

Study in Psalm 51 - Part 4

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[0 : 00] Psalm 51 and verse 12.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. And I want to look with you for the last time tonight at Psalm 51 to bring to a conclusion our study of it.

We've seen, I hope, the sin that lay behind the writing of this psalm. David's sin with Bathsheba and also involving Uriah, her husband.

And we saw how the sin came about, how it began with spiritual sloth, really, and carelessness in David's life. But it grew finally into adultery and murder.

And we also saw David's attempts to cover his own sin and to cover it in two senses. First of all, to hide it from the world.

[1 : 31] And we saw the desperate attempts which he made to hide what he had done from the eyes of other people. And we also saw how he tried in some way even to hide it from himself and to hide it from God.

He tried to excuse himself or tried in some way to minimize the sin that he had committed. And he was refusing to come face to face with what he had done himself and what he was responsible for.

And we also saw how God, through the word of the prophet Nathan, brought him to repentance. It brought David to cry for mercy.

And we saw last time what that cry for mercy was. It was a cry for cleansing. A cleansing from the guilt of sin and a cleansing from its power.

He wanted both these. And we saw how that is involved in any real spiritual repentance. A person who's repenting wishes to be free of the guilt of his sin, but he also wishes the power of sin to be made less in his life.

[2 : 49] And we also, I hope, saw the basis on which the psalmist cried for mercy. It was according to thy loving kindness and according to thy tender mercy.

He had a view of God as a forgiving God. A God who was ready and gracious to forgive sinners. And he also based his cry for mercy on this, on the fact that he was now really repentant.

I acknowledge now my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. So he has come face to face with what he has done.

And he just casts himself on the free grace of God, praying God to deliver him from guilt and to deliver him from the power of sin.

Now when he's praying this prayer, of course he's anticipating God's forgiveness. And he's praying like this because he's laying hold of God's forgiveness.

[3 : 53] And as he prays, I think he sees three things returning into his life that he had lost. Three things returning that he had lost.

Now before we look at these things, I just want to point out this. David knew, even when he wrote this psalm, that the Lord was going to chastise him.

That was very plain because Nathan the prophet had told him so. And the scriptures remind us that the Lord chastises those whom he loves.

Sometimes you wonder why God's people maybe go through much more in this life than others. Now there are different reasons for that.

I wouldn't want to say that it is all to do with their sin. I wouldn't want to say that. But what I want us to remember is this, that God's people's sufferings are in this life. And God's dealings with their sins are in this life.

[4 : 58] That's where he chastises them for their sins. You must remember that the sins of unbelievers are to be dealt with, especially in the world to come. We must always remember that.

But the scriptures remind us that the Lord chastises those whom he loves. Even as you, if you really love your own family, well, you will chastise them. And there are times when you have to hurt them for their betterment and for their improvement.

You know that. It's painful to you, but it must be done. Well, the Lord too chastises those whom he loves. And Nathan told David that because of the serious nature of his own sin and because of the public nature of it too, especially because of the public nature of it, that there would be a chastisement.

And first of all, Nathan said this to him, and you can read it perhaps later for yourselves in 2 Samuel 12 and verse 10. This was the first part of it. The sword shall never depart from thine house.

Now that was a message to David that from this point onwards in his life, bloodshed was going to be connected in a particular way with his own household.

[6 : 13] And then secondly, even worse than that is this, that the root of it was going to come from his own family. Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house.

And then again, there was this. God told him that he would allow this to come to pass too, that someone, an acquaintance or a neighbor of his, would lie with his own wives in the sight of the sun.

Even as he had lain in secret with Bathsheba, that someone else would lie openly with his own wives in the sight of the sun. I will take thy wives before thine eyes and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

And then last of all, Nathan told him that the child also that is born unto you shall surely die. And I think I referred to this before, but you'll notice especially the reason for that.

Because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. The child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

[7 : 34] And I think that must have been something that stayed with David for the rest of his life. Not just what he had done himself. And not even what he had brought upon Uriah the Hittite, or what he had brought upon Bathsheba, but what he had brought upon the cause of the Lord.

And I'm quite sure all the Lord's people, whenever they fall in this kind or a similar kind of way, will feel this the greatest of all, what they have done for the cause of the Lord.

And I think sometimes that whenever temptation presents itself before you, it's one thing that you could well do with thinking of. The consequences for Christ's cause.

Will it give his enemies a reason to blaspheme his name, to mock and to despise religion because of what you had done? Many a day, I'm sure, David regretted it in that respect.

Now, of course, all of this happened. I think it's right for us to say that from this point onwards, the rest of David's life reads like a tragedy. It just seems to bring one disaster after another into his life.

[8 : 44] First of all, of course, the child dies. And David prays and fasts that the child might live. But of course, according to the word of God, the child dies.

Shortly afterwards, one of his sons, called Amnon, violates his own half-sister, one of David's daughters, by another wife.

Very shortly afterwards, another son, Absalom, murders that son, a half-brother of his own, for the crime that he had committed on his own full sister.

And all the time, David is failing to take matters properly into his hands. Shortly after that, Absalom leads a major rebellion by courting the northern tribes who were always a little uneasy under David because most of them were more united to Saul's house.

Absalom courted them and led them in a major rebellion against David. And although this was hidden from David, it was Absalom himself who lay with David's wives in the sight of the sun.

[9 : 58] Now that was a fearful thing and I suppose it was the grace of God that kept the identity of who was to do it from David. There are many things hidden from us, even when some things are revealed.

But it was Absalom himself who did that. David had to cross the brook and shame being more or less exiled out of Jerusalem. And some of his closest friends betrayed him.

And of course, Absalom himself died in the midst of the rebellion. And in spite of everything Absalom had done, you know, David still had a father's heart for him.

Although he didn't know many of the things he had done, he still had a father's heart for him. When he heard that he had died, O Absalom, Absalom, my son, my son, would to God, he said, that I had died for you.

What did he mean when he said that? Was it quite simply, I would rather have died instead of you? Or was it, yes, it would have been better for me after I had sinned if I had taken the full punishment as it were upon myself?

[11 : 05] Because he felt at that moment, what was it for my life to be spared and to see yours ending this way? And I suppose every father with even a wayward son can't forget what that son once was and what it was to raise that son and to laugh with that son and to teach that son.

But would to God, he said, that I had died for thee. One blow after another. And all of these things taught David that it was an evil and bitter thing to sin against God.

Now, I often say this and I often feel it in preaching the gospel. I feel as though I'm walking a tightrope and I'm sure every preacher does. At one level, I would certainly not wish to discourage anyone with respect to the full and free mercy and the forgiveness of God.

But on the other hand, I want to say this too. that it is no light thing to sin against God and to sin against light, to sin against his mercy and to sin against his forgiveness.

And the chastisement of the Lord is never something to play around with as though it was a light thing. Because when God's hand comes in this way, well, we can feel it.

[12 : 25] And this kind of sin brought this kind of chastisement upon David. Now, although that was so, still, David sang this psalm, he wrote these words, and he looked forward, although chastisement would come, he looked forward to three things coming into his life that he had lost.

Three things that would also change his life completely, that would change it on the inside. because you know as well as I that life doesn't really depend so much on what happens to us outwardly as what is true inwardly.

The Bible reminds us of that. It says, the spirit of a man sustains him in infirmity, but who can bear a wounded spirit.

In other words, whatever happens to you from the outside, if your spirit is strong and rejoicing in the Lord, that will sustain you. But when your spirit is out of sorts, what can sustain you?

And we know that very well, and the Bible reminds us of it. And David is seeing certain things coming back into his spiritual life that he had lost because of sin. And I wonder as we go through these tonight, if any of you in here tonight feel that you lack these things, and maybe you know why you lack them, because of something similar perhaps or a sin that has maybe blighted your spiritual life.

[13 : 55] Now the first thing that he sees coming back is this, the joy of salvation. In verse 12, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.

Now, Christian joy is a precious part of our spiritual life. And it's fair to say that people in here who don't know the Lord don't really know what joy means.

The Bible speaks of joy unspeakable and full of glory. Now the unspeakableness of this joy doesn't lie in the fact that it seizes your feelings so much.

Truly it can, but this joy is unspeakable because it is different. It is deep. It's abiding. And it's a joy that's in God and that's based on eternal things and on an unchangeable relationship with God.

When this joy is vibrant and active in our souls, it's a joy really that passes understanding that's, as the man said, it's better felt than told. It's difficult to explain, difficult to convey.

[15 : 01] It is only experienced by the man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered. That's what the psalmist says. Blessed, happy, content in our right relationship is that man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered.

It's a wonderful thing. And this is true about it, that only you can lose it. Only you can lose your Christian joy. You could blame a lot of things for taking it away, but in fact only you can lose it.

Trials can't take it away, persecutions can't take it away, your friends betraying you can't take it away, your enemies can't take it away, Satan can't take it away.

Absolutely nothing can take away your joy except yourself. Yourself. And you lose it through sin, and especially sin that is unconfessed in your life.

As sure as anything, that robs your joy. And how does it rob your joy? Well, it robs it in this way. Your joy comes from the Holy Spirit of God, keeping that joy in your heart.

[16 : 17] But the Bible reminds us that it's possible to grieve the Holy Spirit. And that reminds us, by the way, that the Holy Spirit is a person. He's a distinct person in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit.

Some people, of course, call the Spirit a power. Jehovah's Witnesses would say that the Spirit was a power. Well, it's hard to grieve a power. You grieve a person. And when we grieve the Spirit, what that means is this, that the Holy Spirit withdraws or removes his influence in our heart.

And it causes him to hide to hide his face. To hide his face. And that means that his face ceases to shine upon us.

We speak of God's face shining on us. That's best understood by comparing God's face to the sun. When the sun shines on the earth, it gives us two things, essentially.

It gives us light and heat. Indispensable for life. Light and heat. Now, when the Spirit of God is shining on you, that's exactly what it gives you too.

[17 : 31] It gives you light. It helps you to see your relationship with God. It helps you to see the truth and to rejoice in the truth. And it gives you warmth in your heart.

You feel your relationship. You're able to enjoy your relationship with God. It's a meaningful, living, and vibrant thing. But when you grieve the Spirit, He turns away His face.

It's a bit like the sun going down. It takes away light and it takes away warmth. First of all, light. When God's Spirit hides Himself, it breeds confusion.

Now, I'm sure that many of the Lord's people tonight will know this in their lives, what it means to offend God or to grieve the Spirit and to find confusion coming into their minds.

Sometimes even about the most basic things in the Scripture, you're almost left in the dark. And that's because we have offended the Spirit of God.

[18 : 37] Light withdrawn, warmth withdrawn as well. we lose the comfort, the comfort of who we are, even as sons and daughters of God.

There's a precious text, of course, in Romans that tells us that the Holy Spirit hides His face. We lose sometimes the light of that and we certainly lose the warmth of it.

We're not able to draw the full joy and the full benefit even out of things we understand. We begin to walk in darkness and our souls become dark and they become dry and they become dreary.

We lose our assurance. And that's what David means here when he says in verse 8, now, listen to this, make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which you have broken may rejoice.

He feels that his bones have been broken. You remember how he described it in Psalm 32? Psalm 32 is written later than this and he's looking back and he says that his life became like moisture, like sap dried up, shriveled up and that he was roaring all the day long because of his bones.

[20 : 00] That speaks of a man who feels himself spiritually shriveled up and dried, that he's lost his vibrancy, he's lost his spiritual energy, he's lost his strength and he's praying to God, help me once again to hear joy and to hear gladness and restore to me the joy of thy salvation.

Now, that's a beautiful prayer because it reminds us that when we hear the word of God, we should hear it joyfully, we should hear it gladly, it should bring assurance into our hearts, it should bring love into our hearts and strength into our hearts, that's the way it should be.

He doesn't just say make me to feel joy and gladness but make me to hear joy and gladness as though even listening to the word wasn't bringing him what it should have brought him because he just wasn't where he should be.

And he doesn't just say restore to me the joy of my salvation but restore to me the joy of thy salvation as much as to say give me back my rejoicing in all that you are and in all that you have done because I am not able to rejoice in it and I haven't for months as I ought to have done.

Now, I want to ask you that. I suppose if you're unconverted here tonight, you probably never feel this sense of joy or gladness in hearing the Bible.

[21 : 30] I think it's one sense of a person who's being drawn to the Lord that he does begin to feel these things. He begins to feel a delight and a power and a relevance and it's coming home to you and it's maybe beginning to change your life.

But many of the Lord's people sometimes feel that or are sometimes aware that they've fallen into sin and the word of God is not to them what it ought to be to them.

It's not what it ought to be. I want to read you just a little passage again out of the confession. I read another passage a couple of weeks ago but this again is talking about assurance.

Now assurance means knowing we're in a right relationship with God, knowing that we're loved by God. It says this, now listen carefully, confession always sounds forbidding and you think the language is impossible but listen carefully to what it says.

True believers may have the assurance of their salvation shaken in different ways. Especially it says by some special sin which grieves the spirit.

[22 : 40] Yet they are never utterly destitute of that seed of God, the life of faith, the love of Christ and the brethren and that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty.

out of which by the operation of the spirit this assurance may in time be revived and by which in the meantime they are supported from utter despair.

Now these words are beautiful and David was kept from that despair by the spirit of God. despair means just that you finish as it were with God and that you go off in your own way or in some other strength you just leave off this relationship.

He's kept from that and in due time it's revived. Now maybe you need this joy tonight and I'll tell you you do need it because that brings us on to our second point here.

If you lose your joy you're losing your Christian effectiveness. Now that's very very important and it's the second thing that David's looking forward to getting back.

[23 : 56] Not just the joy of God's salvation but his own effectiveness as a Christian man. Look at how verse 12 flows into verse 13. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit then will I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

It takes joy to meaningfully share the Christian faith. It takes joy and an assurance of who and what we are to really and powerfully bring the word of God in an effective way to other people.

We can only really be a blessing if we have that joy ourselves. Now you think about it. Think about it in any other walk of life. Let's say someone's coming up to you and he's going to commend something.

Suppose he was a salesman. I know this is a worldly thing but the analogy holds good. If he's a salesman and he's talking to you about this product and his face is really down about it and he's telling you about it but he has absolutely no enthusiasm about the thing that he's telling you about.

What effect does that have upon you? You obviously feel that he's got little confidence in this product himself. Now the same is true with respect to a Christian witness.

[25 : 21] How can people really, really be impressed by what we say and commend concerning God if we ourselves seem to have lost this sense of joy, expectation, vibrancy, all these things?

It just won't be. It can't be. Joy very often not makes us, it doesn't just make us poor witnesses but it makes us no witnesses at all.

Sometimes it shuts our mouth completely and you'll notice that David speaks here a couple of times of his lips being shut. Lord open my lips he's saying. Deliver me from blood guiltiness and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

It's as though as well as his spiritual life shriveling up his mouth is shriveled up and he can't speak on the Lord's behalf. Now maybe you're like that and it's your condition that's stopping you and you say well you might make a lot of excuses for it but maybe really when you look at yourself maybe it's what you are yourself that's causing it.

You're not sharing your faith not because of the opposition that this man can bring you not because of how smart this person is but because of how dry you are yourself. I wonder if that's the real reason.

[26 : 38] It's quite tempting to say that I'm afraid of losing an argument. Don't worry about losing an argument. Don't worry about that. Many is a time I've lost one and many is a time many of the Lord's people lost.

That's not what witnessing is about. It's not about winning arguments. It's about commending a savior. And when God begins to argue with that person he'll lose and God will turn that soul to himself.

We sometimes have to carry the shame of losing arguments but maybe the real reason is that I'm too dry and that I'm out of my place. There's many examples in the Bible. I'll take two and I suppose I've referred to them both in the past.

So they should be somewhere there in your memories. Jonah. God told him to go east and he went west. And when he went out of God's way he wasn't able to share his faith with the people on the ship at all.

He went on his own into a small corner in the belly of the ship. And from the belly of the ship he had to go to the belly of the whale before he came to his right place.

[27 : 41] But he couldn't speak, he couldn't testify, he couldn't witness because he was out of the way. And the same is true with respect to Peter. Peter of course had a sense of uselessness after his own fall.

He was walking for long enough in presumption. He thought he could stand but he couldn't. When the heat came he fell and he crumbled and he denied his Lord.

And after that Peter felt that he could do nothing ever again for Christ. He wasn't worthy to be called an apostle. And I think that lies underneath Peter's statement I'm going fishing.

As much as to say well you may meet with the Lord here but I'm not sure really if I'm worthy of meeting with him again. I'm going fishing. But of course the Lord had said this to him.

He told him Peter, Simon he said that Satan has desired you to sift you as wheat but I have prayed for you that your faith wouldn't fail.

[28 : 50] Again our confession kept from despair. Kept from despair. I have prayed for you that your faith wouldn't fail. And he says when you've converted strengthen your brethren.

Now watch that word converted. It doesn't mean what we usually mean by it. Conversion literally means to turn round. That's what the word convert means. It means to turn round. Christ doesn't say to Peter that you're not converted yet.

What he means is this when I've brought you back to where you should be strengthen your brethren. And that's the one thing Peter felt he could never do again strengthen his brethren.

But Christ met him in a real way and Peter began again to strengthen his brethren. And that's what David wants here. He's looking forward again to being of some use in the service of God.

What use do you think this man was? I don't know how many psalms he had written. I don't know how many people looked up to him as a spiritual leader. Of how much use was he during those nine months?

[29 : 56] Walking round roaring shriveled up dried spiritually knowing that everybody knew what he knew trying to cover it for a time trying to excuse himself of how much use was he?

Every time he appeared in the courts of God's house of how much use was he? Was he an effective witness? No. And he knew he wasn't. But he's praying for God's spirit to give him joy and to open his mouth again to others so that I will teach transgressors he says thy ways.

Did it happen? Well you're reading Psalm 51. You're reading Psalm 51. That's a sign that it did happen. God took him back and David taught transgressors God's ways.

He told them the ways of salvation the way of recovering from sin, the way of confessing, the danger of sin, the beauty of repentance, all these things David again taught.

And I think we sung these verses in Psalm 32 and I wonder if we misunderstand them sometimes, if we misinterpret them. Psalm 32 and verse 8.

[31 : 15] Now I've referred a couple of times to this Psalm because it's so related to Psalm 51. Psalm 32 and verse 8. It goes like this, I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go.

Now we often read that as though it's God that's speaking there. But I wonder if it isn't David himself that's speaking there. Right the way through the Psalm it's David that's speaking.

Every time the word I appears, for example in verse 5, I acknowledged my sin to thee. That's David speaking. In verse 7, thou art my hiding place.

That's David speaking. Thou shalt preserve me from trouble. Now what makes us think that it's God certainly that's speaking in verse 8? I will instruct thee and teach thee. I'll give you a little hint here.

In the title of Psalm 32 we have the word masculine. A Psalm of David, masculine. Now the best commentators on this tell us that that word has something to do with teaching.

[32 : 22] If so, then verse 8 takes us to the heart of Psalm 32. I will instruct thee and teach thee the way that thou shalt go. And listen to verse 9. Don't be like the horse or like the mule which have no understanding whose mouth must be held in with a bit and a bridle in case they come near to you.

Now the point that David's making there is this, and he's talking from his own experience. He says, I'm teaching you this from my own life. Don't be stubborn. That's what he associates especially the mule with.

He says, you've got to put a bit and a bridle in its mouth to push it in the direction that you should. Well, don't be like that. Don't make God's chastisements be the thing that have to push you in the right direction.

Don't wait to be thrown out of boats and for whales to come along. Don't recognize the still small voice.

Recognize your duty and what God's requiring of you. Don't be like a horse or mule. And if you've sinned, if you've transgressed, well, don't be drawn to God, as it were, almost against your will, but come willingly, come freely, and come fully to know the peace of God that passeth all understanding.

[33 : 40] Now, this is an important thing because David looks forward to helping God's people. Now, there are things in some people's lives, you know, that make them almost opt out of the church.

And I want to say this, I hope, as sympathetically as possible. I can understand, and I'm sure everyone can understand, maybe how something was in your life that makes you very reluctant, even almost to mix with other people.

But you remember what was true in the life of David, and in the life of Peter, and in the life of Jordan, and the life of others. God still has a place for you in his service and in his kingdom.

There's some reason, it's never an excuse for you to do it, but there is some reason why that happened. These two things are never the same, there's never an excuse, but there's a reason. And maybe God just has somebody that needs to hear what you have to say.

And in the providence of God, he will lead you there, and you will find that there's someone who does need to hear what you've got to say. And I'm sure David met that person, even as Peter would have met that person.

[34 : 53] Rejoice in God. After all, you rejoiced when he forgave you the first time. Isn't it greater to rejoice in him when he forgave you the second time? Yes, I know that it's more shameful to sin after conversion, but it's more glorified of God to forgive them.

More glorious of God to forgive them. It's still for Christ's sake. And after all, if our witness is look at me, then we may as well be quiet anyway.

It's all about the Lord, the Lord and his mercy and his compassion. Even in his chastisement, his mercies overflow. And I'm sure that in the midst of all the trials that came David's way, he was able to sustain it because he had got this back, the joy of God's salvation.

And there's one other thing that he was looking forward to as well, real worship. Real worship. Verse 14, my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

Verse 15, open my lips and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. verse 19, then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness with burnt offering and whole burnt offering.

[36 : 13] Now, there's two things here. We'll look at them both briefly. First of all, praise. He's looking forward to praise. You know, when he was in that condition, he couldn't really praise God properly.

his conscience was there and it was troubling him. You know, it's a good thing for your conscience to be alive. Paul speaks of people whose conscience are seared with a hot iron.

Now, I think that refers to branding. If you put a hot iron on an animal, or if you burnt, let's say, yourself with a hot iron, that skin is seared and it can't feel anymore.

It can't feel. And some people's consciences are like that. they've so abused their consciences and sinned so much against their conscience that they don't feel anymore.

They don't feel a sense of wrong or a sense of guilt or a sense of obligation. David's conscience was still alive. God kept that conscience alive. And that meant that every time he tried to praise God, he felt that he was a hypocrite.

[37 : 19] And he was. Because he just wasn't coming face to face with this terrible evil in his own life. A sense of hypocrisy because of unconfessed sin.

And when he's brought to this place, he's looking forward to singing God's praise again. You know what it's like, friends, to sing God's praise meaningfully. When you're converted, you sang it like that. Give praise and thanks unto the Lord.

I mean, you couldn't sing enough and you couldn't praise God enough and that's the way it should be. We shouldn't lose that praise and thanks to the Lord for all that he is to us.

But David lost it because of his sin. But he also speaks of sacrifice. Now, I want you just to look closely here.

I want to ask a question. In this psalm, is God happy with a burnt offering or isn't he? In one verse it seems that he isn't and in another verse it seems that he is.

[38 : 14] Look at verse 16 which seems to say that he isn't. For thou desirest not sacrifice else I would give it thee thou delightest not in burnt offering.

Now, there you seem to have it as plain as could be that David's saying if you wanted a sacrifice or a burnt offering I would give it. But you don't. But then in verse 19 he says this Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness with burnt offering and whole burnt offering.

Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar. Now, what is David saying? Well, what he's saying is this. God doesn't want a sacrifice from me as some kind of ritual.

He doesn't want that. When God says give a bullock for your sins or to give an animal for your sins God isn't wanting us to sin and to come up with a bullock and offer it and go back and live as we were before.

God doesn't take pleasure in religious ritual. In fact, as Isaiah reminds us, God was weary of the religious performances of the Israelites, weary of them, weary of the festivals, of the religious gatherings, weary.

[39 : 35] The smell of the incense, he said, was even a stench in his nostrils, even though he had commanded it. But the key verse is verse 17. The sacrifices of God, that God really requires are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise.

In other words, David knows, and I hope you know, I hope every converted and unconverted man, woman, and child here knows that that's the real sacrifice that God wants. God wants you sitting here like that tonight.

God wants this in every worship service, this sense of our sin, our need to confess it, and to embrace Christ for his forgiveness. That's what he wants, a broken and a contrite heart.

And David says, if that's like that, then my burnt offerings and my whole burnt offerings will be acceptable. Now, I'll just say this little thing.

The burnt offering in the Old Testament represented giving your whole life to God, in a work of service, in devotion, just giving yourselves to God.

[40 : 46] But what David's saying here is, what's the point of doing that unless we've really come to conceal sins and to confess our sins and to be reconciled through Jesus Christ?

If we don't do that, then all our religious performances just don't amount to anything. They don't amount to anything. God doesn't want religious performances.

He wants your heart. And he wants your heart in these things. That's what makes them pleasant and acceptable to himself. And David knows that.

And I think when he talks about Zion on Jerusalem, I think he's just expanding it out beyond himself. He says, maybe this is what's wrong with the nation. Maybe this is what's wrong with the city.

This is what's wrong with us as a people. That we're just not giving our hearts as we are to God. We're not confessing our sins, not confessing them to each other properly, and we're not confessing them to God.

[41 : 46] We're just trying to cover them, trying to hide them, to apologize for ourselves and to make ourselves beautiful in front of other people so that people will think we're something. And that means that the religious performances aren't really blessed and that they aren't really accepted.

So not a solemn thought. it comes through to us very vividly in Matthew 5 where Christ says, if you're bringing your gift to the temple and you remember that you've done something wrong to your brother, well he says leave your worship there and put it right with your brother and then come and offer your gift.

Isn't that why we have self-examination before communion? Isn't that why we try to be at one as much as we can with those around us at a time of communion?

So that our worship and our unity will mean as much as it should at times of the Lord's Supper. Let our worship mean something because we're giving him a broken and a contrite heart.

And you never cease to need that. You never cease to need that. Now, I said lastly but when I say finally I mean it definitely. I want to say just this one thing.

[43 : 00] God brings good out of evil. God's love and not only did he bring back David's joy and his ability to share and to teach and instruct and his ability to worship as he should, he also turned the very situation itself, he actually turned it to the good.

Bathsheba of course was herself broken hearted when the child died and I believe that child went to glory. God's chastisements even of children.

We have to remember that chastisement doesn't mean that the child is lost. In fact there's a beautiful verse in the Old Testament. It's tucked away. Jeroboam, I think it was Jeroboam, if I've got the king wrong you'll pardon me, but Jeroboam lost one of his children and God said that he had taken him away because there was something good in that child and he took him away from the evil that was to come on Jeroboam's household.

Isn't that a beautiful thing? Maybe a non-looker would have said, well isn't that fearful a child died? But of that young child God said that there was something good in the heart of that young child towards the God of Israel.

Isn't that wonderful? In the midst of an ungodly family, something good in the heart. I hope that's true of a young person here tonight that there's something good in your heart towards God.

[44 : 28] God took this child and after all his weeping, David said, he'll never come back to me, but he says, I'll go to him. One day I'll go to him.

He comforted Bathsheba and in a short time she became pregnant. And that child, who was he? None other than Solomon, who was to inherit the throne.

And Nathan, the same prophet that had rebuked him. How well David took that, it didn't mean that he didn't want anything to do with Nathan again, no. When Nathan came to him, Nathan called him Jedediah, which means beloved of the Lord.

And he came to be called Solomon and he sat upon the throne. God brings good out of evil. And always remember that if ever you tend towards despair.

let us pray. O gracious God, grant us never to lose hope and confidence in thee, the God who does all things well, and who chastises with a loving hand, and who never forgets the pain and the grief of thy people.

[45 : 44] We bless thee that all things work together for good, to them that love God and have called according to his purpose. And we pray thee Lord to bring every one of us into that blessed circle tonight that we would all realize what is promised to us by being members in the visible church of Christ and that all these things are offered to us in the gospel and offered to us in our baptism.

May we take them by faith and know thee as our God and Savior. For Jesus sake. Amen.