

Hope for the Prodigal

Psalm 51

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HOPE FOR THE PRODIGAL

The weather has been devastating lately. Texas keeps getting hit with rain. Across the state there were areas that got 6-10 inches of rain last weekend. As a result of the flooding, there are over 100 people still missing. New York had over 2 inches of rain fall in less than an hour, causing the subway tunnels to fill with water. Last Saturday, pastor Daniel shared with the staff “I think we have been officially welcomed to the Midwest. Our basement flooded yesterday, and I was up until midnight moving all the boxes upstairs to our family room. Over 4 inches of rain fell in less than 4 hours here in the Quad Cities last Thursday, along with a tornado touching down in Davenport. As my heart is heavy grieving with families that have loved ones missing, grieving with people that have lost everything, families like Daniel whose lives are in some degree of chaos as they clean up the damage. This picture from Daniel also gave me a much needed laugh, when I saw their cats, just hanging out, not a care in the world.

For most of us the stuff in our basement is rarely used. Our basements are full of Holiday decorations we tuck away, and occasionally pull out. Boxes of clothes that we try to convince ourselves we will one day fit back into. In the Rogers house it is where the 374 candles, each candle was absolutely needed, are stored. There is nothing beautiful about the boxes of stuff we keep in our basements, so I am sure that Pastor Daniel’s wife, Dee Dee, was less than excited to have her living room filled with the contents of their basement. I remember looking at my basement one day and wondered if I were to throw everything in there away, would I really ever miss any of it?

BASEMENT OF YOUR HEART

This got me thinking, what do we store in the basements of our hearts? The basements of our hearts are a totally different place. This is the place where we bury the worst of ourselves. Each shelf in the basement of our hearts is full of those secrets that we never want exposed. The secret sins we pray no one finds out about. Our past mistakes we don't want to admit to. The basement of our hearts is where we place the things that hurt too much to deal with. So we throw them on a shelf, run out of the room, and slam the door behind us and try to forget about them. We hide these sins behind a locked door, because we fear what people would think of us. We fear what people would say about us. For many of us we somehow convince ourselves that the basement of our hearts is a place where even God cannot see. So, we hide here. We hide the thoughts we would never verbalize, we hide the desires that even scare us, we hide the past that we allow to define our present. We put it on a shelf, we slam the door to our hearts closed, lock it, and barricade that door closed, with the hope that light will never expose the reality of who we are. Instead, we try to place on display the parts of our lives for others to see that we think are beautiful and inviting. I was challenged a few weeks back when

I began to wrestle with who really knows me. I mean who REALLY knows me. Have I ever allowed anyone to see the basement of my heart? Who knows even the stuff of my life that I try to hide there?

Our students are wrestling with the idea of “being known” as well. Parents, your kids are wrestling with this. It is up to us to create a space where people feel safe enough to share the hard parts of life, knowing we will still love them and point them to Jesus.

Every year I celebrate with our graduating seniors, as they finish high school. BUT every year, I'll be honest, I'm also heartbroken as I see a student step away from the church and choose to step into sinful desires. As a result, every year I have parents and grandparents come to me in desperation that their kids and grandkids are so caught up in sin that they are walking away from their faith... students that at one time loved Jesus with all that they are, suddenly are lured away by the world. As a result, I have had dads that have regrets for not spiritually leading their families better. Looking back, they realize their priorities were messed up. I have had moms that carry so much guilt. Moms that have tried to raise their kids up to love and follow Jesus, but their kids are now distant from God. I have had grandparents that are heartbroken, as their kids have walked away from the Lord, and this has caused tension in family relationships, and they are now watching their grandkids from a distance... their grandkids having no significant spiritual influence in their lives. Or maybe it's your spouse that is distant from God... or lets be honest. Maybe it is you today. Sitting here. Bible open. Eyes attentive to the sermon. BUT, your heart is far from God.

This isn't something new to our culture, or to our generation... People have walked away from God as far back as the garden of Eden. Parents hear me in this... Adam and Eve walked away from God and their Father was perfect! Let's be honest... How many of us today have prodigals in our lives that we want Jesus more for them, than they want Him for themselves? People in our lives that we are broken over. People in our lives that we cry out to God for, that we beg God to draw them to Himself, we beg God to save them from themselves and their sinful lives.

Pray for the prodigals- bring encouragement where encouragement is needed and conviction where conviction is needed, hope, comfort

REFLECTION/REPENTANCE/RESTORATION/REJOICE

I find myself returning to Psalm 51 to find hope for those prodigals. This Psalm is known for being David's response of repentance, BUT we also see HOPE. We see that David reflects on who God is. We see that David is restored back to God. He once again finds joy in God alone. We see that David the prodigal came home.

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. **2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! **3** For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.**4** Against you, you

only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your word and blameless in your judgment. **5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. **6** Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. **7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. **8** Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. **9** Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. **10** Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me. **11** Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. **12** Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. **13** Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. **14** Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. **15** O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. **16** For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. **17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. **18** Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem; **19** then will you delight in right sacrifices in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

There is so much going on here in Psalm 51 that we couldn't even begin to tackle it all today. If you were here last weekend when Pastor Daniel and David Beebe shared God's Word with us, I'm sure you were blessed just as I was. They touched on Psalm 51 but I want to go deeper into it today. I did learn one thing last week for sure.

THINGS NOT TO SAY WHEN YOU PREACH

David Beebe taught me not to say that you hate country music and Quad Cities style pizza. There was such an uproar that I was waiting for people to walk out! I will say, I don't mind country music, and that I like Quad Cities style pizza. I also like the square pizza from the high school cafeteria, so that may tell you that my palate is not too refined. LOL

BACKGROUND OF PSALM 51

We find that King David became a prodigal and he was far from God. One author describes the scene. David, known as the greatest of Israel's kings, was now prostrate on the ground, nose to the stone, had torn his clothes, hadn't eaten in a week. By now the whole town knows. David the once great and conquering king of Israel is a lying, scheming, conniving, backstabbing, murdering, adulterer. “

Through the help of a trusted friend, David recognized his need to plead with God for forgiveness. This confession was with regards to his relationship with Bathsheba. We see this in 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12. From his roof, he noticed her while she was bathing. David called her into the palace, committed adultery, and she became pregnant by him. At first, David brought her soldier husband, Uriah, back from war, hoping he would lie with his wife and cover up the illegitimate pregnancy. But Uriah was loyal to his fellow soldiers who were still on the battlefield. Uriah was an honorable man and believed he should be on the battlefield with his men, so he refused to even enter his home. David even tried getting Uriah

drunk, thinking this would lower his inhibitions, but that failed as well. Finally, David felt he had no other options in his attempt to cover his sin, so he arranged for Uriah to be caught in the midst of a battle maneuver and killed. One pastor was discussing how David then brought Bathsheba into the palace as a wife, and how it is believed that David may have thought he was doing something honorable. When in reality David is the one that caused all of this. When I read this I was like, David, what are you thinking? How did you get to this point? One sin spiraled into another and into another until David lost himself... How quickly David's downfall, when he took his eyes off of God.

The Thing that David had done

I find all of this leading to such a disturbing line of scripture, 2 Samuel 11 ends with these words: **"The thing that David had done displeased the Lord" (2 Samuel 11:27)**. It's like that time as a kid when my dad caught me doing something wrong and he said "I'm not mad, I'm just disappointed." I would have rather my dad yell at me at that moment. The idea that he was disappointed was so much worse. Our aim, as believers, is to glorify God. We walk through life, sometimes we even fight through life, but we have the hopeful expectation that one day we will stand before the Judgement Seat of God and He will say **"well done, good and faithful servant"**. BUT here is David... His darkest sins were exposed. The basement door of his heart was blasted open, spot lights were turned on, exposing the worst of David, for all to see. The guy that was known as being a man after God's own heart, now grieves God's heart. Actually, the original word used for displeasure gives the context that God saw David's actions as evil. This man, that God had chosen while he was still a boy, to be the king. This man that stood before a giant as a teenager with boldness and proclaimed to Goliath: You come to me with a sword. **1 Samuel 17 "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts,..."** this man, that God had given victory upon victory. Now, his actions were seen as evil to the Lord.

The band, Newsboys, former frontman Michael Tate has spent decades pointing arenas of people to God, through their music. He recently stepped down from the band, acknowledging he had been living a double life where he was singing songs of praise to God one day and basking in sin the next . Listen, more information is coming out about the depth of depravity Tate was involved in, and it makes me sick. I choose not to go into further details about this, other than to say, in a confession letter that was released, Tate states:

But it crushes me to think that someone would lose or choose not to pursue faith and trust in Jesus because I have been a horrible representative of Him—for He alone is ultimately the only hope for any of us.

Michael Tate continues- "King David's prayer of repentance in Psalm 51 has been my prayer this year:"

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness...

Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me...

Create in me a new heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

My prayer is that Tate is authentic in his repentance, only God knows his true heart. King David, similarly, was in a place where his life was out of control. David who once was so deep in love with God, had lost his way. He had been distracted with the things that the world was luring him with. David forgot the joy he once found in God alone. I wonder today as we look at the condition of our own hearts, if similarly some of us have lost the joy of a close relationship with God? The lyrics from the song come thou fount “prone to wander Lord I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love.” Have brought me to my knees more than once.

Nathan

BUT, God is so good. God met David right where he was at. While David was basking in the midst of his sin, God sent the prophet Nathan to him with a parable. From this parable, David realized his sin and he instantly owned up to the life he had been living. Nathan had proven to be a close and trusted friend. He spoke truth to David, even when that truth was difficult to hear. We all need friends like Nathan, friends that are there to encourage us, but we also need people that are watching our lives, that are willing to have the tough conversations with us and call us out in our sin, not to condemn us, but to point us back to redemption.

Psalm 51 I find to be one of the most genuine responses to God in our brokenness, and one of the most encouraging for the prodigal. In this Psalm, David finally opened the door to the basement of his heart and confessed his sins to God and held nothing back. David did not blame anyone else and made no attempt to excuse his actions. These words display absolute humility and crushing brokenness over sin. For the prodigal this gives us hope. There is hope of forgiveness, and there is hope that God will use even our failures, for His glory. If God can bring David back from all of this, there is hope.

Psalm 51:12

This Psalm culminates to the point where David asks God to

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation. The joy of our salvation is when we find all that we desire in God alone. We find ultimate satisfaction and delight in God Himself. In this place, the noise of the world quiets and we sit fully fulfilled at the foot of the cross. NOW, the big question is, “How do we do that?” With the noise of the world, “How do we fix our eyes solely on Christ?” “How do we find joy in God alone?”

Reflection

David shows us, this process begins with **Reflecting on God- knowing who God is**

(verses 1-2): Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. **2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

I love this... David has to have a proper knowledge of who God is, to come to this place where he falls into God's mercy. Without a right knowledge of God, David instead may think he is just condemned. I mean how do you come back from the place that David is at? Deception, adultery, murder... how could you possibly be redeemed from this? Or David, without a right understanding of God could try to tip the scale in the other direction. David could start to

work really hard... doing lots of good deeds. If only he could do enough good things to outweigh the bad. The difference is, David KNOWS God. David knows his actions have grieved God, but David also knows there is hope. I believe we all need to hear this today. As so many of us sit in the heaviness of sins we have committed, there is hope and there is freedom. David KNOWS that God loves him with a steadfast love. This steadfast love refers to God's enduring and faithful love, rooted in a covenant relationship. God showers abundant mercy. The Hebrew translates this as "a multitude of God's tender mercies blot out his sin". It is God alone who can wash him thoroughly from his iniquity and it is God alone that can cleanse him from his sin. David acknowledged all he could do in this moment was throw himself before God and acknowledge his desperate need for God to do what only God can do. I believe this is the biggest hindrance for the prodigals that we know, to finally come home. Our prodigals often have a head knowledge that God is full of abundant mercy and grace, but their feelings of guilt and shame lie to them telling them they are not worthy of being redeemed. Our foundation in Christ is rooted in the knowledge of Christ.

Colossians 2: 6-7 **6** Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, **7** rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

We need a right knowledge of who God is to find joy in God alone.

Next, we see that before we can find joy in our salvation we need to come clean to God. One author describes that in repentance is where we spend the most intimate time with God.

Repentance

(verses 3-6): 3 For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.**4** Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your word and blameless in your judgment. **5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. **6** Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

The command to repent is the first recorded public statement made in the ministries of John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter, and Paul. By definition, repentance is a change of direction, so we turn from sin and turn to Christ. This means you can't repent and expect your life to continue to look the same. Something has to change! One author describes repentance as exchanging irresistible sin for an irresistible Christ. Matthew drives this point.

Matthew 6:24

24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other,

In this moment of Psalm 51 David chose to return to, and serve his irresistible God.

David used three different words here as he repented. He confessed his sin, his transgressions, and his iniquity. The three words communicate the same idea: evil and lawlessness, as defined by God. But if we look a little closer, each word has a slightly different meaning

Sin

- SIN-*Sin* means “to miss the mark.” It can refer to doing anything against God's moral standard.
- Under this definition, you may not consciously choose to sin, but for all of us, our hearts are already conditioned for it. Each of us was born with original sin, so we all fall short of God’s glory.

Transgression-

- Transgress is to choose to intentionally disobey;
- When we speed, knowingly run a stop sign, tell a lie, we are transgressing.

Iniquity-

- *Iniquity* refers to a premeditated choice; to commit iniquity is to continue without repentance. David’s sin with Bathsheba that led to the killing of her husband, Uriah, was iniquity.

David in his confession to God, swung open the basement door of his heart and started grabbing boxes of sin that he had been storing there for too long. He began throwing them out as he repented of it all, using every possible word for sin. This wasn't David sitting in self-pity or condemning himself, but for the first time in a long time, David was honest with God and admitted that in every way he rebelled against Him. That is why, when David confesses his sin, stating **4 Against you, you only, have I sinned.** Joseph said something similar to Potiphar’s wife when he chose purity over sin. **Genesis 39:9 Joseph says “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”** David wasn't avoiding taking responsibility for his actions against both Bathsheba and her husband Uriah. BUT David was acknowledging who God is. David was acknowledging that it is God that sets the moral standard, and that it is God's moral law that he had broken. David was once again placing God as the rightful Lord of his life.

Since David knew God’s word so intimately, he would know that the law condemns an adulterer to death. David didn't cry out to be saved, David just threw himself at the mercy of God.

Verses 7-12 show us that following repentance, God is the one that restores us to a right relationship with Him. It is in a right relationship with God that we find our joy in God alone.

Restoration

(verses 7-12):7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. 9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.10 Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your

Holy Spirit from me.**12** Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Hyssop is an evergreen plant that is classified as a garden herb, and is part of the mint family. We see in Leviticus that Hyssop was used in various purification ceremonies. It was used, during the plagues in Egypt, to apply the blood of the lamb to the doorposts so the angel of death would “passover” God’s people. As Jesus hung on the cross, a centurion **put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.****30** When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. John 19-. David knew God and knew that there was no forgiveness without the blood of a sacrifice. So David knew the weight of the sacrificial cost for him to be restored. When David called God to "Purge me with hyssop" it gives this meaning of, an abrupt or violent removal of the sin within, with the purpose of purifying. This highlights the understanding that true cleansing is not merely external. It's never been about how we try to clean ourselves up and present ourselves, but about an internal and spiritual cleansing that only God can do. As a young boy, when David was selected to be the next king,

1 Samuel 16: 7 the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature,.. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”

David was not just asking for ritualistic cleansing, but David knew God looks on the heart and his heart needed to be transformed. David begged God to inspect the dark crevices of his heart and not to just reveal the depth of his sin, but to do the tough work of removing it. David asked God to: purge him, to wash him, to blot out his iniquities, and in return David would be clean, would be whiter than snow, would have a clean heart and a right spirit.

John MacArthur writes: David “gives no excuses, no explanations and no rationale. In short , David is saying to God, ‘I’m wrong and you’re right.” David just owned up to his actions.

Spurgeon

“If I hate sin because of the punishment, I have not repented of sin, I merely regret that God is just.”

I always appreciate that David made no attempt to ask God to spare him from the earthly consequences of his sins. Let me be clear, David's sin was forgiven, his iniquities were blotted out, God did create in him a clean heart, God did renew a right spirit within him, but there were still consequences to his actions.

Ray Pritchard wrote a book PRAYING FOR THE PRODIGAL. There are free copies available in the lobby. In his book, he reminds us that:

1) Prodigals won't come home until they are ready, (they must first be convicted and repentant)

2) We can't argue them back, or shame them back.

3) We can't force them back too early, they will still be in the far country... on the inside. God is the only one capable of giving them a renewed heart and a right spirit. God is the only one that can give them the joy of salvation.

All David wanted was simply to be with God. I asked one of the guys I disciple, "Why did you place your faith in Christ?" He quickly said, "I didn't give my life to Christ, because I feared hell. I gave my life to Christ because I had a fear of life without God." Similarly, David's greatest fear was that God would cast him away and that God would take His spirit off of David. David was like God, don't give up on me. God don't leave me. God do whatever you want with me, but please God don't walk away from me.

I'm reminded of the moment in Genesis 32, when Jacob was wrestling with God. It was Jacob that refused to let go. Even after his hip was injured, Jacob refused to let go. In desperation, Jacob continued to grasp on to God. I see David similarly here. David is here, in desperation, begging God **11 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.**

David has a right knowledge of who God is. David has repented of his sin. David asks God to restore him. Now, he ends this section by asking God to renew the joy of his salvation. For David, it was when the joy of his salvation faded, that he found himself in such a pit of sin. One pastor notes, People give way to sin because they don't find joy in their salvation alone. Essentially, we sin because God does not have the supreme place in our feelings and thoughts. God doesn't have the supreme place in our lives.

Listen, we aren't much different than David. How many times in your life have you stopped and been like, "How did I get to this place?" I used to be so passionate about Jesus. I used to look forward to my time in scripture and in prayer and now you're just walking through the motions, you have lost the joy of your salvation. Or maybe you're so deep into sin that you feel trapped and have no way out. Maybe you're in a cycle of sin, you repent and then return to your sin, over and over. Let me encourage you. There is hope, and there is freedom. That doesn't mean it is going to be easy, but it's worth it. It all begins in this moment of repentance as you call out for God to return to you, the joy of your salvation.

This summer, we took some of our high school students to receive world view training at Summit. A teenager there asked one of the speakers a question. With a heavy voice she asked, "How can I help my friends that claim to be Christian, but just seem so apathetic." She continued as she asked, "How? How can we know all that we know about how amazing God is, and yet be apathetic. How can they seem so indifferent? How can they not really care? How can I help them see Jesus for how amazing He is?" This speaker answered her question well. Later, I shared a quote from a book with her that I was reading.

The book “Hope for the Prodigal” discusses how there are 3 roles when it comes to a prodigal returning home.

- 1) The prodigal has to make a choice to place Jesus on the rightful throne of their lives.
- 2) The Holy Spirit has to convict and draw their hearts to God.
- 3) Our job includes praying, and encouraging them to come to a right relationship with God.

The author then spoke bluntly and said... stay in your lane. No one could force David to make a decision to repent and come back to God, and we definitely cannot be the Holy Spirit. So, what can we do?

What is our lane? What is it we can do as people who love our prodigals and want to see them come back to their faith?

- Live your life as an example of someone passionately following Jesus. (Story about Ed?) This includes that sometimes we should be a “Nathan” and lovingly confront our brothers and sisters in Christ with the sin we see in their lives.
- This starts with checking your own heart. We can't be an example to others for the Kingdom, if we don't have our eyes on God ourselves. One author states, “The sad fact is that too many parents don't pay attention to what's happening spiritually in their kids' lives, because the parents themselves are too busy chasing the world.
- Be devoted to your kids/ grandkids/ the people in your circle of influence and their faith, more than you are to their sports. It's easy to keep our eyes on their ability to succeed in school or sports but completely miss that the most important thing is their heart toward Jesus.
- Create an environment where it is tough for a prodigal to leave, and it is easy for them to come home. As the church we are supposed to be family. Are you building friendships here? I mean deep meaningful relationships with people who love you. The church in Acts 2:44 were together and had all things in common. It is hard to walk away from the church, when the people of the church are where you have “all things in common.” But then, we need to also be creating an environment where it is easy for a prodigal to come home. With authentic repentance, prodigals should be welcomed home.
- Trust that God is working on the prodigal's heart. In the parable of the prodigal son, in Luke 15, the famine was no coincidence. The pig farmer was no coincidence. God orchestrates people and circumstances to work in the life of the prodigal. The tough part for us, is that we are called to trust that God is working, even when it seems that our prodigal is out of reach.
- Remember, everyone is redeemable. For those of us that are hurting today, as our prodigals are far from home. We hold onto the hope of **Philippians 1:6 6 And I am sure**

of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Rejoice

From this, how can we not Rejoice?

To rejoice is not to find joy in our circumstances, but to rejoice is to find joy in who God is. God calls us forgiven, God calls us redeemed, adopted, righteous and His. This is the truth we hold on to!

2 Samuel 12 tells us that David is in the midst of living through the horrific consequences of his sinful actions. On a day that most of us would claim as one of the worst days of our lives. On a day where David is at his lowest and full of grief, David does an amazing thing. He gets up, he bathes, anoints himself, changes his clothes and goes into the Lord's house and worships. David even after all of this is still a man after God's own heart. So, David climbs Mount Zion, walks into the Lord's house. As close as he can legally get to the Lord. And here, David worships. The original Hebrew for worship means to bow down, to fall flat, to be prostrate, to be reverent. David falls on his face before God.

We know that David wrote Psalm 51 as a response to this time in his life, but we don't know for sure the exact place in time that it was written. Some believe it was written at this exact moment. One author wrote about King David, a wretched blackhearted sinner, like me. Even at his worst climbed Mount Zion, into the tent, fell face down and raised his hands to worship. And God who is faithful, whose mercy is everlasting, who stretched out the heavens with a word, who told the edge of the sea where to start and stop, who hung ten trillion stars, met him right there. In the muck and mire. That tearful, wrecked, hands raised sinner, is a picture of both repentance and worship."

When we look at this Psalm, even before verse 1 we see that David gave this Psalm to the choir master to sing. Allowing his sin to be known. David finally tears off the basement door of his heart. The sin David had tried to keep hidden for so long, he finally exposes for the world to see. David, is at the place he wants God more than anything else and he says: here is the truth of who I am. David chose for this story of his downfall to be sung as worship within the temple. David opened his life for men to know him. BUT more importantly David opened his life, allowing his redemption to be known. David wants to show others that God can redeem even the most lost. The prodigal that has wandered the farthest, God can bring home. From this, David has no other desire than for the opportunity to tell others how amazing God is. David states

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. **14** Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. **15** O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise

David is a textbook case of the idea you don't know how good God's grace is, until you know the depth of your depravity. As a result, David's desire is to use the rest of his life, to point the lost back to God. To welcome the prodigal home .

One parent shared the difficult truth that "I cannot save a prodigal myself. If a prodigal truly wants to turn away from the Lord and is determined to do so, then no amount of my effort will prevent that." We can't fall into the false belief that if we only try harder, if we are a better parent, or a better friend, or better pastor, then the people in our lives will never walk away from the Lord. If only we try harder, read more, pray more, do more, teach better, create better programs, lead better Bible studies, then people won't walk away from their faith. We cannot buy into that lie.

Instead we hold tightly to the promises of God, that He will do what only He can do, as we entrust our prodigals to Him. With the prayer that they will return to the Father.

Luke 15 the prodigal

20 ... arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. **21** And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' **22** But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. **23** And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. **24** For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.