

Study in Psalm 51 - Part 2

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth Stewart

[0 : 00] You Seeing God Clinton will jak release the second prophecy 1 Psalm 51 Psalm 51, verse 1.

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And then when the time of holding was finished, he took Bathsheba to be his wife. We soon saw then that the child would be reckoned all of it to be his, and he thought that that was the end of the night.

But we were reminded solemnly at the end of the chapter that the thing which David had done is pleased the Lord. And I want to be with you at the way in which God brought David to repentance and the way that he felt forgiveness.

Then although he was brought to repentance and although he felt forgiveness, I think you should understand that it took some time for that to happen. When Nathan the prophet came to David with that word of the child had already been born.

And that tells us that David had been unrepentant for at least nine months. And the scriptures give us reason to believe that in spite of all that was waiting for David in his life.

[4 : 30] In spite of the rebellion in his own household when Absalom rose against him. In spite of the evils that Absalom did, in spite of everything, I'm quite sure that those nine months were the worst in David's own life.

It would be wrong for you to think that David was unmoved for nine months by what had happened. It would be very difficult to understand how that could be so. And the scriptures don't tell us that that was so.

In fact, the scriptures tell us that he lost more or less everything that he had inwardly. He tells us here in verse 8, for example, Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Now that tells us that David had lost all his spiritual strength. Even perhaps at times he felt that he had no physical strength. It was though his very bones, the very fabric of his being, was shattered and destroyed.

He had forgotten what joy and gladness actually meant in his own soul. In verse 12 he prays, Restore to me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit.

[5 : 43] And that again reminds us that David has lost, or that he lost for that time, any sense of joy in what the Lord had done in his life. He also prays for a right spirit to be renewed inside of us.

And that tells us that he was far from conscious of any sense of peace with God. He was far from conscious of any sense that he was religiously on a right footing with God.

He was disturbed. He was disordered. Psalm 32 tells us that before he confessed, My bones waxed old. Now there again is the reference to his bones, to his strength.

Because he says, I roared all day long. Now that was an inward roaring. I'm sure at times it would have manifested itself outwardly. I have no doubt that for those nine months, David would have been a difficult person to live with.

He roared all the day long. Why? Because upon me day and night, he says, your hand lay heavily. God wasn't allowing him to forget what he had done or to think lightly of what he had done.

[6 : 49] In fact, God withdrew his own countenance from David and left him in many respects to himself. And he says that my moisture turned into summer's drought.

It felt as though his life sap was dried up like a summer heat or summer exhaustion. David felt himself coming to nothing, losing sleep, restless by day and restless by night, all because of what he had done.

Now none of that is repentance. To feel bad, to feel spiritually shattered, to feel exhausted, disordered in your mind, none of that is repentance.

Repentance only came when God brought it to him graciously in his soul. And that's the staggering thing that we're reminded of in 2 Samuel when Nathan came. It's God graciously that brings repentance into our lives.

We would never turn towards the God whom we fly against in our sin, whom we rebel against. We would never turn back to him. We would never follow his ways and cleave to him unless God himself drew us to do just that.

[8 : 02] The desire to repent is from God. The desire to repent is from him. It's not from us. It doesn't come from our own hearts. Now, when Nathan came to him, you can tell that David was disordered.

When David heard that tale of the man who took the poor man's lamb rather than take his own, he was filled with the kind of anger that someone has who's out of his own place himself.

It went way over the top. He was going to kill the man for taking the other man's lamb, and he was going to restore it fourfold. It's interesting that when a person who's not at peace with God himself, and when he's very conscious of sin crying out against himself, sometimes he can go very heavy on sins that he sees in other people, as though somehow it is minimizing his own.

And David was like that. Who, he says, is the man? That man shall be put to death for what he's done. Until Nathan takes his own life in his hands, and in obedience to God, he says to him personally, You are the man.

My parable is not about someone else. It is about you. You are the man, and this is what you have done. Now, it wasn't anything particularly profound that Nathan said, but God chose that moment for the arrow to come home to David fully, in such a way that this psalm was wrung out of his soul and out of his being.

[9 : 31] He was brought to that place where he really and properly confessed his sins. And that's what we have in the opening cry of the psalm, Have mercy upon me, O God.

It's a cry for forgiveness and a cry for mercy. Have you ever put up that cry meaningfully and intelligently to God? Have you really prayed for God to be merciful to yourself, and for God to forgive your sins?

Maybe you did once. Maybe you cried in desperation. Maybe you had some kind of sentence of death written over you, with some illness or some catastrophe, and you prayed for mercy because you thought death was near.

But it wasn't long-lasting. It wasn't intelligent. It was just a cry, a cry of desperation. But that's not the kind of cry that you find David crying here.

There's a sense in which it's desperate. There's a sense in which it is, because he knows that he has grievously wronged the Lord, and he has grievously wronged men too. He's conscious of that, and he knows it.

[10 : 43] But yet, although it's a desperate cry, it's an intelligent cry. And it's a cry of understanding. He knows what he wants. When he prays for mercy, he knows what he means.

He knows the basis on which he asks for it. He knows the kind of God from whom he asks it. In all these ways, it is a meaningful and an intelligent prayer.

Have mercy upon me, O God. And it's meaningful and intelligent because of what he knows about God, and because of what he knows about himself.

He can pray for forgiveness, because he's come to know certain things about God, and he's come to know certain things about himself.

And unless you know these things too, unless you know a certain thing about God, and unless you know a certain thing about yourself, you can never meaningfully repent. You can never really change your mind, or turn your heart towards God, which is what repentance is.

[11 : 46] You can't do it. And you'll notice in the psalm here, what David does know about God, and what he does know about himself. First of all, he knows this.

He knows that God is a God of loving kindness, and a God of tender mercy. Now look at that again in verse 1. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your loving kindness.

Have mercy on me, according to the multitude of your tender mercies. Blot out my transgressions. Now these words are beautiful scriptural words.

Loving kindness and tender mercies. They bring before us God in his covenant relationship with men. That's what they bring before us.

They bring before us the God who forgives sin. Entering into covenant with men in the Lord Jesus Christ, promising on his own integrity, giving an oath according as he lives himself to forgive sins on the basis of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[12:59] And David knows that God is like that. David doesn't presume on it in a flippant kind of way, but he's come to a deep, meaningful, and spiritual understanding that God is a God of covenant love, of loving kindness, who actually forgives sins and who shows mercy.

And that's why David sings in another psalm, but yet he says, with thee forgivenesses that feared thou mayest be. And that in itself is a beautiful psalm.

It goes like this. David says, if you were to mark iniquity, strictly to mark it, and strictly to judge it, in me as it is, or in anyone as it is, then who, O Lord, could stand?

But yet, with thee there is forgiveness that thou mayest be feared, or literally, that you may be worshipped. That's what he's saying. In other words, what David says is this, that he could never repent unless he knew that.

Unless he saw the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, he could never repent. And neither can you. Yes, you can regret, and David could have regretted, but he could never really repent.

[14:17] He could never with his heart turn meaningfully and lovingly towards God unless he knew that God, through Christ, freely loved him too. unless he knew that God was willing to eat with him and to have fellowship with him, then he could never meaningfully repent.

In other words, repentance hangs on the love of God. And there can never be repentance without a knowledge of the love of God, and without the knowledge that God is willing to accept you.

And if you cannot at all repent, you must have that in your mind. And it's remarkable how the devil himself, of all people, will try to take that out of your mind. He'll present before you the holiness, the inflexible right.

He could forgive a sin like you've committed. That you're bringing him down, that you're cheapening his majesty by asking him to forgive the fearful offense that you have committed.

But that is devilish. That's a satanic temptation. What the Lord would have you lay hold of it, and lay hold of it, is that he forgives sins.

[15:29] Even the sins of the chief of sinners. What have you done? What have you done of which God could say about you, you're the man, or you're the woman, you did this.

And scarcely anyone else knows it, but I know it. It was in my sight you did it. You are the man. But yet you must get a hold of this, that God will freely forgive your sins in Jesus Christ.

And David says that. He doesn't just put up a shriek, as it were, hoping that some power somewhere could hear him. He doesn't appeal to who knows who, in the hope that there is a supreme being who might just have mercy for some reason.

But he lays hold of a covenant God according to the loving kindness of which I have heard. According to that, forgive me my sins and have mercy upon me.

So he knows that about God and I hope you know it too. But he also knows something about himself. And if he didn't know this, he wouldn't ask for mercy at all.

[16:36] What he knows is that now he's confessing his sins and now he's acknowledging them. Look at what he says in verses 2 and 3 and notice especially the word for.

Verse 2, Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin for I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.

In other words, that's a basis for mercy too. Not just that God is merciful, that is good in itself and necessary but also this, that I am truly repentant.

I am truly confessing my sins. Now I want to stop with you and to consider what confessing your sins actually means.

It's very, very important. It's right at the heart of repentance. It's involved in coming to the Lord and in laying hold upon Jesus Christ. What is confessing?

[17:37] Well, I suppose you know that to confess something means really to come out into the open with something or to declare something, to show it, to acknowledge it as he says here.

I acknowledge my sins, I confess them. The opposite of it very often in the Bible is interesting. The opposite of confessing is covering or hiding.

and it's important that you don't misunderstand what that actually means. If I was to ask you, what does it mean to hide your sin? I suppose you would immediately think of trying to hide it from people so that people won't find out about it.

That's what people usually think of in terms of covering sin or hiding sin, keeping it quiet so that people won't hear it. But that's not really what covering sin means in the Bible at all.

To hide your sin or to cover it means this, that you somehow justify it or excuse it. That's what it means, that you justify or excuse it.

[18 : 47] In other words, to cover it means to dress it up, to put a covering on it, to make it appear presentable and to make it appear plausible. And that belongs to you and it belongs to me in our nature to do exactly that.

It's in our nature to dress up our sins, to make them presentable so that we don't have to look them in the face. And it's part of grace's work just to make us look at them in the face.

Now when I say it belongs to sin at its very heart, it's always good to go to the Garden of Eden and to find it working there. You remember before Adam and Eve sinned, they were naked.

They had no need for clothing. They had no need for shame. They were content to know themselves as they were and they were content for God to see them as they were. Their lives were an open book.

But the moment they sinned, and it's not that long since we thought of this, they sewed fig leaves together in order to hide themselves from the presence of God, in order to make themselves presentable, to make themselves acceptable.

[19 : 55] And immediately the Lord began to search them out, out came the excuses. When God confronted Adam, he says, the woman whom you gave me, she gave me of the fruit and I ate.

And when God confronted the woman, she said, the serpent beguiled me and I ate. Now, like every covering for sin, that's partly true.

It's partly true, but only partly. After all, what's wrong with all these statements? Well, first of all, there's this. They're an abdication of responsibility.

You could say to Eve, yes, Eve, that is right, the serpent beguiled you, but God gave you reason, God gave you spiritual wisdom, God endowed you with free will, to stand, as it were, yourself before God, to choose the good and to resist the evil.

And no amount of temptation on the devil's part can excuse you of your guilt in giving in to that temptation. And it belongs to sin always to abdicate responsibility and to always put the blame on somebody else.

[21 : 16] And tonight, as long as you are claiming your background as a justification of what you are, or your environment, your poverty, your marital circumstances, or any circumstances, full stop, as long as you're claiming any of these things as an excuse for godlessness and for spiritual and religious rebellion, then you are just not repenting and you can never repent because you're not confronting things.

You're not confronting what you are. you're excusing what you are all the time. It's not long too since I mentioned that that's one of the great diseases of our society in the western world, certainly in the United Kingdom.

Sin has disappeared. Four letter words are more acceptable than the three letter word. You hardly hear a mention of sin anymore.

Disorders, yes. sin, no. No. No, suddenly all forms of crime, whether it's murder, rape, robbery, is down to circumstances.

It's a matter of genetics. It's a matter of dispositions. It's a matter of environment. And suddenly the judiciary can't punish anymore. No one can't be punished because the person can turn around and say, I am what I am.

[22 : 43] I'm a collection of genes. I never had a say in determining myself. I am the product of my background, the product of my birth, the product of all these influences.

How can I be punished for being what I am? And what is the evolutionist answer to that? Well, you'll be waiting a long time.

There is no answer to that. There is no answer to that. unless God has endowed you with a spirit that is immortal, a moral spirit that chooses good or evil, there just is no answer to that.

None at all. You are indeed what you are in that way. And that's why you abdicate responsibility. You know, I don't know what keeps you tonight from God.

But I do know that you might have many reasons for it. It's my nature, you say. Or, I can't help it, you say. Or, it's a disease, you say.

[23 : 46] As long as you say all that, you'll never repent. Repentance always goes a lot deeper than that. These things are coverings.

These things are fig leaves. And they don't wash when it comes to standing before God. So Adam and Eve both do that. They put the blame on somebody else.

Adam unto Eve, Eve unto the serpent. And then again, all these coverings end up blaming God. The woman whom you gave me.

She tempted me. The serpent that you created and allowed to come in beguiled me and I did eat. Now it's strange how when you blame your circumstances for what you are or when you blame your environment, who is it that you're really blaming?

Who is it that you're really blaming? Well, it's just a strange kind of way of blaming God, isn't it? When the Israelites came to Moses in the wilderness and they said, why didn't you leave us in Egypt?

[24 : 54] Why did you bring us out into the desert? Was it to kill us, to kill our wives, to kill our children, to kill our cattle? Is there nothing here but hunger and thirst day after night? And Moses said to them quite simply, you're murmuring, he says, it's not against me, it's against the Lord who brought you here.

You should recognize that the trial of a wilderness is better than the bondage of Egypt. But your complaints are not against me, they are against the Lord. And that reminds me of an interesting text in James, chapter 1 and verse 13.

Let no man say when he is tempted that I am tempted by God. Because he said God doesn't tempt any man with evil. But a man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own lust and enticed.

And lust when it is conceived brings forth sin. And sin when it's finished with you brings forth death. You say, well how could any man say that God is tempting me to sin?

Well the minute you blame your environment, your hereditary circumstances or whatever, that's what you're doing. You're putting the blame on providence, you're putting the blame on God, except you're keeping it one step back so that it doesn't look so bad.

[26 : 09] But that is exactly what it is. Now all that is coverings, coverings. It's very strange how difficult we find it to look at ourselves. It's strange how difficult we find it to acknowledge what we are with our weaknesses, our sins, our frailties.

We're always prone to dress it up and to make it look better in ourselves. Now the staggering thing is according to Psalm 32 and according to Psalm 51, for nine months David did exactly that, he dressed himself up or he tried to dress himself up before God.

You'll notice how he prays in verse 6, behold he says, you desire truth in the inward parts. It's as though he was trying inside somehow to deceive God with a lie.

In Psalm 32 also he says, blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven and in whose spirit there is no guile. Guile, cunning.

What cunning is he talking about? He's talking about the kind of cunning that he was using when he was dressing himself up. That's the guile. But he says, blessed is the man who's got rid of that and who's freely pardoned having confessed to the Lord.

[27 : 26] David did it. Now you would have thought, well, how could David possibly try and dress himself up? Well, your heart is as deceitful as mine and mine as yours.

There's no end to the way in which you can justify yourself in a course of action. No end to the ways. You can imagine David sitting there saying, it's her fault.

You can imagine that. What on earth was she doing there then in the midst of a warm afternoon outside? It's against decency, it's against all that a woman should do.

So it was. But that's no excuse for David. But yet if he wanted as an excuse, well, there it is, as an excuse. I'm sure too that David thought that getting rid of Uriah, an old soldier, who every day risked his life was better in the long run than discredited the Lord's cause right throughout the nation.

To bring himself down, to bring the cause of God down, the sweet psalmist of Israel brought to ruin by the revelation of what he had done. Sometimes you can use God's cause as the reason, when it's really your own shame.

[28 : 42] I mentioned that last week. God's cause can withstand your failings and mine. God's cause will withstand all that, but can we withstand that? That's the question. Could David withstand it?

And of course, if Uriah was a Christian man, a God-fearing man, I'm sure, I'm not saying that David thought all these things, I'm not saying that, I'm only saying the way in which he could have reasoned.

Certainly he was trying to cover himself. If he was a good man, I'm sure he would have thought well. If he dies in battle, he's lived to do that. He's been a soldier all his life, and he will enter into the presence of God.

I'm only hastening that. He dies in his lawful course of action, and he goes into the presence of his God. There are many ways in which a person can reason himself into something, and reason away his responsibility.

Now, he could also have perhaps said to himself, well, God anointed me king over Israel, and perhaps in the circumstances this is lawful.

[29 : 50] Remember when the devil came to Christ in the wilderness, the first thing he said to him was this, if you are the son of God. Now, I don't think at that moment he was putting doubt in him.

I don't think that's what the if means. I think it's more if in the sense of since. what the devil is saying to him is this, very well, you've heard the voice in Jordan, you've heard a voice from heaven, from wherever it came, saying that you're the beloved son of God.

Very well then, if you are, use your power and use your authority to turn these stones into bread.

Why should you, the son of God, perish with hunger in the wilderness?

Can the devil not come to you sometimes and say that there is some reason why you can take liberties and why you can take advantages that would keep someone else back? The devil could say that too.

All these things are coverings. What are your coverings tonight? What are they? You've got them. What are they? There's a more subtle covering too.

[30 : 52] It's a covering of religion. Now I wonder if that's the covering that David's referring to here in this psalm, in verses 16 and 17.

Now look carefully at what David's saying here in verses 16 and 17. For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it thee, thou delightest not in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. David is saying here, if I could give some kind of outward sacrifice.

Well he says, you don't desire that. That's not what you want. What you want is a noon word sacrifice of a broken heart, a genuinely sorrowful heart and a contrite spirit, a heart that wishes to be back in tune with God and serving him.

Do you think, well I'll put the question to you, I can't answer it dogmatically, but you think of it, do you think that David was less religious or more religious during the nine months before his confession?

[32 : 05] I would venture to suggest that externally he was more religious. It's quite possible for a person to try and give more and more outward performances, to try and hide the way that he feels inwardly, to try and deal with the way that he feels inwardly.

You can use your religion like that as something that tries to mend these things and it can never mend them. Didn't Isaiah say it in chapter one he says, your fasts he says, are a stench in my nostrils.

Your religious exercises, I'm tired of them, God said. I'm tired of them. I'm tired of your feasts, of your ceremonies. Why? Because your hands are filled with blood.

In other words, those people were using religious exercises to make that peace with God rather than to deal with the heart. And it's your heart that God's concerned with tonight.

I'm not saying he's unconcerned with whether you religiously conform externally. He is concerned with it, but he's concerned primarily with your heart. That's what true religion is about.

[33 : 15] God's talking tonight to your heart and to mine. It's God that's speaking to you about your need tonight and your sins and your need for repentance. It's your heart that he wants broken and contrite.

Not a burnt offering, not a sacrifice, but the sacrifice of God which is a broken and a contrite heart. And here's David trying to please and to appease, and inside he's broken and churned up because

nothing's right.

That's what covering sin is. So what's confession? It's coming face to face with what I am and what I've done. Not giving it another name, but just acknowledging it as a sin and as my sin.

And you'll notice too, not just my sin, but a sin that comes from within me. A sin that comes from an abyss within me. Not something that floated towards me, that Satan put in me and then vanished out of me, but something that came out of the well of corruption, that I realize is even more deeper, more deep and more awful than I thought it was.

You'll notice David said, behold, he says, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. Now, is David blaming his mother for what he is?

[34 : 37] No. Is he saying that he was somehow, that his mother was not behaving somehow correctly when he was conceived? No. In fact, he's not making a statement about his mother here at all.

He's just simply making a statement about himself. And the statement that he's making is just this, this is me, this is what I am, what I have been.

I was never in existence for a moment, even in the womb, without this being part of my nature, part of what I am. Some people out there will tell you that you're basically good.

The word of God doesn't tell you that. And a sinner can't really come to Christ unless he recognizes that he's basically bad, and that he needs the grace of God and the salvation of Jesus Christ.

And, you know, when a person is being led to God, maybe you're being led tonight, maybe your sins are beginning to trouble you. Well, if you are, then one mark of it will be this, that it's not just isolated sins.

[35 : 44] Yes, they will be troubling you, and God will be using them, but God will be using them in this way. He'll be using them to point up that the trouble is more fundamental than that, that the trouble is deeper than that.

It's not just some things you do wrong. No, it goes deeper. It's what you are, what you are as a sinner. And out of that all these individual sin arises.

So that you begin to say yourself, what am I? What are my potentialities and my possibilities? And I tell you, that's not a lessening experience in your Christian life either.

It'll only grow. I'm sure the most ripe Christian here tonight is the one who's most horrified at his own heart. I'm quite sure of that, quite sure.

But the most ripe Christian is the one who's most aware of the potentialities and the possibilities and the fearful truths that lie within. if you can be deceived about that, well, there's a big question mark as to whether it's the Holy Spirit who's teaching.

[36 : 52] The Holy Spirit teaches David that his very shape was in iniquity and he was conceived even in sin. And that's a mark of real repentance.

A couple of things very briefly about this confession. A couple of things and I try to be as brief as I can. first of all, you'll notice that it's God word.

It's a God word confession. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned. Now I wonder if you thought what I've thought about that particular verse. How could he say that?

Did he not sin against Uriah? Did he not sin against Bathsheba? Did he not sin against his own wives, his own household and so on? Well, yes he did. But in the highest sense of course, sin is against God.

We wrong others, but sin in the highest sense is against God. And again, when God is dealing with you, it's your relationship to him that comes to the fore.

[37 : 54] It's that relationship that worries you and that leaves you anxious at heart. And when God's really pressing the issue home, it's as though there was no one else in the universe except yourself and God.

He has to do with you and you have to do with him. It's in thy sight, he says, that I have done this ill. Yes, for nine months he was worried about who saw him.

For nine months he was worried about the servants who knew. He was worried about Joab, he knew, who knew. He was worried about the whispering that seemed to go everywhere he went. He was worried about the extent to which this spread and the consequences, the repercussions. But now suddenly it's not what men think. But it's what God thinks. And that's what's true in your heart tonight if there's real repentance coming into it.

It's not a matter of what people say when you do such and such. It's a matter of God knowing it. In thy sight, he says, I have done this ill.

[38 : 58] God saw me. You know, you can measure the sincerity of your Christian life by who you care about looking over your shoulder. If what you care about or the person you care about looking over your shoulder is somebody else, watch for hypocrisy.

But if you genuinely care about God being the one who looks over your shoulder, that is a better thing. In thy sight, I've done it. Yes, men saw me, but so be it.

You saw me, and I did it before you. And not only did I do it before you, but I did it before your holiness, I did it in the presence of your patience, and I did it before your kindness too.

I think I may have mentioned a couple of weeks ago, it's one thing for a poor boy to steal, it's another for somebody who's got more or less everything to steal. That's what he did, and that's what Nathan's parable showed up, he did that.

He had everything, and God said it to him, I would even have given you more. Why did you do this? You know, again, when repentance is working up in your heart, you see all you do as being against the goodness of God.

[40 : 11] You know, before true repentance comes in, you think of God as an austere man, who's giving you a hard time in your providence, and so on, there's complaints. But when God is truly working, you begin to recognize that your sin is against his goodness.

And who can say in here tonight that he doesn't know the goodness of God? Very often we complain, but sometimes it takes a visit to a hospital to stop complaining, or the sight of people on a television screen crying and screaming without bread and without water, dying of diarrhea in their millions every day because they don't have a clean glass of water to drink.

We can complain, but when repentance is working, all that you can see really is the goodness of God and his justice in rebuking and condemning your sin.

And doesn't that come into it too? In verse 4, and I'll finish with this, against thee only have I sinned and done evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Now what does that mean? Well, what David is saying is this, I understand that my sin is against thee and it's grievous.

[41 : 39] In the light of your holiness and my sin it is grievous. But he says, so much is that so, that when you judge me, you are right.

And when you speak a sentence of condemnation or chastisement, you're justified. And I justify you in speaking that, and I justify you in judging it.

You know, again, when a person is in rebellion against God, he never justifies God's actions.

Everything is to be reproached upon God. We see that in letters, pages in the newspapers, we see it in television, we've seen it recently in letters, pages in the newspaper.

God is blamed for everything. Poor man, the unfortunate victim of a despotic God. But when the spirit of God begins to work really into your heart, it ceases to be like that.

And what it becomes is sinful man, in the light of a good, merciful, gracious, and holy God. You, he says, are justified when you speak, and you are clear when you judge.

[42 : 48] All these expressions are signs that David is ripping off the flimsy coverings that he's been wearing for nine months, and he's coming before God and saying, this is what I am, but according to your mercy in Christ, have mercy upon me.

And isn't that the wonderful thing? The Bible's all about coverings. When you get rid of the flimsy covering, God puts one on you. Adam and Eve got rid of the fig leaves, and God put the animal skin on them.

The fruit of the sacrifice, he clothed them with it. That's what God will do too. You just come as you are, as you are, with a heart to turn from it.

You come like that, as you are, with a heart to turn from it, and cast yourself on the mercy, on the goodness, and the power of God. That's a covenant.

The righteousness of Jesus Christ is a garment that really surrounds you and looks beautiful in the eyes of God. And that's what David got instead of his own.

[43 : 56] You come to Jesus Christ tonight and you'll have the same. Repent and believe the gospel and you shall be in Christ. Amen.