

Finding God in a Broken World: Experiencing God When You've Blown It Big Time

Do you feel like you've blown it big time? Maybe you have committed a huge sin, and you think that God could never love you or will never forgive you? Maybe it's a secret thing that no one knows about, but it's eating you up inside, and you just can't get over the hump. What do you do when you've blown it big time? When you have sinned and know it is wrong but don't know where to go.

Someone has said Jesus is the God of second chances. Jesus is Savior of the world. Jesus is the God that you come to and say, I want a do over. I blew it. I'm sorry. I failed. Will you give me another chance? And Jesus is the God who says absolutely. The question is, how does that happen? How do you get cleansed, forgiven, and headed back on the right track? That is what we are going to talk about today.

Sometimes smart people do dumb things. Sometimes wise people do foolish things. And sometimes even Godly people do sinful things. The person who is talking to you has made a few of those mistakes, and all of you sitting in your seat listening have also made a few of those mistakes. But over and over in scripture we find that we are related to a God who, although He will never, ever treat sin lightly, He understands that we are but dust, understands when we have blown it big time, and is willing to meet us in a way that is absolutely contrary to human logic and is absolutely contrary to what we know about anything and everything other than Him. He wants to forgive. He wants to take even our worst moments, even when we knew it was wrong, and reclaim us for Himself. He is a God that specializes in redemption for His honor and glory.

I want to read you a story. This story is about one of the Godliest men in all of scripture. His name is David. The scripture says that it was time for kings to go out to battle, and he stayed home. He was walking on the roof one night and saw a very attractive woman. He was a good man in a weak moment. He was attracted. He lusted. He called for her. He committed adultery. She became pregnant. He brought home her husband, tried to get her husband to spend the night with her so that when the child came that he would think it was his own. The husband had too much honor. So, he sent him back on the battlefield and had him killed. He later married the woman. She's now pregnant with his son and months have gone by and God is going to intervene through a prophet. We pick up the story in 2 Samuel 12. It is important to note that when Nathan came before David he used a word picture. To confront a king directly about something he may have done wrong was a really good way to get yourself killed.

12 And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, there were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: 3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4 And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

In this culture, hospitality is very big. If a stranger comes, you were obligated to provide a meal. Here is a super-rich guy with all these sheep and all these cattle, but he decided I don't want to waste mine, so he took this one little sheep from the poor man that was almost like a member of the family, butchers it and prepares a meal. Now David was a shepherd, so this hit home with him. Notice his response.

5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: 6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. 7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. 9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. 11 Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

Here is his response. David has been in denial. David has been pretending, he has been lying, he has been living with a guilty conscience. And now when he sees it clearly, here is his response.

13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. David comes clean. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. 14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

David understood the implications of what was happening here in this particular story. Under the law, what is the sentence for committing adultery? It's death. Under the law, what is the penalty for murder? It's death. God has given mercy to David. He has owned his sin. Now, he understands the sword is not going to part from his house. That is God's judgment. He understands from out of his house there is going to be calamity and embarrassment and consequences. But the prophet has said that God has forgiven you. That is a graphic picture. Sin is an amazing thing. There are always ripples aren't there? Here is the question that I want you to answer along with me. How do you ever recover when you know that you have done something terribly wrong? How do you ever get back on your feet? How do you overcome the guilt, shame, and embarrassment? How do you ever get right with God again? How do you ever experience His fellowship? How do you ever get this huge bump in the road behind you? How do you get restored? How does it work?

I believe that God has given us the answer in Psalm 51. Notice that what we have in Psalm 51 is David's prayer after this conversation with Nathan. We literally get to eavesdrop on this great and Godly man who committed adultery, who committed murder, who knew better, who knew God better at this point than probably any of us sitting in this room will ever know Him. And yet, in a moment of weakness, in a window of time, at a point of vulnerability, he made a disastrous mistake. And then did what most of us do. Instead of owning it early, he tried to hide it and cover it up. What have we learned happens when you try to cover up sin? It grows. Its impact grows.

If you want to jot down in the margin of your notes to look at Psalm 32, that tells us what was happening in the heart of David. It says the Lord's hand was heavy upon me, when I was silent about my sin. It was like being in a desert. My body was wasting away. When we know that things aren't right with God, when we have sinned against Him and others, it will eat you up. It will crush you spiritually, it will devastate you emotionally. You know, we are all human, aren't we? What we all have in common

as human beings is failure. We try to rank it. I'm not sure how much God ranks. The consequences for each of our failures is certainly different, but the point remains the same, we have all failed at some point in time, but here's the message in Psalm 51, with God, failure is never final.

I hope in the VCR of your mind, the pictures, the things that you have done that you are ashamed of, maybe some things that no one knows about, maybe some things that even right now that you are involved in, I am praying that the Spirit of God will break through the armor of your denial. That it will break through how you are covering and hiding your sin and let you know that you can come clean today. You can be forgiven today. For some, it's from your past. Nobody knows about the abortion. You would be ashamed if anyone ever found out. For some of you men, you are the one who urged her to have the abortion. For others, it's the affair, it was the business trip. For others, it was flat out stealing. You got away with it. No one knows, but you never know if they are going to find out. For some people, it's a big, dark, ugly past. For others, it's a secret, and it's dipping into the internet, and adult book stores, and you are hooked on pornography. For other people, you have a thought life and a mind that goes in directions that make you feel so overwhelmed by guilt that you feel like the biggest hypocrite. You feel pulled this way and that way. You want to be close to God but you feel like there is a war and it's always going on inside, but you don't know how to get out.

And then there are some of you that think, you know, thank God I have never blown it big time. I like the title to this lesson. How to experience God when you've blown it big time. That's great, but this one isn't for me because I've never blown it big time. If you feel that way, I'd encourage you to read the sermon on the mount. What happens in our day is that we rank the sins. Jesus says that God is absolutely pure, absolutely holy. In Matthew 5, he says if you have never had an affair, but lusted after a woman in your heart, you have already committed adultery in your heart. If you have never acted and committed murder but you have had anger and wrath towards someone else, you have assassinated them already in your mind. If you have gossiped and torn down, it's like shooting or assassinating another person's character by gossip. You may not think that is big time, but I have news for you, He does. And that sin, although never seen, never popping up on the screen and never having a large impact on others, it's an offense to a holy God. If you don't think so, try something just as an experiment. I dare you to turn off the TV, the radio, don't go to a movie, don't rent a video, have a media fast for 7 days. Substitute that for time in the scriptures. You will turn on the TV a week from now, you will see things in commercials, and you will hear language and see images that offend you that never offended you before. If you really want to get offended and really want to see who God is, take a 30-day media fast. At the end of that, you will say, I can't watch that anymore because you will begin to look at life the way that God looks at life.

James 3 says that anyone who becomes a friend of the world, you know what he calls us, he says, you are adulterers. We have a church and we have a nation who has become a friend to the world. You know something? Sin doesn't bother us very much. It bothers God a lot. We don't experience the freshness and promptings of the Holy Spirit, and we don't experience the kind of joy, and we don't see the power and answers to our prayer. You know why? Because God is holy. Try something if you get a chance, read straight through the book of Leviticus. I know it will be a challenge. I often get stuck in Leviticus during my Bible reading plan. But you get a view of how high God views the issues of holiness, how particular He is and how He longs for holiness and His presence to be in every aspect of worship and life for the people of Israel. That will make you realize that the God that we worship has grown much smaller than the God who is. With that as a backdrop, maybe you and I have blown it a little more

big time than we think. So, what do you do? There are seven steps that flow out of Psalm 51 for spiritual recovery.

1. Come clean with God.

Get honest. Get it out in the open. Stop the secrecy. Stop rationalizing. Stop minimizing. Stop reframing it. Stop saying everyone else does it. Stop comparing yourself to someone else that does it worse. Stop it, stop it, stop it, stop it and come clean with God. That's what David did. He could have said I'm the king. I have a special privilege. I have all of the pressures of the office, it's a struggle, she's a beautiful woman. We do all those things. Do what David did. He got to the point where he said that I have sinned against the Lord. This is the most difficult step, but without this, the next 6 mean nothing. Come clean with God. As I continue to speak, I want you to pray a little prayer. Pray the prayer of Psalm 139, O, God search me and know me. See if there be any wicked way in my heart. Don't manufacture stuff. Don't try and think something up to feel bad about. The Holy Spirit will make it vivid and clear if there is a problem. Just be open to him about relationships, about conduct, about viewing, about habit's, about your relationship with the Lord, and then come clean. Come clean. You do that, it begins to happen.

Steve Arterburn wrote a book, and he makes a point that is worth mentioning here. One of the seven keys to renewal is confession. He says that there are 3 reasons why people don't come clean with God. The first is we have a fear of losing our reputation. The fear of being publicly exposed can keep us awake at night with a feeling of dread. It's better to be found out and even have a damaged reputation than to allow the venomous secrets to poison our relationship with God and others. Get it out.

The second reason he says that we don't come clean with God is fear of losing our favorite sin. When we come clean, we realize that we can't be doing that anymore. You need to break that relationship off, you need to stop that habit, you need to address that. But we don't because we won't want to lose our favorite sin. That leads to the third reason.

The third reason he says is the fear of losing our security. When our emotional or financial security is linked to something sinful, naturally we fear confession. Confession will bring change, and the immediate change may not seem to be good. This is where faith comes in. If we agree with God about it, what He says, and what He says is good, we can trust the ultimate outcome of obedience will be good.

2. Ask God for forgiveness.

Look at Psalm 51, the first two verses, he prays, he's been confronted and now we are eavesdropping right in his room as he prays to God. He says, 51 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Did you notice the verbs? There are 4 of them. Here is a guy that says, help me, forgive me, have mercy, blot out, wash away, cleanse me. Did you notice the basis? He is not cutting a deal. He's not negotiating a settlement. He's not saying now God I'll do this if you do this. He's not saying God I know that I was a little off. He is not reframing or minimizing. He is not saying now a lot of kings have done a lot worse. What's does he say? He asks God to wash, clean, and forgive

him based on God's character and not on anything that he has done to be worthy to deserve it. He says, God, according to your lovingkindness. That is a Hebrew word that means God's loyal covenant love towards us. He goes on to say according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. And that means literally out of the bowels or out of the womb, out of something deep down inside of God that feels what we feel, God on the basis of who you are, not on the basis of what I have done, will you wash, clean, forgive, and cleanse. If you have never done that, get honest, and ask him to forgive you. He wants to forgive you.

3. Own responsibility for your sin. That flows out of verses 3-5 he says, notice that there are 5 times in these 3 verses that he is going to own his sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Do you hear what he is doing? He owns it. This is almost unheard of in our day. You know when we sin, our first words are well you understand the kind of home I came out of. You understand the environment at our job and in this industry, everybody lies. When you travel this much, everyone is going to have an affair now and then, and you don't understand, my marriage isn't really fulfilling, and you know, I have to have my needs met. I have to be fulfilled. You know what that does? That is just another layer of denial. It's another layer of trash. God doesn't care about whatever excuse that you want to throw before Him. He paid the ultimate price to free you from the bondage of sin, and He wants you to live a life full of fellowship with Him, but you have to get honest and get the garbage out of your life.

There was once a man that somehow along the way got in a jam. He went one year and didn't pay the IRS. Soon, he had gone 5 years without paying any of his taxes. He finally ended up paying the next year. They checked his records, and he realized that he was in trouble. This guy was in ministry and doing all kinds of things. It's amazing the dissonance we can live with. We can pray, lead a bible study, have people over to our home, and go to church, and just be flat out lying and cheating over here. He finally decided to own his own sin. He made a called to the IRS and said, if you put me in jail, you put me in jail. I want to work something out, but I know what I deserve. Have mercy on me. They developed a pay out plan, and they worked it out. That guy's life totally changed because he got rid of his secret. He came clean.

4. Accept God's forgiveness and cleansing.

This is critical. David was a man of faith. Even after the sin, the New Testament describes him as a man after God's own heart. We need to come clean with God. Ask Him for forgiveness, own responsibility for our sin and the consequences, by the way, which he did. And as you read that, you need to know that he wasn't blaming his mom, he was saying, my sin problem is so big that it goes all the way back to my roots. We sin as people, not only by choice, but by nature. We are all sinners. From the moment we come into the world, we sin. Adam is our father, and the apostle Paul would teach that this is a part of who we are, and that is why we need the second Adam, Christ.

Now he says, accept God's forgiveness and cleansing. There is a major shift in the Psalm in verse 6. It now turns very positive. He's putting it behind him. He says this is what happened. Now I

want to move on with you God. 6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts. He is saying, God, I want a relationship with you, and here is the deal, you only have a relationship with God the second that you get honest. It's not about making up for it. It's not about doing things to try to balance it out. The moment that you get honest is when we see the biggest change. Honesty is what God wants. In John 4, what did He say to the woman at the well? The father is seeking worshippers who worship him in spirit and truth. See, what I have learned, I have done some dumb things. I have done some bad things. I have done some sinful things. I have often felt guilty and tried to do good things for 2 or 3 weeks to try to balance them out. Nothing helps. The moment that I have gotten honest and come clean with God and said help me. It all goes away, you get grace.

God is looking for truth in the innermost man. The last part of that verse goes on to say, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom or skill. He's talking about how to live and be a man or woman of God. 7 Purge me with hyssop (a little herb that would be dipped in blood, that is ceremonial cleansing), and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. 9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

Now, I want to show you something. If you are taking notes, this is something that you might jot down. It doesn't come out in some translations as clearly. There are 4 phrases here that are in the future tense. The first one is where he says, Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, literally after that, it says that you will teach me wisdom. The second is you will purge me with hyssop and I will be clean. The third is you will wash me and I will be whiter than snow, and the fourth is you will let me hear joy and gladness. See what these really are, they are more than desires, they are affirmations. This is not just something that David wants to see happen. This is what David says that God will do for us if we get honest with Him. See, David, has accepted God's will. He says that I know based on your character and not on my sin, that you will restore me and you will guide me. He is accepting the work of God.

When Nathan said that the Lord has forgiven you. David didn't go back into the palace and say, but I just can't forgive myself. I know that God has forgiven me, but I just can't forgive myself. Have you ever done that? Boy, I sure have. And I don't know about you, but I have had things where I say to God that I will never do that again, and I do it. God, I promise, never, ever, ever again, and I do it. You ever do that? Don't look at me that way. I know I'm not the only one. And then I have felt so overwhelmed and so guilty that I felt like why even pray, why ask him to forgive me again. I mean, I'm a jerk, and then I know the scripture, I know what the bible teaches.

I know that it says that Christ died on the cross for all of that sin. I know the moment that I trusted Christ that he paid for all of my sin past, present, and future. I know that I am positionally right in my relationship with God, but I need to confess my sin, agree with God about it to be cleansed and restore fellowship. But I played the game for years that I can't forgive myself. Little sins meant be depressed for 2 days. Big sins mean be depressed for 2 months. Don't read your Bible. Don't pray. Mopey, mopey, mopey. Which usually leads to other sins, by the way.

I was reading in a book about someone else that had this same problem. The author, let's call him Bob, was sitting down with Bill talking about the Bible. Bob was expecting comfort and didn't get it. Instead, He got rebuked. Bill said, how arrogant can you be? What do you mean? Bill said, Bob, you are arrogant. Bob said, no, you don't understand, I just can't forgive myself for the sin I have committed. Put yourself in his shoes, you fill in whatever sin it is. I just can't forgive myself, I had an abortion. I just can't forgive myself, I had an affair. I just can't forgive myself, I am not a good father, I'm not a good mom. Bill said, now let me get this right, God looks at your situation, and He has taken the guilt of your sin. He has taken it off of you. He allowed Jesus to hang on the cross, a man who was perfect, fully God, fully man, and He placed it all on Him for the purchase price and the payment. God has declared you innocent and declared that Christ's payment of His pure blood was enough, and you are going to say to God that that is not quite good enough? He said, I've never looked at it quite like that. Have you? Are you willing to accept where you have blown it, but then accept the cleansing? Can you accept that you are loved and special and valued? I don't know how it works. It's not because of who you are. It's because of who God is. He doesn't love like other people. He loves you unconditionally. Accept God's forgiveness and cleansing.

5. Request a fresh work of Grace.

This isn't like doing bad things, and then wiping it off so you can do something else and get it on the board. I remember a situation in my life, I was on the tilt, I was just ready to sin in a very familiar area, and I was thinking no, no, no, Holy Spirit do a work in me, and my flesh was going, yeah, yeah, yeah, and this thought came to my mind. Well, I'll go ahead and sin, then I will ask for forgiveness later. Do you ever think of that one? It's called presumption on the grace of God. It may be one of the most dangerous things that you ever think, let alone do. See, genuine forgiveness means that you are genuinely repentant, and what David says, is man, I've had that guilt, against you and you only have I sinned. Did he sin against Bathsheba? Yes. Uriah? Yes. The nation? Yes. But what he understands is that every time we violate another person, ultimately, it goes back to their creator, God. What he is going to say is that I don't want anything to do with sin. I want a fresh start.

If you are genuinely repentant in your heart, you are not going to play games with God. You are not going to say, "Oh good, thank you for forgiving that, this is kind of easy." That is dangerous ground. You may find the high, heavy hand of the Lord when you start playing those kinds of games. Notice what he says in verses 10-12, 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, this is a great word here by the way, it's used about 2 or 3 different times in scripture. It's used in creation, bara is the word, it means to bring something out of nothing. God speaks and creates life. David is asking for a miracle. He said, man I was low. I was bad. I have offended you. God, I want you to do a new creation. I want you to do a miracle. What is it? Create in me a clean heart and renew a right or steadfast spirit. Why? I don't know about you, but when I sin I want to give up. Give me that steadfast spirit within and then, he says, 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Where'd he get that? Remember Saul? Saul was the king. Saul turned away from God. Saul backslid, and in the old testament economy, they weren't sealed with the Spirit. It's the new covenant where we have the Spirit of God living in us. They didn't have that. The spirit of God

would come upon a prophet and a king for a special assignment. David saw what happened to Saul, and said, oh God, please don't take the Holy Spirit from me.

Now, you don't have to worry about that. The new covenant is where God says I will be their God and they will be my people. Ephesians 1:13 says that you have been sealed with the Spirit. Romans 8:28-39 says that nothing can separate you from the love of Christ, but notice what he does, create, renew, don't cast, and then he says in verse 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. You feel low, you feel depressed, you don't like yourself. You know what he is saying? He is saying God I want back in. I want to experience your fellowship. I can't do it. It's not about me. Pulling up my bootstraps, trying harder once again. Saying I'll do, I'll do, I'll do, I'll do. No, you won't. I don't. You don't have the power. David didn't have the power.

Create, renew, restore, sustain. He's saying, God I want to pray and feel your presence like I did before. God, I want to pray and see you work. God, I want to go into worship with God's people and sense your love and your appreciation and your affirmation and your joy. God, I don't want to just be cleansed. I want to be filled again. Ask God to do a fresh work. Request of Him to do a fresh work in your heart. He will do it. Some of the greatest people in all of scripture are people who blew it big time. Moses- murder. Paul- murder. You think they got forgiven? You bet. Did they experience great times with God? Yes. Were they used mightily by God? Yes. Was there baggage, hurt pain, tough issues? Yes.

6. Resolve to use past failures for ministry.

There was a drug dealer from Alaska that started a recovery ministry. When he first started, maybe 2-3 alcoholics would come. The next week a different 2-3 would come. He was ready to give up. God put a dream on his heart, and he said that I'm going to stick with this. He went down to southern California and learned about a recovery ministry at Saddleback. It gave him a heart and a vision. A year later, this was the second largest recovery ministry in all of Northern California. God birthed this through a team of people with a former drug addict. See, God wants to use the most difficult, painful, sinful thing that you have done and make you a trophy of His grace where your testimony is that this is where I was, and only by the grace of God, this is where I am. He gets all of the credit.

Picking up in verse 13, what does David say? 13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Hey, he says, I don't want to just have fellowship. I want to get back on the playing floor. I want to be used by you. I want to teach other people your ways. What ways? The ways of a forgiving, grace-filled God who takes the evil that we do and somehow forgives and turns it into good.

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. I want people to know about what you are really like, your character. 15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. See, he wants to be back apart of ministering to others. He's resolved, I have blown it, I deserve death, I've been forgiven, I've been restored, and now God, I don't want to be some second-class Christian citizen where I say, I'm a Christian, but I've been divorced, I'm a Christian but I've had an abortion, I'm a Christian but I've had an affair. I'm a Christian, but I lied at work. I'm a

Christian, but I'm guilty of embezzlement. I'm a Christian, but I'm in jail. You know what you are? You are a Christian who has been forgiven of all of that. And God will use those very things. See, God will take wherever you have been and He will use it for good, if you and me can let our pride go, and say, God I'm open and willing.

Then, notice, the little aside in verse 16. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do you hear what David learned? This is a little theological perspective. Is David saying that the Old Testament law is no longer or that sacrifices are no longer given? Of course not. What he is saying is that external religion, doing things by the book, reading your bible more, giving, praying, getting involved in ministry, whatever your thing is, what David is saying is that none of that means anything unless you do it with the right heart. All the time that he was in sin with Bathsheba, I guarantee he was still going to the temple, he was the king, that was his job. He was still playing the game. He was still religious up to his eyeballs, and God wasn't showing up in his life. You know why? Because of his sin and failure to let that sin break his heart.

The true sacrifices of God, prayers have meaning when they come from a broken and contrite heart. A gift of money has meaning and worship when it comes from a broken and contrite heart. Loving other people, being involved in ministry, has meaning when it comes from a broken and contrite heart. When you understand who you are, and you understand who God is and you come clean. He says that's the sacrifice. And notice, I love the line, you will not despise. I don't care where you have been. I don't care what you have done. I don't care what you are doing right now. You come to God with a broken heart, he will not turn you away. You come honestly and repent and you say you are sorry, and you will be hugged by the God of the universe and He will forgive you out of His character and His son's work on the cross.

7. Pray for limited fallout from your folly.

Notice David picks it up and says, 18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion (Jerusalem): build thou the walls of Jerusalem. 19 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. Do you hear what he's doing? He heard what Nathan said, the sword is not going to depart from your house. He's the king. Out of your own family there will be great embarrassment. What David knows, is just like us, your sin never effects just you. My sin never affects just me. What David knew was that his enemies, the last line of 2 Samuel 12:13 says, now your enemies have this advantage because of what you have done. You know what David is basically saying, Hey God, just limit the fallout. Please don't let my sin mess up my kids too bad. Please don't let my sin mess up my family too badly. Please don't let it mess up my people. He would say, oh God, I'm the one, let it get me. What God would say to you today and to us, is come clean with me, ask for forgiveness, own responsibility for your sin, accept God's forgiveness and cleansing, request a fresh work of grace, resolve to use past failures for ministry, and pray for limited fallout from your folly. (Ask someone to come for invitation)

As we close today, I want to ask you a very straightforward, personal question. Are you ready to come clean with God? I mean be honest. No denial. No blaming. No pretending. I mean getting ruthlessly honest with yourself and God. Are you ready to ask him to forgive you? He wants to. He loves you. He

cares for you. You have to take the first step. You know what is wrong. You can blame. You can deny. But you know in your heart of hearts that you have to own this one. I implore you for your own good, to stop right now in your spiritual tracks, and just say, God I can't take it anymore. I want to confess. I want to own this. I thought this, I did this, I lied about this, this habit that I have, whatever it is, come clean with God. The Lord is near to the broken hearted. He saves those who are crushed in Spirit. The Lord answers those who call upon Him, to those who call upon Him in truth. Just own it. Just come before Him. Say God based on Jesus's work on the cross and His resurrection, will you forgive me and cleanse me?

In our lesson on Psalm 139, we learned that God knows us very intimately. He knows our thoughts before we even think them, our words before we even say them, and he knows exactly how and why we will respond to a specific situation. He is not surprised by anything that happens. Before the foundation of the world, when you came to His mind, He already knew every single time that you would ever blow it in your life, and that includes the times that you have really blown it big time. Do you know what His response to that was? Love. He loved you so much that even though He saw the very worst of you, He decided to send His son to die for you anyway. He saw your worst and loved you with His best. That is how much He desires to have a relationship with you. He paid the ultimate price to ransom and reconcile you so that you may spend forever in fellowship with Him.

He wants to meet you and restore you, but you have to be honest with yourself about where you are, and you have to be honest with Him too. He already knows where you are, but the first step in obtaining forgiveness is acknowledging that for yourself. It's kind of like that one time and I know this has happened to every single man in this room, when you were on a road trip and inevitably, you got lost. Like most men, they stay that way for a long time because they won't acknowledge that they don't know where they are. It's not until they say, honey, we are lost, that they take the steps necessary to fix the problem. Have you lost your way? God would like to help you find your way home, even if you have blown it big time. He stands with arms wide open waiting to restore you and cleanse you.

If you are honest with yourself, you might say, but Adam, my sin feels so natural to me. I don't think that is a stretch to say it is the dilemma we all find ourselves in. You see what God has to say about your sin, but your heart doesn't utter the same sentiments. God's word says it's sinful; your heart says it feels right. God's word says it's abominable; your heart says it's delightful. God's word says it's unnatural; your heart says it's totally normal. Do you see that there is a clear divide between what God's word says and how your heart feels?

So, which voice should you believe? There will be a time in everybody's walk with Christ where you will experience temptation about falling back into a life of sin. These temptations will cause you to doubt God's word. Those temptations and desires become more real to us than the truth of the Bible, but God says that we have to believe that His word is true even if it contradicts how we feel. We can either trust His word or trust our own feelings. Either look to him for the pleasure our souls crave or search for that pleasure in lesser things. Either walk in obedience to what He says or reject truth as if it were a lie. The struggle with sin is a battle of faith. Is God your joy? Is He good enough? Or are you still looking to broken cisterns to quench a thirst only He can satisfy? That is the battle. It is for me, and it is for you. The choice is yours. You can put your faith in Christ and flee from the lies of our society that coincide with the voices of your heart- a heart that scripture says is wicked and deceitful. Run to Jesus instead.