

I'm going to come as I am, okay? Just as you are. You know, this is what you get when you're a blond headed boy who has spent countless hours in the hay field. And then when I wasn't there, I was fishing and doing all kinds of things. It's okay.

This is all. I'll tell you a little bit more about it in a minute. I will tell you this, that Tim's never been to a dermatologist. Who thinks Tim should go to a dermatologist. Okay.

He said his retirement plan was to die young. So there you go.

Hey, does this look terrible? Sorry. I'll back up just a little bit. Where you stand determines what you see. Think about that.

Isn't that true? Where you stand determines what you see. I got a little illustration here. I believe so. So one guy looks at this and says, oh, it's a nine.

And the other guy says, no, it's a six. And their perception is based on where they stand. And that's literally true. But it's also true in other ways. David was standing in a place at the wrong time and he saw something he should not have seen.

In the spring of the year, when kings normally go out to war, David stayed behind in Jerusalem. 2 Samuel 11. So David sends out his soldiers, his loyal soldiers who are fighting the Amalekites. And while they're out there battling, David seemingly is taking. Taking it easy back home in the palace.

And one afternoon he decides to go up on the roof and just look around the city. Tim and I were at a place where we think David's palace was, and it's up on a hill and you can see over Jerusalem. And so he goes up there as the sun is slowly sinking into the horizon. And he looks quiet and he sees her, a beautiful woman bathing. And David looks and he keeps looking.

And his lingering look turns into lust.

David leans into it instead of moving away.

And so he asked somebody, who is this woman? The answer should have stopped him because the servant said, this is Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. Uriah. Uriah is one of David's warriors, one of David's mighty men, one of the guys that fights for David. But David doesn't stop.

He says, can you go get her? Tell her to come to see me? There's a huge, a huge power imbalance here. And I don't think she can say no. That's just my thinking.

And so David abuses his power as he abuses her.

She leaves. David probably assumes that this will fade deeper into secrecy. The few people that know, won't tell, and nobody else will know. A few weeks later, everything changes. David receives word from Bathsheba, I'm pregnant.

And with those words, David had some choices.

He could have stood in a place of humility. He could have come clean. He could have confessed, yeah, I did that. And I think he would have received mercy. But instead of standing in humility, David chooses to stand in a place of deception.

So he lies, he deceives, he manipulates the situation. He says, hey, bring Uriah in from the front lines. I want to talk to him. He thinks if Uriah comes home, then he has a plausible explanation for Bathsheba's pregnancy. But Uriah ruins the manipulation because he stands in a place of integrity and a place of loyalty with his fellow soldiers.

And so says, how could I possibly go sleep in my own bed with my wife tonight when those guys are out there sleeping on the ground? So as David realizes his manipulation fails, he makes a very cold, calculated decision and he writes out an order to give to the commander. And he seals it, gives it to Uriah, and says, give this to the commander. Uriah doesn't realize he's sending his own death sentence because the letter says, hey, put Uriah on the front line and then have everybody withdraw. The commander obeys and Uriah dies.

Bathsheba mourns her husband, and I'm guessing public opinion said, what a nice, compassionate king we have because he's taking in this poor widow. Isn't that nice of our king? And so that's one way of looking at it. And maybe that was the way, but God standing in another place is seeing it in a different way. The text says that the thing that David did displeased God, displeased the Lord.

And so David lives in displeasure, God's displeasure, we think, for about a year. He lives with a very sinful secret for about a year. Then God sends Nathan the prophet to help David stand in a different place. Nathan tells a story, a very compelling story, about a really rich guy, has all kinds of animals and resources. But this rich guy looks at this poor guy who has one little lamb and says, I want your lamb and I'm going to have it for dinner tonight.

Night. Well, when David hears the story, he's just outraged. He's livid. And he looks at Nathan, he says, whoever did that deserves to die.

And Nathan stuns David and says, you are that man. It's you.

In that moment, David suddenly moves from standing over here in deception to standing over here in humiliation, which then leads to humility. And so over here, he now allows himself to see what God sees. And he agrees with what God says that this is a sin. It's a terrible sin. And so David confesses.

He confesses on the spot. He says, I have sinned against the Lord. You know, it's interesting. Confession in the Bible essentially means the same thing as it does in our language. It means to acknowledge reality, to say to speak to what reality is, to speak to truth.

But in the Bible, there's a. There's a nuance that evolves into the New Testament that. That says, I agree and I see what God says, and I agree with it. So I see and I agree with what truth is and what reality is. There are two psalms, two psalms that are written by David that we believe are in response to him standing over here in a place of humility, seeing what God sees, and agreeing with what God sees says about his sin of adultery.

We believe Psalm 51. I think most people know that Psalm 51 was written almost immediately after David's confronted and confesses. Some considered it like a written confession that he might have written that night on the spot. Listen to some of the beautiful words of confession in Psalm 51. Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love, because of your great compassion.

Blot out the stain of my sins.

Wash me clean from my guilt, purify me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and make me willing to obey you. Now, I'd encourage you to read all of Psalm 51 later.

You know, Psalm 51 is considered like a confession in the moment. It's raw, it's real, and it's honest. And David's shame is on display, holds nothing back. He's very, very honest, and he's full of godly sorrow. I've sinned against you, Lord, and you only.

And Paul says in 2nd Corinthians 7 that Godly sorrow leads to repentance. It leads to a change of view, a change of living. And David's doing all that. It's his pain, pleading, and desperation for God's forgiveness. And David stands in humiliation.

He stands humbly with God, and he agrees that he does not deserve any of it. But he receives mercy, and he's so, so thankful. He praises God for it. Now, that's Psalm 51. But we also believe Psalm 32 is about David and Bathsheba.

And we believe that Psalm 32 was written later. And it's a little different Psalm. Psalm 51 is kind of like raw and right on the spot.

Psalm 32 is more reflective. And it seems like David has had time to process what has happened.

Psalm 32 is about freedom, freedom that comes from confession. It's about relief. It's about standing with God and seeing mercy and seeing grace and praising him for it. So Psalm 51 is kind of directly to God, but Psalm 32 is more to God's people. It's more to us.

It's called a masculine. You might see that in your Bible. That just means it's a teaching psalm. And so David is not only celebrating the forgiveness that he received, but he's saying, I want you to experience it, too. I want you to understand that it's available for you as well.

And so essentially he's saying, come, friends, I want to. I want to share with you something, and I want you to come clean. I want you to confess your sins. I want you to stand with God and agree with his mercy, agree with his grace and forgiveness. Because this is where you will find what you want so desperately.

This is where you'll find peace and joy, joy and freedom and confidence. So I want to look at a few verses from Psalm 32. So verses 1 and 2 says this. Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight. Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty.

So in the Hebrew, you kind of see it in English, but David stacks three words for forgiveness, and he stacks three words for sin. And it's like he puts together this beautiful thing of six words that make one point. And it's this. God knows everything about you. He knows it all.

He sees it all, and he will forgive it all. Every kind of sin, whether it's out there or in here, whether it's intentional or unintentional, known or unknown. When we confess, forgiveness follows. That's what David is saying. And he said, this is.

This is a spiritual flourishing. It's a joy that's unspeakable. When we stand where God stands and live in complete honesty, there is a peace that's unbelievable, indescribable. The idea is just. Just flourishing.

No more pretending, no more hiding, just truth and transparency. Confession is meant to be a rhythm and not a crisis. It's often a crisis, but it's meant to be a rhythm. First John, chapter one. It says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and.

And just and will forgive us our sins. And Purify us from all unrighteousness. I've heard it illustrated before. It's like a

windshield wiper. This is a constant, continual process.

And I don't know about you, but recently, with all the snow and stuff on the road, if you get passed by a semi or even any other car, all this junk comes up on your windshield. But if you have the fluid in your thing, your windshield wiper will take that right off. A lot of people say that's like sin. Sin just shows up because that's what we do. But God's grace and mercy, we confess will continually keep us clean and keep us in a right standing with God.

And that's a beautiful picture. God's not wanting perfection because we can't do it, but he is wanting honesty. Honesty. And when honesty comes, mercy and grace are waiting, waiting. Verses 3 and 4.

When I refused to confess my sins, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long, day and night. Your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.

Unconfessed sin is difficult and sometimes we don't even know it. And we'll stand over here and we'll rationalize and saying, yeah, you know, if you slow down and say, rationalize, you will come up with rational lies. And we do that a lot. And we suppress and we hide and we conceal. And David says, you know what?

That just destroyed destroys your body, it destroys your mind. It just erodes your soul. And he says, thankfully, God didn't leave me alone. He kept his hand on me and he kept me in discipline in the form of guilt, I think. And it was more about conviction rather than condemnation.

He's wanting David to come around. AA says, you're as sick as your secrets. And I think David would say, that's right, that's right. An honest confession just brings healing and it restores life. Then verse five, finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt.

I said to myself, I will confess my rebellion to the Lord and you forgave me. All my guilt is gone. So this is the turning point of the psalmist, the turning point of David's life. He moves from hiding to naming, to acknowledge, to agree with. What God is saying is to uncover sin, to expose it where God can then cover it with mercy and grace.

Honesty replaces hiding, and it brings release and relief. Peace, verse 6 and 7. Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time that they may not drown in the flood waters of judgment. For you are my hiding place. You protect me from trouble.

You surround me with songs of victory. So in these verses, David is making it personal. He says, listen, I want my personal experience to

benefit you. I'm inviting you to go through this process. He urges.

He says, respond quickly, don't wait, because there is the flood waters of judgment at some point are going to overwhelm us and it will be too late. So he says this. Take care of it now. Do it now. Confession followed by forgiveness allows us to find this safe place with God to where we can sing, sing songs of victory.

So, as Tim mentioned, we're in a series of sermons. I think this is week six out of 13. And this series of sermons is based on the 12 steps of recovery programs. I told you before that we are piloting a program called Regeneration, which is the 12 steps. It's more of a discipleship program, and it's for everybody.

And I am helping to lead that. I'm going through it. So I'm working through the 12 steps, and it's been quite challenging to me. Step five is what I did recently. Step five of regeneration is confession.

We admit to God, we admit to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. So in regeneration, you have a mentor, kind of like a sponsor in aa, and I have a friend in Tennessee that I've known for a long, long time.

His name is John. And I asked John if he'd be my mentor. He said, sure. And so I confessed to John. Step four, which is what we talked about last week, is a fearless and searching moral inventory.

And so it's where with guidance, you go back and you look at your whole life and you see sins and you see patterns and you see things, some of which already forgiven. So you just kind of say, yep, yep, yep, yep. But then what I saw was things that I hadn't really dealt with. It's kind of like this. This is.

This is what damaged cells look like that could turn into cancer. And so I've gone through two weeks of applying cream twice a day that ended on Friday. And what that cream does is it penetrates and identifies and brings out cells that could turn into cancer. And as it brings it out, it destroys them. And so it's ugly.

Yes. And it's painful. But you know what? It's a part of a healing process. And a fearless moral searching inventory is the same thing.

Yeah, it's kind of hard to go back and see some things that I did a long time ago, but I did them, and I'VE received grace and mercy and forgiveness. But also I found out, you know, there's some things there. Ah. And so I bring those all out and I tell John, I said, look at this. I confess to you.

I confess that. And he, as everyone should, loves me. And he received it. Hey, man, have same struggles. And it's so liberating to just get

that all about.

And it's not about shame, it's not about guilt. It's about freedom. It's not easy, but the acceptance of another person to hear you in love makes it easier. So step five is confession. It takes confession upward to God, inward to myself, and outward to another human being.

And we have a bunch of resource material out on the table as you leave today. You can access, but we think about confessing to God. Just keep it honest and simple. He knows. He already knows.

And so it's not about a polished prayer, and it's not about the right words. It's just about saying, hey, just naming sin. Specifically, I got this problem. And we want to stand where God stands and see it as God sees it. And as we stand there and see it as he sees it, we also see his mercy.

We see his grace, we see his forgiveness, we see his love for us. And as we stand there, we invite God to heal us and we pray. Create in me clean heart, O God. Renew. Renew a loyal spirit within me.

Thank you. Thank you for your grace and mercy. Then the second thing is we confess to ourselves. This is where I own my own story. A lot of us are not very good at this, and we rationalize.

We tell rational lies to ourselves. We live in denial. But as you take a good look at your life, you see stuff. I was like, oh, I see how this is connected with that. Now when I go back behind it and see what's going, really going on with me, then it's liberating.

And I stand with God and I can see what he sees. And this is not about self condemnation. It's about liberation. And it ends with mercy and grace and forgiveness and praise. And then the third piece is Confessing to others.

James 5:16 says it very plainly. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. Now you want to be really careful about who you confess your sins to. There were four preachers who decided they should confess their sins to each other.

So they got in the room, got really quiet, and one guy said, I'll go first.

I have a problem of in moments of weakness, I watch movies that I should not Watch. Everybody said, yeah. The second guy said, well, my problem is all this stupid sports gambling has got me and I gamble. That's a real problem for me. The third guy said, listen, the stresses of ministry and the Sunday afternoons where you question everything you said in a sermon, it just winds me up so tight.

And I found that marijuana, smoking marijuana really helps me. Well, the fourth guy didn't say anything and so he said, dude, and they kept pushing him. He finally said, well, listen, my vice is I like to gossip and I can't wait to get out of here. So anyway, so be careful. Be careful who you choose.

Choose someone who's mature, trustworthy and safe. Share honestly, not graphically. You don't go back and tell every little detail of every sin. Just say, hey, I did this and this. And it's not about glorifying or celebrating sin.

It's about saying, listen, I just need to get this out in the open. And confession doesn't end with sin. It ends with God's mercy and what he's doing and his love for us. Keep it grounded in grace. Let somebody pray over you.

So step five, confession isn't about drowning in shame. It's about stepping into a place where God already stands. You remember that picture we had earlier? I don't know if we. Yeah.

So which one's right? One of them is right. Because whoever wrote that on the ground meant a six or a nine. So somebody is looking at it in a place where they're seeing the wrong thing. I think that illustrates we can sit here and talk about this and that and so on and so forth.

Well, I think that's right. But until we stand with God, we're not really seeing reality because God creates reality. God is truth. And so when we stand with him, we see things as they really are. And David shows us what happens when we do.

Burdens are lifted, joy return, and the soul breathes again. God's not asking for perfection. He's just asking for honesty. Just honesty. When we confess to God, to ourselves, and to someone trusted, we stop carrying what we were never meant to carry.

And just like David, we discover mercy, grace and freedom that God has had for us the whole time. As we come to the table today, we come to stand in a particular place. Not in deception, not in dishonesty, not in hiding or self justification. We come to stand in the place where God stands now. David learned that when he stepped out of hiding and into honesty, God was already waiting for him with mercy and forgiveness.

But David only had a glimpse of what we know he couldn't see how God could forgive, but we see it. We see it when we come to the table because we see Jesus. David didn't know, but we see Jesus. And so the bread we take reminds us that Jesus took on a real body. It was real, and he gave it for real sinners like you and me who have real stories and real problems.

The cup reminds us that forgiveness is real. Jesus poured out his blood, poured out his life for us at the cross. Jesus stood where we should stand, in a place of condemnation so that we can stand with God in a right relationship. Paul says in 2nd Corinthians 5, God made him who had no sin to be sin. We're a sin offering so that we might become the righteousness of God, that we might become right with God and stand with Him.

So the table reminds us of these things. So as you take the bread, take the cup, just be honest and thank God that He sees you and still loves you and calls you his beloved child. Let me pray. God, thank you for giving us all that we need. Just help us to be honest and transparent about our struggles.

At times, we don't want to celebrate them, we don't want to focus on them, but we don't want to hide them either. And so just thank you for the victorious lives that we can live of peace, joy and confidence and free from guilt and shame. We still struggle with things, but we can just be honest about them. So we thank you for this bread and this cup today that reminds us of the fact that Jesus had to die for our sins, but was also glad to die because he loves us so very much. It's in his name we pray.

Amen.

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