

Real Repentance from a Real Sinner

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Date: 10 May 2026

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[0 : 00] But even if you're not, you're very welcome to come along a Wednesday evening and join in with that 730 at Bar Street. But we are going to be listening to Phil Copeland, I'm glad to say, this evening, and he's going to be preaching to us on Psalm 51.

So perhaps you would turn with me now to Psalm 51, and we're going to read it together. If you don't have a Bible, there are visitors' Bibles at the side, at the back, red Bibles. Feel free to pick one up. It's page 474, I think, in those Bibles.

And we're going to read together this very well-known Psalm of David. And the little superscription there, which is part of the biblical text, not the bit in bold that says, create in me a clean heart, O God, that's somebody's heading they've put in.

But the bit underneath that is part of the psalm, and it gives a little of the background. To the choir master, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone in to Beersheba. And perhaps during the offering time, you might want to read the little story of that. You'll find it in 2 Samuel chapter 12, if you're not familiar. But it's a dark and a horrible story, really, of how David not only committed adultery with another man's wife, but then tried to cover it up, and ended up murdering the man.

[1 : 28] So the background of this psalm is very dark indeed. And that perhaps helps to explain the contents as you listen. So David says, Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, your covenant love, according to your abundant mercy.

Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity. And cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

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

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth, in the inward being, and you teach me the wisdom in the secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness.

[2 : 49] Let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. And create in me a clean heart, O God.

And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God.

O God of my salvation. And my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God.

[4 : 04] You will not despise. Do good to Zion in your good pleasure. Build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings, and whole burnt offerings.

Then bulls will be offered on your altar. Amen. May God bless His Word to us, and help us to hear His words to our hearts today.

Amen. Well, good evening, and please do have your Bibles open to Psalm 51. That will be most helpful. Well, I wonder when was the last time someone said words to you that revealed a humbling truth about you.

Years, and I mean years ago, I joined the gym. And on my first gym visit, one of the staff put me through a fitness assessment. And I was fine when it came to lifting heavy stuff.

But when I got to the treadmill, it all fell apart. It was a disaster. Maybe after about six minutes of plodding along on this thing, the bloke, who was the gym worker, said to me, he said this, I still remember the words, May, your cardio is atrocious.

[5 : 41] My membership didn't last long. But those were words that revealed a humbling truth to me about me. And often that is the Christian's experience when we encounter the Word of God.

Now, the Word of God often encourages us, comforts us, fills us with great joy and assurance. But it's also true that very often, the Word of God reveals humbling truths to us about us in order to lovingly break us, to slay our pride, to turn us away from sin, from the way of death, and to go back to the Lord our God of salvation, and to deepen our faith and our knowledge of Him and His mercy. In fact, that is what the Word of God did in the life of King David. That is what Psalm 51 is all about. As Willie mentioned at the start, earlier on, before the reading, you can see the little short title that's there in our Bibles, that this was written after the events that were recorded in 2 Samuel 11 and 12, where David, the great king of Israel, a man after God's own heart, found himself tragically on a disastrous, slippery slope of sin.

It all began at a time when kings were out fighting, and David should have been there too, leading his army in battle, defending God's people. Instead, he stays home. And late one afternoon, he's up on his roof, and he looks out, and he sees a beautiful woman bathing.

And instead of fleeing, David lingers, and he sends a servant to find out who she is. And the servant tells him, well, that's Bathsheba, but she's married to Uriah the Hittite.

[7 : 26] Uriah was one of David's top soldiers, who was currently out of town, fighting for David and for God's people. And despite knowing this, and knowing God's clear commandment, thou shalt not commit adultery, David sends for her, and commits adultery with her.

And of course, time passes, and then Bathsheba sends David a message. I'm pregnant. I'm expecting. And so begins David's desperate scheme to try and cover up his sin.

He calls back Uriah from the battle line, and he says to him, oh, Uriah, my brother, go home, go and have a rest, and go and be with your wife. Go and enjoy time with her. And David was doing that so that it would look like the baby was Uriah's and not his.

But it doesn't work. Uriah is a man of honor, and he refuses to use his marital privileges during wartime. And so in the end, David sends Uriah back to the front line, and he gives instructions to his commanding officer, Joab, and he says, make sure Uriah ends up at the place where the fighting is at its fiercest.

And when you're there, have every man draw back apart from him. Isolate him so that he will surely be killed. That's exactly what happens. Friends, David murders Uriah.

[8 : 51] And with Uriah out of the way, David takes Bathsheba to be his wife. And when the child is born, it all looks so legitimate. And David thought he'd cover up his sin.

But you can't hide anything from the Lord our God. The last sentence of 2 Samuel 11, is very sobering. It says, but the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

And because the Lord is so gracious and takes our sin seriously, he sent his word to confront David via the prophet Nathan. And you remember, Nathan comes to David and tells him this story, this little parable about a man who carries out a horrible act of injustice.

And when David hears it, his blood boils with anger. He's furious. And he says, the man who's done this awful thing will surely die. He deserves to die. And then comes the sledgehammer moment.

Nathan looks at David and says, you are the man. You are the one who has done this. Why did you despise the word of the Lord?

[9 : 55] By doing what is evil in his eyes. The word of God revealed the humbling and horrible truth to David about himself and what he's done.

Psalm 51 is David's written response to all of that. This is a prayer of real repentance from a real sinner. And it's full of humbling truths about not just David, but actually about all of us, all of our hearts.

But it's also full of glorious hope that we need to hear. I want to look at the psalm now under two headings, two things that David has learned, two things that we too must learn if we're to be a people marked by real repentance.

Here's the first thing David learned. Firstly, his own heart is deeply sinful. His own heart is deeply sinful. That is, David humbly confesses the depravity of his rebellious heart.

Let's read verses 1 to 3 again. David says, Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.

[11:08] Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.

Here's the voice of a broken man who has been truly crushed in his bones, humbled, and he's convicted by the word of God. And David knows he's guilty. He doesn't question God's verdict upon his life.

He doesn't argue with Nathan. He confesses, actually, that he agrees with everything Nathan has said. And did you notice there, I was emphasizing it as I was reading it, all the repetitions of me and my.

It comes up again and again and again. David doesn't suffer from what I call BSE, that is blame someone else, or blame something else syndrome.

He admits that he's fully responsible for what he's done. No excuses. When I was about 11 years old, and please don't tell this to my oldest child, for he is 10 years old, and I don't want him to get any ideas.

[12:14] But when I was roughly 11 years old, I was walking home from school with a friend of mine called Craig. And ahead of us, walking up the street, was a certain girl in my class.

And I maybe just perhaps wanted to get her attention, because I maybe just perhaps liked that girl. And my friend Craig turned to me to give me some advice that he thought was absolutely amazing. He said to me, throw a stone at her. I said, I said, what? He went, ah, throw a stone at her. I bet she'll love that. And do you know what?

I thought for a minute, and I thought, oh yeah, okay, yeah. So I did. And on that day, I realized that I would never have a career in cricket. Not that I fancied that. Anyway, but she was right up there, and my stone, when I lobbed it, went there.

And I went like that. It went through the back windshield of a very expensive car. And I bolted. Friends, I absolutely bolted.

[13:18] I was ashamed. I was also afraid of the consequences of what I'd done. I bolted. And eventually, I was caught after doing some bunch of lies that I gave to my parents.

And I rightly stood before the school head mistress. She said, well, Mr. Copeland, what have you got to say for yourself? And like that, immediately, the first words out of my gob were, Craig told me to do it.

It was Craig's idea. It's really Craig's fault. B.S.E. Blame someone else syndrome. And friends, ever since Genesis 3, that is the sad reality about human beings.

By nature, we actually all are like that. We all like to distance ourselves from our sin, often by blaming someone else or something else. Just think back to the garden and the first act of human rebellion by Adam and Eve.

When the Lord graciously comes and confronts them with His word about their sin, what did they do? What did the women say? Oh, it's the serpent. He tempted me.

[14:22] And Adam, what did he say? Well, the woman whom you actually blames God gave me, gave me the fruit. Blame someone else syndrome. And I know I'm certainly guilty of this even to this day in my life.

I'm willing to bet as well it's true of your life. Just think about the last time you apologized to someone or whenever you apologized to someone. Don't we often just throw in little subtle excuses to try and lessen our responsibility?

Oh, I'm really sorry I lost it with you. I'm really sorry I snapped at you there. I'm just really tired at the moment. Oh, I'm so sorry that I shouldn't have sent that angry email to you.

I'm so sorry about that. I'm just under a lot of pressure at the moment. That's not what David does before the Lord. This is real repentance.

Repentance that's been brought about by the powerful word of God knows that it's got nowhere to hide. There's nowhere to hide. It is marked by humble honesty. David is saying, Lord have mercy on me for I am a sinner.

[15:29] I'm guilty. I'm responsible. This is what I'm like. This is who I am. I've done this great evil. And notice the words David uses to describe sin here.

Verse 1. He speaks of my transgressions. That word in Hebrew describes acts which are deliberate breakings of God's law. A deliberate rejection of his life-giving commandments.

Verse 2. He speaks about iniquity. The Hebrew word for iniquity used there is to describe how his inner nature is bent and broken. As Martin Luther would go on to say, it's like his human nature has been curved back within itself instead of being Godward.

It's all self-interested. In verse 2, again, David speaks of my sin, which is the most common word throughout the Old Testament for sin, which means to miss the mark, to fall short.

Not just slightly, but to fall short by miles. David has fallen short by miles of what it really means to be truly human. You see, friends, David isn't just confessing about that particular sin that he's committed with Uriah and Bathsheba.

[16:41] He does confess that, but he knows it's part of just the bigger picture. He's confessing that sin has polluted and warped every part of his human fiber. Sin has warped and twisted every part of his humanity.

Theologians sometimes refer to that as total depravity. And please look at verse 4. Look at what he says there. David says, Just think about that.

Think about all those whom David has sinned against in 2 Samuel 11. He sinned against his own body with his sexual sin. He sinned against Uriah. He sinned against Bathsheba.

He sinned against Joab and his soldiers for involving them in murder. He sinned against all the people of Israel because he is the king of Israel, their federal covenantal head who represents every person in the nation.

So David is in actual fact sinned against everyone. There isn't actually one person whom David hasn't sinned against. So how can David say verse 4?

[17:51] Well, because David knows that at the end of the day all sin fundamentally at its root and on its basis is an attack against God. God is our loving creator, sustainer, life giver, law giver, we are not autonomous beings.

Every action that we do that does not adhere to God's moral commands, his good ways, it is an attack against him and his authority. It is a disgusting attempt to try and dethrone God from his rightful place.

Treason against the king of kings. And so David's priority isn't to be forgiven by human beings, although that is important. But his priority is first and foremost to be right with God.

Put it this way, David knows that sin this way, up and down between us and God, is far more serious than sin this way. And in fact, David believes sin this way, sorry, sin this way between human beings is always sin this way against God.

And so in verse 4, David says, look, Lord, that's what I've done and you're right to judge me. That's what I deserve. I deserve condemnation. And in verse 5, he goes even deeper.

[19:04] He's not finished yet. Look at verse 5. He says, Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, you delight in truth and the inward being and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Just be careful here. David is not saying that sex in and of itself is a sinful and evil thing.

Rather, David is acknowledging what God has already taught him in his inward being, in the secret heart. And that is the fact that sin is so deep in himself that it has been there all through David's existence, throughout all of his history and his life, since the very moment of conception.

As one commentator says, David sees that his crime was no freak event. It's not a one-off. It was in his character, an extreme expression of the warped creature he had always been.

And of the faulty stock he sprang from. My friends, this is humbling stuff, isn't it? I wonder what you make of it because, my friends, the Bible says that these things are not just true of David, they're true of all of us.

[20:23] They're true of you. They're true of me. Jeremiah 17, verse 9, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick.

Or think of the Lord Jesus' words in Mark 7, where he says this, what comes out of a person defiles him. For from within, out of the human heart, comes evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

All these things come from within and they defile a person. It's almost like Jesus is showing us an x-ray of the human heart, of all our hearts.

The Bible says to us, no, you might not be guilty of the same specific sins that David committed externally, but internally. We all have that same potential for evil.

You see, you and I are not to read about David's sin here in this psalm and to think, oh, how dreadful, how atrocious. I'm so thankful I'm not like that. I'm so thankful I could never do that. [21 : 35] Friends, actually, the gospel of God declares to us all that all of our hearts are just as capable of all of these same sins, maybe even worse than David.

And my friend, if you're an honest person who's being truly honest with yourself, then actually, you will know that that's just so. You will know that that's true. You are not what you should be and I am not what I should be.

In fact, this passage really frightens me as a person who has a position of leadership in God's people. If it can happen to David, what chance have I got? It can happen to any under-shepherd. ! Our hearts, by nature, are deeply sinful and we cannot hide this from the Lord. And just maybe, you know, you might be here this evening and maybe you're feeling the way that David felt all those years ago.

Maybe you are here this evening and you know you've messed up big time before God. The Word of God has confronted you and it's exposed the sin problem of your life and you feel desperate and broken.

[22 : 40] Maybe you've fallen into a pattern of behavior that you know is just not pleasing. It's not appropriate for someone who bears the name of Jesus. Or maybe you've messed up big time in another way.

Maybe in a public way. Maybe someone at work or at school or at uni or whatever has questioned you about your Christian faith and you're not a Christian, are you? And you've replied, oh no, no, no, I'm not.

I'm not. Because you don't want to be mocked. Friends, however you've done it, if you've messed up big time, Psalm 51 is for us all here this evening.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, let's all seek to follow David's prayer of real repentance in this first step. Let's not try to hide from the Lord our God or try and blame someone else or something else. Don't try and play like you're a victim. Instead, be honest. Lord Almighty, my heart is deeply sinful. I'm guilty and responsible. You are just, you would be just to judge me and rightly to condemn me.

[23 : 44] I've sinned against you alone. That's the first step in real repentance. It's the first thing David has learned. But let's move now to the hope because there's great hope even for the most depraved sinner.

That's the second thing David has learned in this Psalm. His own heart is deeply sinful but also his only hope is divine salvation.

His only hope is divine salvation. David humbly trusts in God alone to cleanse and renew his heart. And David trusts with great confidence here because he knows the Lord.

He knows who the Lord is, what he's like and what the Lord has promised. So yes, the Word of God has revealed the painful truth to David but at the same time it drives David to exactly the right place to the Lord God.

please look again at verse 1. He bursts out the Psalm and he says oh have mercy on me oh God according to your steadfast love according to your abundant mercy.

[24 : 51] He's saying oh Lord please don't punish me the way that I deserve to be punished. That's what it means to receive mercy. And Lord I know that you're merciful. Your mercy is so abundant isn't it?

It's not just a little bit of mercy it's abundant. And really this is the same prayer in this verse that is so pleasing to the Lord that the Lord Jesus mentions in Luke chapter 18 do you remember in Luke chapter 18 Jesus tells quite a lot of parables about his kingdom?

And in one of the parables Jesus mentions two men who go into the temple to approach God in the temple to pray. And they couldn't be so different in the eyes of society. You've got this Pharisee who in society's eyes was squeaky clean deeply religious.

Ah, here comes a Pharisee a holy man. And on the other hand you've got this scumbag tax collector one who was deeply abhorred by the public.

Both of them stand in the temple before God and they pray and the Pharisee approaches God as though he's doing God a favor. And he says God I thank you that I'm not like other men.

[25 : 59] I'm not like this tax collector. Look how good I am. Look at all the good stuff I've done. And what does the tax collector do? Well he prays the same prayer as Psalm 51 verse 1.

Have mercy on me O God a sinner. And Jesus says and this is the shock of the parable that it's the scumbag tax collector who leaves the temple right with God and not the religious man.

Friends, the only hope for us is not to rely on our goodness or performance but to do what David does and to rely wholly upon the Lord's undeserved kindness upon his mercy.

And also in verse 1 he appeals to God's steadfast love. Did you notice that there? The Hebrew word for steadfast love which I'm sure you'll know is hesed which is the special words for God's special, unmerited, committed love.

The love that he shows only to his covenant people not because of any worthiness within them but because God graciously obligates himself to do so. It is a love that depends solely upon God himself choosing to love these people.

[27 : 12] And so it's to that covenant love that David makes his plea. According to your love, compassion, Lord, blot out my sin. Wash me. Cleanse me.

In other words, David knows that his only hope is divine cleansing. Now today in the 21st century we have amazing washing machines.

Amazing washing machines. And as the parent of two young boys, I can tell you that my wife and I are very thankful that this is so because our boys come home from school with all sorts of stains and marks every single day.

Our washing machine is on again and again and again but no problem at all. All you need to do is put some detergent on the clothes, a bit of soap powder, bung it in the machine, shut the door, set the cycle, press the button and the clothes come out clean.

I don't have to do anything. But it was totally different back in David's day. Yes? No hot point, no personal, no vanish. The first readers of this psalm knew exactly the painstaking process of making something that was filthy, clean, by hand washing.

[28 : 23] You scrubbed, you scrubbed, you scrubbed, you scrubbed, you scrubbed again and again and again until the thing was clean. And that's what David is asking God to do with his soul, with his heart.

Even if it's a painstaking process, Lord, please do that with me. But he's also appealing to the ceremonial law.

Please look at verse 7. David says, Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness.

Let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Now, hyssop was a bushy plant that was used to make someone ceremonially clean. You can read about it back in Leviticus.

As the camp of Israel made its way through the wilderness, if anyone contracted an infectious skin disease or came into contact with a dead body, they were pronounced unclean.

[29 : 24] And that was devastating. Because if that happened to you, you were cast out away from the camp, away from fellowship with God's people, and away from the special presence of God that dwelt in the midst of the camp in the tabernacle.

But do you know, because God is a realist and because of his grace, God provided a way for unclean people to be made clean, the priest would sacrifice an animal without blemish.

And the priest would then take a bunch of hyssop branches, dip them in the blood of the sacrifice, and then sprinkle them, sprinkle the blood upon the unclean person.

That was a sign that sacrifice had died in the place of the unclean person. And that sinner would be pronounced clean. Think of the joy, the celebration and the relief that must have come into the heart of the one made clean as they were welcomed back into God's people, back into fellowship with God, into the sweetness of communion with the Lord God.

That is precisely what David is talking about here. He wants that for himself. And let me just say, it's not obvious from this translation that we've got in our Bibles, but there is a shift in tone, and it moves from a shift from brokenness to confidence.

[30 : 46] It's almost as though the Lord is already answering David's prayer as he prays this. Verse 7 could be really translated as this. Verse 7, You shall purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.

You shall wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. This is a cry of great faith. Again, this is a mark of real repentance. Really what David is saying here is, Lord, Lord, I know what you've promised in your law, the law of Moses.

I know that you've revealed to us the way of cleansing, which is through washing, through the purging of your appointed sacrifice. Lord, you've promised that through this divinely appointed way,

you will make sinners clean.

So, Lord, I call upon you to act upon what you've promised. Not that I deserve it, I'm not presuming upon your grace. I know I'm guilty, but I'm asking you to show mercy.

And I know that it will be so, because I know what you are like, O Lord. I know you are the God who delights to cleanse and renew even the worst of sinners who turns to you in repentance.

[31 : 57] And friends, as the covenant people of God today, we should have much more assurance, much more confidence, much more hope than even David had back then. because we have received the fullness of the revelation of God's, of the cleansing blood, of the eternal covenant.

In other words, we can have, and we should have, much more assurance, confidence, and hope than David because the Lord Jesus has come. He's laid down His life for us on the cross, dying as the perfect sacrifice of atonement for sin, once and for all, never to be repeated again, accomplished.

As He gave His last breath, He was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us all peace. Well, David's prayer doesn't end with simple requests for cleansing.

There's more. He continues to show that his only hope is divine salvation by asking God to bring about a new creation within him. Please look at verse 10. He says this, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

[33 : 23] So David prays that God will not remove His spirit from him like He did with King Saul. But rather, David wants God's spirit to transform his life, transform his heart.

And again, David knows that's something that only God can do. And that's clear from the language at the start of verse 10, the Hebrew word used there for create. It's only ever used to describe God's activity in the Bible.

For example, back in Genesis 1, when God created out of nothing the whole world. In the same way, David is calling the Lord to create out of the darkness and the deadness of this in here, a new heart.

One that will truly love the Lord. One that will truly seek to obey His commandments. And one that will delight in knowing Him. Only a divine miracle, only a divine work of creation can do that.

And David gives the reasons as to why he asks for God to do that. Please look over verse 13 to 15. And you will see that a heart that's been washed and renewed by the mercy of God is a heart that wants to proclaim God's goodness to others.

[34 : 33] Notice the repetition of the stuff to do with speech. David will teach transgressors how to turn back to God. David says, My tongue will sing of God's righteousness.

My lips and mouth will declare your praise. See, David is asking, Lord, have mercy on me because I want to be transformed and be a man who will bring you glory.

I want to go out on mission to share your goodness. I want to lead others and teach them what I have learned so they will follow. But friends, we must get this the right way around.

David is saying, I'm only going to do these things after I have confessed my sin. After I have been cleansed and renewed. Not the other way around.

These are things David is going to do in response to God's gracious saving work. They're not the basis of that saving work. And that is what David says in verse 16 to 15.

[35 : 32] He says to God, For you will not delight in sacrifice or I will give it. You will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.

O God, you will not despise. And friends, when God's people fall into sin and when we are rightly convicted of it, we can often think this way.

We can often think, right, I'm going to sort this out. I'm going to conquer this problem. I'm going to make it up to God. I can sort out this relationship, rupture, bring about restoration myself.

I can get true worship up and running again in my life. And I will show up by some fresh devotion to God. Maybe start a disciplined prayer program. Maybe have a lot of good quiet times.

Yes, that will do the trick. Get back into my Bible. Maybe even try a little bit of evangelism. Don't know. Sign up for a new serving position at church. Yes, I'll do that.

[36 : 34] If I do these spiritual disciplines, everything will be peachy again. And the Lord will be pleased. Now friends, if you think like that, and it's common for us to think this way because as well, I've thought like this in the past, then it's a mistake.

Look again at verse 16. David says, you will not delight in sacrifice or I would give it. You will not be pleased with a burnt offering. What does God want from us first and foremost when we turn back to Him having been stuck in sin?

He wants verse 17. He wants first and foremost this type of sacrifice. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.

Oh God, you will not despise. And what does that look like? What does that sound like? Answer?

Psalm 51. God wants you to come to Him and honestly confess my own heart is deeply sinful.

He wants you to trust in His mercy and steadfast love. The same mercy and steadfast love that sent the Lord Jesus into the world to deal with your sin. My only hope is divine salvation.

[37 : 53] Nothing in my hand I bring. Simply to your cross I cling. And then after that, of course, turn to the Lord and offer sacrifices in your life.

Sacrifices of praise and service. But friends, when we come to God this way, the Psalm 51 way, then you and I really can have great assurance that the blood of Christ will cleanse us from all sin. And you and I can have great assurance that the Spirit of Christ will continue to create a new heart within us. Psalm 51 is a beautiful prayer of real repentance from a real sinner who trusts in the real gospel of God.

And if the cries of David's heart here in this Psalm are echoed in your heart, then you should be wonderfully encouraged. For the Lord, your God, will not despise you.

And if you've never turned to the Lord in this way before, because maybe that's you, if you've never come to the Lord like this tonight, don't delay. there is no one too sinful, there is nobody too far off.

[39 : 06] Turn to Him through Jesus' Son, and you will find the same God that David speaks of here, the God of abundant mercy and steadfast love.

Well, let's turn to Him now in prayer. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Our gracious Heavenly Father, we cast ourselves solely upon your mercy, revealed to us so beautifully in the person and in the work of your precious Son.

Have mercy upon us, sinners. We praise you that in Him we stand forgiven, washed, and cleansed. Help us, Lord, to be a people marked by real ongoing repentance. Create in us pure hearts by your Spirit so that we will be a church, so that we will be a people who teach others your way of salvation, so that the lost world around us will also come and pray, have mercy upon me, a sinner. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.