant demands, a life on the run and a life of endless struggles—David chose to make regular, long term investments in seeking God. A long obedience in seeking God means--

SEEKING GOD THROUGH ALL OF LIFE

David compounded his investment in God. David cultivated a life long desire to seek the Lord in every avenue of life. So should we.

The fruit of worshiping God through the lonely days of life can be seen in the collected testimonies of our hymnbooks.

TEACH ME THY WAY, O LORD

Words and Music by Mansell Ramsey, 1849–1923

Teach me your way, O Lord; lead me in a straight path. (Psalm 27:11)

I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.

—*Martin Luther*

I thank God for my handicaps, for, through them, I have found myself, my work, and my God.

—*Helen Keller*

Whatever absorbs our thinking will ultimately control our actions. It is so important for a Christian, then, to let the ways of the Lord become the controlling force in life. It was C. S. Lewis who reminded us that we are becoming now what we will be in eternity—either something beautiful and full of glory or something hideous and full of darkness.

A spiritual knowledge of Christ is always a personal knowledge. It is not gained through the experiences of others. Knowing the Lord in all of His fullness for every situation we encounter is a lifetime pursuit. Discipleship involves a willingness to be taught and then a desire to follow the ways of the Lord—to go with Him in the same direction He is going. We must be willing to say with David Livingstone, the noted missionary statesman of the past century, “I will place no value on anything I have or may possess except in relation to the kingdom of Christ.”

This hymn first appeared in 1920 in England. The author and composer, Benjamin Ramsey, was a well-known local church musician in the Bournemouth area of England. It has since had a wide use by student groups as well as by sincere believers everywhere who genuinely desire to have a greater knowledge of their Lord.

Teach me Thy Way, O Lord, teach me Thy way! Thy guiding grace afford—teach me
Thy way! Help me to walk aright, more by faith, less by sight; lead me with heav’nly
light—teach me Thy Way!

When I am sad at heart, teach me Thy Way! When earthly joys depart, teach me Thy
Way! In hours of loneliness, in times of dire distress, in failure or success, teach me Thy
Way.

When doubts and fears arise, teach me Thy Way! When storms o’er spread the skies,
teach me Thy Way! Shine thru the cloud and rain, thru sorrow, toil and pain; make Thou
my pathway plain—teach me Thy Way!

Long as my life shall last, teach me Thy Way! Where’er my lot be cast, teach me Thy
Way! Until the race is run, until the journey’s done, until the crown is won, teach me Thy
Way!iii

FIRST WE FIND DAVID’S PSALMS FROM HIS EARLY YEARS

David suffers the intense loneliness of family disappointments—and from these times he grows in his relationship with the Lord. David was overlooked, ignored and even disliked by his family in **First Samuel 16-18**. He is left out of family gatherings, unrecognized for great achievements and basically left alone much of the time to do his “job” with the family’s

flock of sheep. David found God was with him while alone as a young shepherd boy. He had many a lonely night in the fields, the woods and the hill sides of Judea. Instead of hating and fleeing those lonely times, he turned them into meditations upon the faithfulness of God. His testimony from his early years is captured in Psalms 19, 23, 101, and 132.

THEN WE FIND DAVID'S SONGS FROM HIS STRUGGLING YEARS

David suffers intense loneliness as he faces family conflict and danger.

In I Sam 19:11 as Saul tries to murder him, David writes Psalm 59. These times of danger are from his boss and father-in-law King Saul. Instead of being eaten up by the intense loneliness he must have felt with job and family pressures all dumped on him at once--he expresses his needs to God. His prayerful responses to these tough times are captured in the Psalms and show a pathway through loneliness to the One who is closest of all. In that time of feeling so alone David writes *Psalm 59*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in danger.

David finds an *unshakeable trust in God's protection*. Some key truths from this Psalm are:

David turns to God in his fearful times v.1.

David trusts God in his fearful times v.9.

David triumphs through God in his fearful times v. 16.

Psalm 59 has several key defenses to the paralysis of loneliness during times of conflict and danger. Note these truths David found (circle them or underline them in your Bibles) and then ask your self are these personalized yet in your life.

David says the Lord is:

a defense (v. 9); a supply of mercy delivered (v. 10); a shield (v. 11); the ruler of all (v. 13); a defense and refuge in the day of trouble (v. 16); strength, defense, and mercy (v. 17). Now look back over those verses and change this from mere facts to personal reality. This method can transform your Bible study. This is how to apply God's Word to your life each day!

Here is how we do that. Note what David actually said starting in v. 9 “God is *my* defense”. He made it personal. He reached out and touched God by faith—and so can we when we face family conflict and danger. Remember this was David's habit since his youth.

Can't you just hear him singing that 23rd Psalm out on the hills of Judea during those long and lonely nights? The Lord is *MY* Shepherd, *I* shall not want, He makes *ME*...

Go through David's list and make it yours. Say to the Lord from your heart right now with me:
v. 9 be *my* defense; v. 10 deliver mercy to *me*; v. 11 be *my* shield; v. 13 rule over *my* life; v.
16 be *my* refuge in times of trouble; v. 17 be *my* strength today, show *me* Your mercy now I
need it so, and defend me from this painful loneliness!

David learns to live with fear as he is a newlywed and faces the unpredictable outbursts of deadly rage from Saul.

In **First Samuel 20:35-42** as Jonathan warns him of the danger of Saul's wrath, David writes **Psalms 11 and 64**.

1. **Psalm 11** is a meditation on why David should not just run away from dangers—he needed to run to the Lord first.
2. **Psalm 64** is the Psalm about the poison of jealous, hateful, and hurtful tongues. After David's meteoric rise to giant slayer, King's helper, royal son-in-law and commander—there were many who hated and envied him. God shows him how to deal with poisonous language directed at him. This could be in the time of Saul or also in the time of Absalom's rebellion and the evil accusations of Ahithophel and Shimei (2nd Samuel 15-19)

David suffers intense loneliness as he loses his job, and is separated from his family. David writes **Psalm 52**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are away from our work, home, and family. From **First Samuel 21:1-9** as he flees to Ahimelech the priest, David writes **Psalm 52**. Some key truths from this Psalm are:

1. v. 1 God is good no matter what!
2. v. 2-4 People will always hurt us.
3. v. 5-7 Take God as your strength in times like this.
4. v. 8-9 Wait for God, cling to Him, grow through the alone time!

This was a big surprise to everyone but God. So recently unemployed for the first time David faces life, looks at his situation and finds the pain that always surrounds such a sudden and unexpected change in everything he had relied upon. Everything but what was most important.

David reverts to his default system. When the unexpected comes we usually respond by reflex. What was David's habit of life, what he did without thinking very long? David had trusted the Lord from his youth, and though his job ended—his relationship with the Good Shepherd hadn't changed a bit. That is exactly how Psalm 52 begins. Turn there with me.

- v. 1 God is good no matter what!
- v. 2-4 People will always hurt us.
- v. 5-7 Take God as your strength in times like this.
- v. 8-9 Wait for God, cling to Him, grow through the alone time!

Psalm 52:9 I will praise You forever, Because You have done it; And in the presence of Your saints ***I will wait*** (*hupomeno*) on Your name, for it is good.

David is captured and goes from fear to terror to nearly a complete breakdown because of fear.

In 1 Sam. 21:10-12 when David is captured at Gath he writes about this in **Psalm 56**. In this Psalm David is confident (Ps. 56:9)! Why! “THIS I KNOW THAT GOD IS FOR ME”. He confesses a **distinct impression God is on his side!**

So what would God have us to do when all alone and in the worst situation we can imagine? Look at the tune again “dove”. In Psalm 55 David says he wished he could fly away from his troubles on the wings of a dove. Now his troubles have arrested him.

Seek God. What could possibly be better than the wings of a dove in a situation like this when you are all alone? Better than a dove or its wings is the God who made the dove! And that is just where David goes!

Cry out to Him. Four times in three verses (v. 4, 10-11) David cries to Elohim—the Creator of the dove and everything else!

Remember His closeness in alone times. This Psalm was very popular. Psalm 56 is quoted by the writer of Hebrews 13:6 (Psalm 56:4, 11); by Paul in Romans 8:31 (Psalm 56:9); and most of all by Jesus Himself in John 8:12.

John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

Real life is only lived in Christ; real light comes only by the sunshine of His Face; real peace is only in His Presence—and that is what David found.

- **Remember that God cares.** The tears in the bottle phrase speaks loudly of God’s promise to never leave us, never forget us, and never be indifferent to the cares of any of his children.

And what was the way David survived the intense loneliness of this horribly foreign place? In Psalm 56 we find no less than nine resolves David made while facing the “distant land” of a lonely new place of struggle. Here they are:

Psalm 56:3-11

Whenever I am afraid, ***I will trust in You.***

v. 4a In God (***I will praise His word,***

v. 4b In God ***I have put my trust;***

v. 4c ***I will not fear.*** What can flesh do to me? 5 All day they twist my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. 6 They gather together, They hide, they mark my

steps, When they lie in wait for my life. 7 Shall they escape by iniquity? In anger cast down the peoples, O God! 8 You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?

- v. 9 When I cry out to You, Then my enemies will turn back; This ***I know***, because ***God is for me***.
- v. 10a In God (***I will praise His word***),
- v. 10b In the Lord (***I will praise His word***),
- v. 11a In God ***I have put my trust***;
- v. 11b ***I will not be afraid***. What can man do to me?

But as the time goes on his confidence fades and in 1 Sam. 21:13-15 we see him go into a terrible time of fear. Yet as he looks back on this dark hour he writes **Psalm 34**. In this Psalm we see David magnifying God. Because of his **unwavering awareness God was watching**.

- Psalm 34:3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. [***he gives glory to God***]
- Psalm 34:4 I sought the LORD, [***even in tough times he always sought for God***]
- Psalm 34:6 This poor man cried out, [***During tough times he had a proper view of himself; he was poor in spirit as Christ would later say.***]
- Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD [is] good; [***he had a personal experience of God***] Blessed [is] the man [who] trusts in Him!
- Psalm 34:9 Oh, fear the LORD, [***During tough times he practiced the presence of God, acknowledging Him is to fear him. it changed his behavior. If we believe right we will behave right!***]
- Psalm 34:15 The eyes of the LORD [are] on the righteous, [***During tough times he knew he was in touch with God***]
- Psalm 34:22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned. [***During tough times the cross is the ultimate refuge***] (NKJV)

David left Gath and was so alone that he despairs. And now David feels abandoned as moves to a new location that is very foreign to him. David wrote **Psalm 13**—how to overcome the feelings of despair, abandonment and loneliness when we are in a very dark situation that seems hopeless.

1. **My life feels like an endless struggle.** *Psalm 13:1a How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?* By repeating himself four times he shows how deep this feeling runs. **What David says is, “I just can’t go on.”**
2. **My life seems to have lost God’s blessing.** *Psalm 13:1b How long will You hide Your face from me?* David saw a lack of the apparent blessing on God. **My family doesn’t seem blessed anymore. My work doesn’t seem blessed anymore. My ministry doesn’t seem blessed anymore. My spiritual life doesn’t seem blessed anymore.** **What David says is, “I don’t SEE YOU anymore in my home, my work, or my life.”**
3. **My mind seems so troubled.** *Psalm 13:2a How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart daily?* David said that he had dark thoughts and uncontrolled emotions. **What David says is, “I can’t stop these feelings of**

dejection and abandonment.”

4. **My life seems to have lost God’s victory.** *Psalm 13:2b How long will my enemy be exalted over me? What David says is, “I am constantly defeated.”*

David cries out in this prayer to the Lord for three things, and that is what God wanted to hear. He answers and David goes on.

First David prays--**look at me.** *Psalm 13:3a Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; Enlighten my eyes, Lest I sleep the sleep of death;* David felt like God had turned His back on him. He asks the Lord to turn around and look at him. When I am overwhelmed at times one of the most touching moments is when my sweet Bonnie finds me. She sits down and talks, when I don’t respond, she says “Look at me honey,” and gently puts her hand under my chin and lifts my face up to look at her eyes of love and smile of comfort.

Second David prays--**answer me.** *Psalm 13:3b Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; Enlighten my eyes, Lest I sleep the sleep of death.* David felt like God had stopped talking to him. This Hebrew word literally means ‘answer’. David is asking the Lord to let Him hear His voice like in the old days. This is when we take God's Word and say “Open Your Word to my heart again. Let me cling to Your truth. Help my unbelief!”

Finally David prays—**restore me.** *Psalm 13:3c Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; Enlighten my eyes, Lest I sleep the sleep of death.* David felt that he was going to die and never be king. He asks God to do what he promised. This is when we say to the Lord, “You promised to never leave me—I need Your presence again! You told me that you loved me to the uttermost—I need Your power again. You said that you would comfort me—I need Your peace again!

One parting truth we can hold on to as we go--

To be abandoned means once you were not. For the true child of God there is always some awareness of this truth, regardless of how deep his or her depression may be. We may be depressed even to the point of feeling utterly abandoned. But the fact that we feel abandoned itself means that we really know God is there. To be abandoned you need somebody to be abandoned by. Because we are Christians and have been taught by God in Scripture, we know that God still loves us and will be faithful to us, regardless of our feelings.^{iv}

- **David feels intensely alone as moves to a new location that is very foreign to him.** In First Samuel 21:11 as he fled from Saul to the Philistine city of Gath, David wrote ***Psalms 40 and 70***—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in a new situation that is very foreign situation. And in these Psalms he gives the pathway out of the pit that end with praising from the pits and praying from the pits. **The Pathway out of the Pits**

LIKE DAVID--REMEMBER GOD’S WORK IN YOUR LIFE. David first notes the five ways God had worked in his life. Here is God’s grace directed towards David—*Psalm 40:1-3 I waited patiently for the Lord; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry. 2 He also brought me up out of a horrible*

pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps. 3 He has put a new song in my mouth— Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the Lord. The first step out of the pits is to remember God's work in our lives. Like David, we need to remember God's work of grace in our lives.

LIKE DAVID--REAFFIRM YOUR TRUST IN GOD. *Psalm 40:4-5* David verbally says that he trusts God. Like David, we need to reaffirm our trust in the Lord.

LIKE DAVID—RENEW YOUR SUBMISSION TO GOD. *Psalm 40:6-8* What a beautiful way to look at hard times! God is tunneling a well of water to refresh me; God is making room to bury into my life His greatest treasures.

LIKE DAVID--REPEAT TRUTHS ABOUT GOD—He is Righteous. *Psalm 40:9-12.* Like David, we need to repeat truths about the Lord.

LIKE DAVID--REJOICE IN GOD EVEN IN THE PITS. *Psalm 40:13-17* (=Psalm 70:2-5) Like David, we need to rejoice in the Lord.

LIKE DAVID--PRAY FOR OTHERS WHILE YOU GO THROUGH THE PITS. *Psalm 40:16-17*

David suffers intense loneliness as he lives and works with a tough crowd.

David wrote more Psalms in this period than at any other time in his life. These *cave Psalms are 4, 57, 141-142*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are far from home and feel exiled. In First Samuel 22:1-2 as he moved into a cave at Adullam with an incredibly difficult group of men, David wrote more Psalms than at any other time in his life. These cave Psalms are 4, 57, 141-142. In **Psalm 142** We see David calling on God because of his **unfailing hope God was listening and hearing**.

Psalm 142 is the classic confession of David when he was a caveman, alone and depressed. God satisfied him completely as he discovered great things about God. Remember, a heart that flees to God for refuge, will always be satisfied.

That is the summary of the Life of David. What do we find as we examine the life of David? DAVID was always fleeing to Christ as his refuge. In this overview of the dark days in David's life, we see how his needs were always met by the Lord..

CAVE TIMES ARE USUALLY ACCOMPANIED BY GREAT DISTRESS. (V. 3-4)
PSALM 142:3-4 WHEN MY SPIRIT WAS OVERWHELMED WITHIN ME, THEN YOU KNEW MY PATH. IN THE WAY IN WHICH I WALK THEY HAVE SECRETLY SET A SNARE FOR ME. 4 LOOK ON MY RIGHT HAND AND SEE, FOR THERE IS NO ONE WHO ACKNOWLEDGES ME; REFUGE HAS FAILED ME; NO ONE CARES FOR MY SOUL.

IN THE MIDDLE OF GREAT TROUBLES THERE ARE USUALLY SOME ASSOCIATED SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION.

**DAVID FELT OVERWHELMED IN SPIRIT (V.3A): "ROOF CAVING IN!";
"EVERYTHING GOING WRONG AT ONCE!"; "ALWAYS HAPPENS TO**

ME!"; "NOT NOW!"; "I HAVE SOME BAD NEWS".
DAVID THOUGHT HIS ADVERSARIES HAD *HIDDEN A TRAP FOR ME* (V.3B):
"THEY'RE ALL AFTER ME"; "I'VE BEEN RAILROADED"; "FRAMED".
DAVID FEARED THAT *NO ONE REGARDS ME* (V.4A): "NO ONE CALLED...";
"I'M A NOBODY"; "POOR ME..."; "I'M ALL ALONE".
DAVID ALSO FEARED THAT THERE WAS *NO ESCAPE FOR ME* (V.4B):
"ONE-WAY TRIP TO NOWHERE"; "YOU'RE TOO OLD"; "I'M SORRY
BUT THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THIS POSITION..."
FINALLY, DAVID FELT THAT *NO ONE CARES FOR MY SOUL* (V.4C). HAVE
YOU EVER LET THESE DEADENING THOUGHT CROSS YOUR MIND?
THEY WILL BRING GLOOM AS FAST AS A STORM FRONT IN A
SUMMER THUNDERSTORM. BUT HOLD ON –

**CAVE TIMES USUALLY ACCOMPLISH GREAT DISCOVERIES ABOUT
GOD** (V. 5-7) PSALM 142:5-7 I CRIED OUT TO YOU, O LORD: I SAID, "YOU
ARE MY REFUGE, MY PORTION IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING. 6 ATTEND TO
MY CRY, FOR I AM BROUGHT VERY LOW; DELIVER ME FROM MY
PERSECUTORS, FOR THEY ARE STRONGER THAN I. 7 BRING MY SOUL OUT
OF PRISON, THAT I MAY PRAISE YOUR NAME; THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL
SURROUND ME, FOR YOU SHALL DEAL BOUNTIFULLY WITH ME."

Cave times open ways we never dreamed of for knowing God intimately.

As we look there, why don't you take a moment and mark these for someone else who may need them someday. Or even for you if you ever feel the twinge of depression in your life. Look now and find:

When depressed I learn that You alone are my true REFUGE (any time, any where)
Psalm 142:5a: *depression means its time to flee to the Lord my Refuge*. I will believe
Your promise and turn to You as my Refuge right now.

When depressed I learn that You alone are my true PORTION (just what I need). Psalm
142:5b: *depression means its time to feed on the Lord my Portion*. I will believe Your
promise to be all I need in this hard time.

When depressed I learn that You alone are my true LISTENER (who cares and hears).
Psalm 142:6 'Give heed my cry': *depression means its time to speak to the Lord my
Master*. I will believe Your promise and pour out all my troubles to You who care for
me.

When depressed I learn that You alone are my true DELIVERER (comes and helps)
"bring" Psalm 142:7a: *depression means its time to trust in the Lord my Redeemer*. I
will believe Your promise and let You rescue me now.

When depressed I learn that You alone are my true OBJECT OF WORSHIP (loves and
accepts my worship) Psalm 142:7b: *depression means its time to offer worship to the
Lord my Lord*. I will believe Your promise and worship You even when I don't feel like

it.

When depressed I learn that You alone are my true *PROVIDER* “surround” Psalm 142:7c: *depression means its time to rest in the Lord my Provider*. I will believe Your promise and let You surround me now with everything I need.

Cave life yields great discoveries about God. David sings them in Psalm 142. Listen to the confessions of this caveman:

“Lord of Refuge, You are my Portion” (v.5),

“O Listening One, hear my cry and Rescue me (v.6).

“My God who Provides the righteous to gather about me, You are Sufficient” (v. 7).

We find in 1 Sam. 24:16-22 the context for Psalm 57. Here we see David rising above discouragement by **applying his great discoveries about God** he learned in Psalm 142. Now to the conclusion as the caveman confesses the end result of acting upon these great discoveries about God that he made in Psalm 57. Do you remember them from last time? David applies all those truths to his heart!

v.1a – **God is Gracious** (Exodus 33:12 – 34:6), that means that God is gracious to even save us we are so sinful...and He has done so much more than that!

v.1b – **God is Refuge**. He said it is Psalm 142:5, He says it here...Look at Psalm 91. God is our shelter, protection, covering and shade. The cross is our safe harbor Hebrews 6:19 – anchored!

v.2 – **God is able—He accomplishes**.

v. 4/6. Interlude – enemy without because enemy within

v.5 Solution –focus on God. **God saves**.

v.7a – **God Establishes**. See Psalm 40 5x He....Inclined to me, heard my cry, brought me up, Set my feet, Put a new song.

v.7b – **God makes us praise** through sorrow

v.8-9 – **God makes us thankful**

v.9b – **God opens an audience to us...**

v. 10 – **God is loyal**. Lamentations 3 - mercies fail not.

v.11 – God uses our adoring His name--to pull us out of the cave to Him!

- **David suffers the intense loneliness of unemployment and unsettled home life.** David takes time to write *Psalms 17 and 63*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are insecure. This was a time of no sure place to live, no reliable source of income and provision.

- In First Samuel 22:5 and 23:14-16 as he was hiding from Saul in the Wilderness of Hareth, David takes time to write Psalms 17 and 63. Sam. 23:13-14 > Ps. 63 We see David seeking God. Why? ABUNDANT SATISFACTION GOD REFRESHED HIM. **Psalm 63** may have been in his time of fleeing Absalom as also are Psalms 3, 4, 5, and 63. Some truths from Psalm 63: v.4 worked for God; v. 5 witnessed God; v. 6-7 waited for God; and v. 8 walked with God.

- **David suffers the intense loneliness when betrayed by friends.** David

writes *Psalms 7, 31, 35-36, and 54* as he records his heart on how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are betrayed by those we trusted as friends. In First Samuel 23:10-13 as he escapes from Saul at Keilah and goes into hiding in the mountains of Ziph, David writes Psalms 31 and 54. 1 Sam. 23:19-25 > Ps. 54 We see David finding refuge in God. Why? CONSTANTLY SETTING GOD BEFORE HIMSELF v. 30. In First Samuel 23:29 as he hides in the cave at En-gedi, David writes Psalms 35-36. In First Samuel 24:1-16 after he spares the life of his mortal enemy King Saul, David records his heart in Psalm 7. **Psalm 7** may also refer to other Benjamite adversaries such as Shimei and Sheba both who hated and attacked David.

- **David suffers the intense loneliness when wronged in a business deal.** David writes *Psalm 53*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in danger of bitterness over being hurt in a business deal. In First Samuel 25 in the Wilderness of Paran as he faces the danger of his anger toward Nabal “the fool” and as God delivers him, David writes Psalm 53. The key to this Psalm is the word fool which in Hebrew is Nabal (15 times in this Psalm and 15 times in the account of 1st Samuel 25).
- **David suffers the intense loneliness of the complete loss of his family, friends, and finances—and finds hope in the Lord in this dark hour.** David writes *Psalms 16*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we suffer the loss of family, or friends, or finances—or even all three at once.
 - Finally in First Samuel 27 as he is grieved and endangered over the raid on his family and city of Ziklag, David writes **Psalm 16** and mirrors the wording of his plea to Saul in 1st Samuel 26.19-20. So it seems that Psalm 16 is written after this event with Saul and the key is seen in 1st Samuel 30.6b when David ‘strengthened himself in **the Lord his God**’. That was the One he had entrusted with his life. Psalm 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
 - **Psalm 16** is a Michtam or an engraved Psalm. Michtam speaks of something so special it can’t merely be written on the surface like a pen on paper, it must be engraved like a chisel into stone to preserve it. So these truths were engraved into David’s heart and life—he knew that God would show him, lead him, and give him the promises of His Word. There are actually six Michtams (Psalms 16, 56-60) all of which come from the furnace of affliction surrounding Saul’s hunting down David to destroy him.

FINALLY WE FIND DAVID’S SONGS FROM HIS CLOSING YEARS;

FINALLY WE FIND DAVID’S TESTIMONY OF GOD’S CLOSENESS

DURING HIS OLD AGE OR HIS WANING YEARS

- And finally, at the end of his magnificent career. David extolls his Master and King in

Psalm 18. Especially note his life long praise to God in Psalm 18:46 The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted. 2 Sam. 5:17-25 - 2 Sam. 22 and Ps. 18. We find David triumphing over all enemies! Why? SEEING LIFE FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE, And what might that be? Psalm 18 tells us: v.1-3 God is greatest attraction; v. 4-6 We are in desperate condition; v. 7-15 God is awesome; v. 16-24 It is God who rescues; v. 25-29 God is just; v. 30-36 God reveals Himself; v. 37-45 God conquers enemies; v. 46-50 God is to be praised. This Psalm is in God's Word twice. Once at David's coronation and then again at the close of his life—it was like a way of saying that he wanted to start his career right and end it well for the Lord!

- **David suffers the intense loneliness of old age.** And finally, at the end of his magnificent life, David extolls his Master and King in *Psalm 18*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in our last days before death. Especially note his life long praise to God in Psalm 18:46 The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted.

FIRST WE FIND DAVID'S PSALMS FROM HIS EARLY YEARS David suffers the intense loneliness of family disappointments—and from these times he grows in his relationship with the Lord. David was overlooked, ignored and even disliked by his family in **First Samuel 16-18**. He is left out of family gatherings, unrecognized for great achievements and basically left alone much of the time to do his “job” with the family's flock of sheep. David found God was with him while alone as a young shepherd boy. He had many a lonely night in the fields, the woods and the hill sides of Judea.

Instead of hating and fleeing those lonely times, he turned them into meditations upon the faithfulness of God. His testimony from his early years is captured in Psalms 19 and 23.

1. *Psalm 19 has three basic lessons:* v. 1-6 explains that David meditated upon the character of God when he was alone; v. 7-11 explains that David listened to the Word of God when he was alone; v. 12-14 explains that David feared the disapproval God (heeded His Word) when he was alone.
2. *Psalm 23 is the testimony of what you can learn about God in times of loneliness.* Listen to David's testimony of what he experienced, what he clung to from his long dark nights, and long lonely days. As you listen, ask the Lord to give you the same desire, then echo each of David's affirmations and make them your own testimony. Confess these loneliness lessons and find them true!

David faces and wins an immense spiritual confrontation. Goliath is not just an enemy warrior—he is defying God.

1. In **First Samuel 17:4, 57-58** David is the giant killer and writes **Psalm 8**. We believe this because in the most ancient Jewish Targums (paraphrases of the Hebrew Old Testament into Aramaic from the time of Ezra onward)—specifically point this 8th Psalm as being about David and Goliath.
2. The words in the manuscripts before Psalm 9 are actually the ending of Psalm 8. Muthlabben means ‘death of champion’ and was paraphrased in the Targums referring to David's killing the ‘man of the space between the camps’ in **1st Samuel 17.4**. That no mans land was dominated by Goliath and was conquered by David.
3. Much like Satan was defeated by Christ's coming to earth. David may have sung this

Psalm while in Saul's court to comfort him when the demons troubled him.

David explains his habits as a young man that fortified him for Goliath, a life of hardship and for being so useful to God.

He explains this in **Psalm 132** which records how David started walking with the Lord as a young boy. This may be David's confession after being anointed King by Samuel (1st Samuel 16.13) and looking back and remembering God's Hand on his life. This Psalm may capture his resolves for his young years—stated when rising to be King, as a testimony of God's faithfulness in the past and a reaffirmation of his consecration to the Lord. Some key truths from this Psalm are:

1. This psalm could be called *David's spiritual secret*—what made him the Giant that we see him to be from the Scriptural record of his life.
2. David **put God ahead of comfort** in v. 3-5. He made time for God a holy habit in his life. Is it yet for you? Without regular, consistent, disciplines time alone with God—you and I will never amount to anything for eternity!
3. David also **personally longed for God** as a young shepherd boy. His family probably kept the Sabbath and the Feasts—but David had an internal, personal longing inside of his own heart for the Lord. Do you? Or is it just your parents that make you come and read and serve? Is it just your family or husband or wife that keeps you kind of going? Reality in spiritual life only comes when it is personal longing from your heart for God.
4. David wanted to be **clothed with righteousness** in v. 9a. That means he wanted to live the Lord's way as much as possible. Consecration to the Lord was a choice. He wanted to come before the Lord like a holy priest. And isn't that what God says we are to be—his holy priesthood that spend our life bringing Him offerings of worship and deeds of sacrificial service? Are you clothed with consecrated righteousness and living each day as a priest?
5. David **engaged in corporate worship** in v. 9b. Note the plural 'saints'. He was personally a seeker of the Lord and that made him come into the congregation of saints with such a zeal he wanted to 'shout' to the Lord. This verse is repeated as v. 16. Do you engage in corporate worship? Does your heart shout? Does your face radiate a deep love for the Lord or a distracted, disconnected air of indifference to the times we join our hearts in worship to the Lord God Almighty?

David also had made some vows for personal conduct and consecration.

These resolves (much like Jonathan Edwards) are captured in **Psalm 101** which can be called David's pact for purity. He fled to the Lord as his refuge from sins of his youth.

This Psalm, like Psalm 132, was also probably written when David starts his career as King—as a testimony of God's faithfulness in the past and a reaffirmation of his consecration to the Lord.

Some key truths from this Psalm are:

1. The *pathway to a godly life* contains personal choices or resolves of holiness to God. Note the seven "I wills" (2a, 2b, 3a, 4b, 5b, 5c, 8a).
2. David **sought personal integrity** as his goal v.2b.
3. David **made a personal pact of purity** for his life and conduct v. 3a.

4. David had a **habit of scraping off anything displeasing to the Lord from his life** (like coming in from the horse barn; like barnacles on a boat; like taking a shower before a date) in v. 3b.
5. David **chose to limit his exposure to evil** and things that would displease the Lord in v. 4-5. He specifically says any sin I will not look at (v. 3 ‘nothing wicked before my eyes’ and v. 4b ‘not know [experience for myself] wickedness’).
6. David **sought to always have proper heroes** to look up to and emulate in v. 6a.
7. David had a **life long plan to purge evil** from being around his life and acceptable in his presence v. 8. (Like Paul having the Ephesians burn anything to do with Satan—so we must not have pornographic or occultic books, videos, games, and music in our homes, cars, computers, lives or minds.)

THEN WE FIND DAVID’S SONGS FROM HIS STRUGGLING YEARS

David suffers intense loneliness as he faces family conflict and danger. In **1 Sam 19:11** as Saul tries to murder him, David writes **Psalm 59**. These times of danger are from his boss and father-in-law King Saul. Instead of being eaten up by the intense loneliness he must have felt with job and family pressures all dumped on him at once--he expresses his needs to God. His prayerful responses to these tough times are captured in the Psalms and show a pathway through loneliness to the One who is closest of all. In that time of feeling so alone David writes **Psalm 59**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in danger.

David finds an ***unshakeable trust in God's protection***. Some key truths from this Psalm are:

1. David turns to God in his fearful times v.1.
2. David trusts God in his fearful times v.9.
3. David triumphs through God in his fearful times v. 16.

David learns to live with fear as he is a newlywed and faces the unpredictable outbursts of deadly rage from Saul.

In **First Samuel 20:35-42** as Jonathan warns him of the danger of Saul's wrath, David writes **Psalms 11 and 64**.

3. **Psalm 11** is a meditation on why David should not just run away from dangers—he needed to run to the Lord first.
4. **Psalm 64** is the Psalm about the poison of jealous, hateful, and hurtful tongues. After David's meteoric rise to giant slayer, King's helper, royal son-in-law and commander—there were many who hated and envied him. God shows him how to deal with poisonous language directed at him. This could be in the time of Saul or also in the time of Absalom's rebellion and the evil accusations of Ahithophel and Shimei (2nd Samuel 15-19)

David suffers intense loneliness as he loses his job, and is separated from his family. David writes **Psalm 52**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are away from our work, home, and family.

In **First Samuel 21:1-9** as he flees to Ahimelech the priest, David writes Psalm 52. Some key truths from this Psalm are:

5. v. 1 God is good no matter what!
6. v. 2-4 People will always hurt us.
7. v. 5-7 Take God as your strength in times like this.
8. v. 8-9 Wait for God, cling to Him, grow through the alone time!

David is captured and goes from fear to terror to nearly a complete breakdown because of fear.

In **1 Sam. 21:10-12** when David is captured at Gath he writes about this in **Psalm 56**. In this Psalm David is confident (Ps. 56:9)! Why! “THIS I KNOW THAT GOD IS FOR ME”. He confesses a **distinct impression God is on his side!**

- **Seek God.**
- **Cry out to Him.** Four times in three verses (v. 4, 10-11) David cries to Elohim—the Creator of the dove and everything else!
- **Remember His closeness in alone times.** This Psalm was very popular. Psalm 56 is quoted by the writer of Hebrews 13:6 (Psalm 56:4, 11); by Paul in Romans 8:31 (Psalm 56:9); and most of all by Jesus Himself in John 8:12.
- **Remember that God cares.** The tears in the bottle phrase speaks loudly of God's promise to never leave us, never forget us, a

But as the time goes on his confidence fades and in 1 Sam. 21:13-15 we see him go into a terrible time of fear. Yet as he looks back on this dark hour he writes **Psalm 34**. In this Psalm we see David magnifying God. Because of his **unwavering awareness God was watching**.

- Psalm 34:3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. [*he gives glory to God*]
- Psalm 34:4 I sought the LORD, [*even in tough times he always sought for God*]
- Psalm 34:6 This poor man cried out, [*During tough times he had a proper view of himself; he was poor in spirit as Christ would later say.*]
- Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD [is] good; [*he had a personal experience of God*] Blessed [is] the man [who] trusts in Him!
- Psalm 34:9 Oh, fear the LORD, [*During tough times he practiced the presence of God, acknowledging Him is to fear him. it changed his behavior. If we believe right we will behave right!*]
- Psalm 34:15 The eyes of the LORD [are] on the righteous, [*During tough times he knew he was in touch with God*]
- Psalm 34:22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned. [*During tough times the cross is the ultimate refuge*] (NKJV)

David left Gath and was so alone that he despairs. And now David feels abandoned as moves to a new location that is very foreign to him. David wrote **Psalm 13**—how to overcome the feelings of despair, abandonment and loneliness when we are in a very dark situation that seems hopeless.

5. **My life feels like an endless struggle.** *Psalm 13:1a How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?* By repeating himself four times he shows how deep this feeling runs. **What David says is, “I just can’t go on.”**
6. **My life seems to have lost God’s blessing.** *Psalm 13:1b How long will You hide Your face from me?* David saw a lack of the apparent blessing on God. **My family doesn’t seem blessed anymore. My work doesn’t seem blessed anymore. My ministry doesn’t seem blessed anymore. My spiritual life doesn’t seem blessed anymore.** **What David says is, “I don’t SEE YOU anymore in my home, my work, or my life.”**
7. **My mind seems so troubled.** *Psalm 13:2a How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart daily?* David said that he had dark thoughts and uncontrolled emotions. **What David says is, “I can’t stop these feelings of dejection and abandonment.”**

8. **My life seems to have lost God's victory.** *Psalm 13:2b* **How long** will my enemy be exalted over me? **What David says is, "I am constantly defeated."**

- **David feels intensely alone as moves to a new location that is very foreign to him.** In First Samuel 21:11 as he fled from Saul to the Philistine city of Gath, David wrote ***Psalms 40 and 70***—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in a new situation that is very foreign situation. And in these Psalms he gives the pathway out of the pit that end with praising from the pits and praying from the pits. **The Pathway out of the Pits**
 1. **LIKE DAVID--REMEMBER GOD'S WORK IN YOUR LIFE.** David first notes the five ways God had worked in his life. Here is God's grace directed towards David—*Psalm 40:1-3* The first step out of the pits is to remember God's work in our lives. Like David, we need to remember God's work of grace in our lives.
 2. **LIKE DAVID--REAFFIRM YOUR TRUST IN GOD.** *Psalm 40:4-5* David verbally says that he trusts God. Like David, we need to reaffirm our trust in the Lord.
 3. **LIKE DAVID--RENEW YOUR SUBMISSION TO GOD.** *Psalm 40:6-8* What a beautiful way to look at hard times! God is tunneling a well of water to refresh me; God is making room to bury into my life His greatest treasures.
 4. **LIKE DAVID--REPEAT TRUTHS ABOUT GOD**—He is Righteous. *Psalm 40:9-12.* Like David, we need to repeat truths about the Lord.
 5. **LIKE DAVID--REJOICE IN GOD EVEN IN THE PITS.** *Psalm 40:13-17* (= *Psalm 70:2-5*) Like David, we need to rejoice in the Lord.
 6. **LIKE DAVID--PRAY FOR OTHERS WHILE YOU GO THROUGH THE PITS.** *Psalm 40:16-17*
- **David suffers intense loneliness as he lives and works with a tough crowd.** David wrote more Psalms in this period than at any other time in his life. These **cave Psalms are 4, 57, 141-142**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are far from home and feel exiled. In First Samuel 22:1-2 as he moved into a cave at Adullam with an incredibly difficult group of men, David wrote more Psalms than at any other time in his life. These cave Psalms are 4, 57, 141-142.
 1. In **Psalm 142** We see David calling on God because of his **unfailing hope God was listening and hearing**.
 2. We find in 1 Sam. 24:16-22 the context for **Psalm 57**. Here we see David rising above discouragement by **applying his great discoveries about God** he learned in Psalm 142.
- **David suffers the intense loneliness of unemployment and unsettled home life.** David takes time to write ***Psalms 17 and 63***—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are insecure. This was a time of no sure place to live, no reliable source of income and provision.
 - In First Samuel 22:5 and 23:14-16 as he was hiding from Saul in the Wilderness of Hareth, David takes time to write Psalms 17 and 63.

- 1 Sam. 23:13-14 > Ps. 63 We see David seeking God. Why? ABUNDANT SATISFACTION GOD REFRESHED HIM. Psalm 63 may have been in his time of fleeing Absalom as also are Psalms 3, 4, 5, and 63.
- Some truths from Psalm 63: v.4 worked for God; v. 5 witnessed God; v. 6-7 waited for God; and v. 8 walked with God.
- **David suffers the intense loneliness when betrayed by friends.** David writes *Psalms 7, 31, 35-36, and 54* as he records his heart on how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are betrayed by those we trusted as friends. In First Samuel 23:10-13 as he escapes from Saul at Keilah and goes into hiding in the mountains of Ziph, David writes Psalms 31 and 54. 1 Sam. 23:19-25 > Ps. 54 We see David finding refuge in God. Why? CONSTANTLY SETTING GOD BEFORE HIMSELF v. 30. In First Samuel 23:29 as he hides in the cave at En-gedi, David writes Psalms 35-36. In First Samuel 24:1-16 after he spares the life of his mortal enemy King Saul, David records his heart in Psalm 7. Psalm 7 may also refer to other Benjamite adversaries such as Shimei and Sheba both who hated and attacked David.
- **David suffers the intense loneliness when wronged in a business deal.** David writes *Psalm 53*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in danger of bitterness over being hurt in a business deal. In First Samuel 25 in the Wilderness of Paran as he faces the danger of his anger toward Nabal “the fool” and as God delivers him, David writes Psalm 53. The key to this Psalm is the word fool which in Hebrew is Nabal (15 times in this Psalm and 15 times in the account of 1st Samuel 25).
- **David suffers the intense loneliness of the complete loss of his family, friends, and finances—and finds hope in the Lord in this dark hour.** David writes *Psalms 16*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we suffer the loss of family, or friends, or finances—or even all three at once.
 - Finally in First Samuel 27 as he is grieved and endangered over the raid on his family and city of Ziklag, David writes Psalms 16 and mirrors the wording of his plea to Saul in 1st Samuel 26.19-20. So it seems that Psalm 16 is written after this event with Saul and the key is seen in 1st Samuel 30.6b when David ‘strengthened himself in **the Lord his God**’. That was the One he had entrusted with his life. Psalm 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
 - **Psalm 16** is a Michtam or an engraved Psalm. Michtam speaks of something so special it can’t merely be written on the surface like a pen on paper, it must be engraved like a chisel into stone to preserve it. So these truths were engraved into David’s heart and life—he knew that God would show him, lead him, and give him the promises of His Word. There are actually six Michtams (Psalms 16, 56-60) all of which come from the furnace of affliction surrounding Saul’s hunting down David to destroy him.

NEXT WE FIND DAVID’S TESTIMONY OF GOD’S CLOSENESS

DURING LIFE AS DAVID WAS IN HIS PEAK OR HIS STRONG YEARS

- ***Psalm 132*** may be David's confession after being anointed King by Samuel and looking back and remembering God's Hand on his life.
- ***Psalm 101*** was David's pact for purity. He fled to the Lord as his refuge from sins of his youth.
- ***David feels the loneliness of those struggling years of unending work in his career.*** David writes of his desires to serve the Lord as he enters his career as King David over Israel. He writes ***Psalm 15, 24, 68 and 101*** in this time. II Samuel 6.
 1. One special note on the Psalms is the usage of the Psalms in the daily Temple worship from Solomon's time through the time of Christ. Here are the Psalms that were sung^v each day at the Temple: Sunday—Psalm 24. Monday—Psalm 48. Tuesday—Psalm 82. Wednesday—Psalm 94. Thursday—Psalm 81. Friday—Psalm 93. Saturday—the Sabbath Psalm 92.
 2. Psalm 15 seems to be the outline Jesus used for the Sermon on the Mount. That sermon follows quite closely^{vi} the flow of this Psalm.
- **David suffers the intense loneliness of temptation and failure.** David writes ***Psalm 32***—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are tempted and fail. From the depths of conviction after his fall into sin with Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11; David writes Psalm 32. and 38?
- **David suffers the intense loneliness of chastisement and restoration.** David writes ***Psalm 51***—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are chastened by the Lord and restored. From the pain of chastisement that leads to repentance and restoration, 2 Samuel 12; David sings of his faithful God in Psalm 51.

FINALLY WE FIND DAVID'S SONGS FROM HIS CLOSING YEARS; FINALLY WE FIND DAVID'S TESTIMONY OF GOD'S CLOSENESS DURING HIS OLD AGE OR HIS WANING YEARS

- Finally We Find David's Testimony Of God's Closeness During His Old Age or His Waning Years. **David faces the loneliness of old age.** David writes ***Psalm 71 and 116***—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are old, weak, and leave behind our health, comfort, friends, family, and security. Psalm 70 is the intro to Psalm 71 in the Hebrew Bible and Psalm 70 is the last five verses of Psalm 40. So we conclude that Psalm 71 is David's prayer and testimony of how to be a godly man to the end of life.
- And finally, at the end of his magnificent career. David extolls his Master and King in **Psalm 18**. Especially note his life long praise to God in Psalm 18:46 The Lord lives! Blessed be my

Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted. 2 Sam. 5:17-25 - 2 Sam. 22 and Ps. 18. We find David triumphing over all enemies! Why? SEEING LIFE FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE, And what might that be? Psalm 18 tells us: v.1-3 God is greatest attraction; v. 4-6 We are in desperate condition; v. 7-15 God is awesome; v. 16-24 It is God who rescues; v. 25-29 God is just; v. 30-36 God reveals Himself; v. 37-45 God conquers enemies; v. 46-50 God is to be praised. This Psalm is in God's Word twice. Once at David's coronation and then again at the close of his life—it was like a way of saying that he wanted to start his career right and end it well for the Lord!

- **David suffers the intense loneliness of old age.** And finally, at the end of his magnificent life, David extolls his Master and King in *Psalm 18*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in our last days before death. Especially note his life long praise to God in Psalm 18:46 The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted.

iOsbeck, Kenneth W., *Amazing Grace—366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications) 1997.

iiOsbeck, Kenneth W., *Amazing Grace—366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications) 1997.

iii Osbeck, Kenneth W., *Amazing Grace—366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications) 1997.

iv James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms—An Expositional Commentary—Volume 1—Psalms 1-41*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998, p. 111.

v John Phillips, *Exploring the Psalms*, vol. 1, page 180.

vi John Phillips, *Exploring the Psalms*, vol. 1, page 121.