

The Summit Church
"Repentance Is Not Just a One Time Thing"
Psalm 51
July 25-26, 2015

I want to welcome all of our campuses worshipping all across the Triangle this weekend, my name is Will Toburen and I'm one of the pastors here at the Summit.

Pastor J.D. asked me to preach this weekend because he was supposed to be with one of our teams traveling to help further establish and encourage the work in South Asia. Unfortunately at the last minute his visa was revoked, most likely due to the fact he is a recognized Christian leader and this is an area unfriendly to the gospel. The rest of the team was able to go and we've already gotten great reports of what's already being done. In fact, if there is a silver lining the national partners there have said, if anything, this helps them realize God has given them the responsibility and ability to reach their country with the gospel!

But he'd already asked me to preach so this weekend, I want to share a message I've titled, "Repentance Is Not Just a One Time Thing". Now before I go any further let's acknowledge the simple fact that some of you need to stop and repent right now! Some of you just cursed under your breath a little bit when you realized Pastor JD wasn't going to be preaching this weekend. God will forgive you...I'll need to pray about it, but God definitely will.

In all seriousness, all of us who fill this pulpit when Pastor JD is out realize that the reason the congregation has that sentiment is because 1) you love your pastor, and 2) we see the power of God at work in his life when he preaches, and for that we can all be grateful.

But this weekend, I believe God has a challenging word for us, so if you have your Bible I want to encourage you to turn to Psalm 51 and I want us to study together one of the most well known passages on repentance found in the Scripture.

Martin Luther famously said, "All of a Christian's life is repentance." Repentance is not something we do to start the Christian life; repentance is a posture toward God that we adopt at conversion and maintain the rest of our lives.

That's why Jesus taught His disciples to pray, every day "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Daily we remind ourselves and confess to God that sin saturates our hearts through and through.

So, the discipline of repentance is vital. My desire for this weekend is for us a church to think about the role that repentance should play in our lives recognizing that it's imperative if we are going to fully experience the pleasures of God and ultimately be conformed into the image of Christ.

So, before we go any further let me share with you the definition of repentance that I want to work from this weekend.

DEFINITION:

Repentance means literally a "change of mind," and that change involves 3 things: our intellect, our emotions and our will:

- The intellect: Changing our opinion about something, acknowledging that God's truth is right
- The heart: Changing our feelings about that sin, feeling pain and sorrow over that sin
- The will: Changing our behavior

So, genuine repentance engages our intellect, our emotions, and our will. What I want to do is unpack each of them individually from David's prayer in Psalm 51 where we see David crying out to God in light of what he did to Bathsheba, Uriah, and the people of Israel.

The intellect: Repentance means acknowledging that God is true.

Repentance begins by acknowledging 'sin as sin' and that it is ultimately against God. All throughout Psalm 51 David does this but I want to look at vs. 3-5 specifically for just a moment.

51:3-5, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Up until now David has rationalized his sin. Perhaps he's said to himself, "I'm the king and I deserve this. Not to mention, I don't even do this often in comparison to other people." But now, David is saying, "God, it was evil. Wicked. David had now changed his viewpoint on his actions to God's.

And notice – don't miss this – David in these three verses acknowledges this specific action was a violation of God's law, but he goes farther, he says his whole heart is consumed by sin. Let's look at how David does this:

- Specific sin: "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me."
 - There is little doubt that David was readily replaying in his mind the specific sin that brought him to his point. (recap David's story)

- For many of us this may be pretty natural. You think back over the course of the day and you readily identify specific sins of either omission or commission that the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.
- But it's not just that. We know that behind every behavioral sin is a motivational sin.
 - Before David ever committed physical adultery he had committed spiritual adultery.
 - We know that our behavior (whether good or bad) is really just a manifestation of what we desire the most.
 - I can't speak for you but it's often easiest to remember and confess the obvious negative behaviors along with their motivations.
 - When I get angry with my wife or children b/c I want things the way I want things.
 - Have you seen the movie Tommy Boy? [SHOW PICTURE] One of my favorite lines is when Tommy's talking to his future girlfriend and she offers him a donut. He declines and says: "The doctors say I have what they call a 'little bit of a weight problem' ...but if I'm honest when things get stressful either personally or with ministry I can seek comfort in food.
 - Now before you start judging me, some of you do the very same thing only with exercise (which I just can't quite get my mind around...a choice between a donut and 50 burpees doesn't seem like much of a choice.)
 - Telling you it's a bit like a cult...Iron Tribe vs. Crossfit
 - All right I just have to do an informal poll:
 - How many burpee people do we have here? (If you don't know what a burpee is, then your probably a donut person)
 - How many donut people?
 - What I have a much more difficult time doing is being still before God and giving him the freedom to bring to mind my motivations behaviors that on the outside look to be consistent with the nature and character of God but in reality are done with a sinful heart.
 - Perhaps your generosity is motivated by the fact that you're convinced God will now have to 'owe' you.
 - Perhaps your desire to serve others is really motivated by wanting control what people think about you.
- KEY: Repentance means acknowledging not just that we sinned, but that we are sinful through and through.
 - Even our good deeds are tainted with selfish sin.

- The old Puritans used to say, “Even our tears of repentance must be washed in the blood of the Lamb.”
 - I want us to remember again this weekend that David wasn’t just remembering his specific sins, he was acknowledging his sinful condition.
- Sinful condition: *“Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”*
 - David is obviously not condemning his mother for something wrong that she did. He was brought forth from a mother and father in the confines of marriage.
 - Rather, he’s saying ‘iniquity’ is the element in which I have always existed.
 - I love how Spurgeon said it, *“It is as if he said, not only have I sinned this once, but I am in my very nature a sinner. The fountain of my life is polluted as well as its streams...I naturally lean toward forbidden things.”*
 - For most of us when we evaluate our character and our lives we think, “I am not that bad of a person.”
 - The Scripture, however, teaches us the exact opposite! Our hearts are deceitfully wicked above all things, which means I’m capable of doing things far beyond my comprehension.
 - I was sick a good part of this week and found myself reading more of the news than I normally do, and was reminded over and over just how disturbing things are. In the last 10 days there have been 5 mass murders! 5!
 - 5 family members stabbed to death in Oklahoma
 - Three kids and two adults killed in Modesto, Ca.
 - A woman and her three children found decomposing in a Chicago home
 - Four killed at a Chattanooga military training center
 - Four people shot dead in Holly Hill, South Carolina.
 - We think to ourselves, ‘what is going on in our world?’ But we also think to ourselves, ‘there would never be a situation where I could do something like this.’
 - And that’s where we would be wrong. You see were the environment and circumstances just right in your life you are capable of doing things that to you seem absolutely inconceivable!

Tim Keller said it this way, *“You can't be in denial about your capacity to sin. Sin is always crouching at your door. You are capable of much more than you want to admit, so the first thing you must do is get out of denial.”*

Repentance begins when we stop making excuses and acknowledge sin for what it is! Keller would go on to say: **“Real repentance begins where blame shifting ends!”**

We have to stop making excuses and using words like 'if' and 'but' when we're acknowledging our sin. You're just trying to justify yourself and that's not getting to the core.

So genuine repentance will always involve the intellect, but it can't end there. No, true repentance also has to involve the emotions. Let me share what I mean by that:

The emotions: Repentance means feeling sorrow for our sin.

Along with acknowledging our sin, genuine repentance will always involve godly grief and sorrow.

- In 2 Corinthians 7 Paul talks to the Corinthians about the effect that his previously letter had produced. The church in Corinth was being persuaded to turn away from the true gospel and Paul writes to them a stinging rebuke. In chapter 7 he shares with them how grateful he was that his letter had played an instrumental role in their turning back to God.
- In vs. 9-10 Paul writes: *"As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. **For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.**"*
- This godly grief that Paul is talking about is that feeling you get in the depths of your soul when you know that you have sinned against God.
 - *"Against you, and you only, have I sinned."*
 - Godly grief and guilt are like symptoms you feel when you are sick. You start getting a sore throat, fever, and hacking up a lung and you know something's wrong so you get yourself to the doctor so they can treat the bacteria or virus that is causing the symptoms.
 - In a similar way 'grief and sorrow' are the symptoms that lead you back to Christ where you receive spiritual healing.
 - It's what we see in the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:
 - *"Father I have sinned against heaven and against you..."*
- He contrasts this with worldly grief which is nothing more than the sorrow you feel when you realize what you did results in punishment or humiliation. There's not an acknowledgment of it being a sin against God and therefore ultimately only brings death.
- True godly grief and sorrow is ultimately directed toward God...not self. The former will lead to life and salvation...the latter leads to death.

David shows us what godly grief and sorrow looks like. Look back with me at Psalm 51.

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

- 4, *“Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.”*
 - Don’t miss this...David is crying out for mercy because he knows he’s guilty.
 - And you know how you can tell that David feels genuine sorrow and grief that leads to salvation? Because it’s not the punishment that he’s crying out against...it’s his sin.
 - *‘blot out my transgressions’*
 - *‘wash me thoroughly’*
 - *‘cleans me’*
 - *‘Against you, you only, have I sinned’*
 - The doubling of the subject speaks to the intensity David feels.
 - Same thing we see when Jesus cries out on the cross, “My God, My God”
 - David’s heart is broken over his sin and he says it’s *‘against you, you only, have I sinned.’*
 - His sorrow and grief are so deep that it lead him to the place where he says, *‘you (God) are justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.’*
 - There were no excuses, no ‘if’s’ and no ‘but’s’! Just a profound acknowledgement that he totally deserved the judgment and consequences of his sin.

It’s important to note that this is something that only the Holy Spirit can bring, it can’t be manufactured. Some of you may even be thinking, ‘Well, what if I don’t feel this intense sense of sorrow/grief? Does that mean I’ve never really repented?’

Listen, there is a battle that is constantly being waged between your flesh and your spirit, and you’re constantly going to be tempted to do things that you know you shouldn’t do. Shoot, in Romans 7 Paul basically says, “Part of me wants to stop sinning, and part of me doesn’t.” That’s why repentance must be more than just sorrow and guilt...it must engage the will and act on it.

So, genuine repentance involves the intellect and emotions. But it can’t stop there. It must also involve a change of attitude toward sin and behavior. Therefore it involves the will.

The will: Repentance changes its behavior:

In other words repentance should ultimately result in a change of behavior. In vs. 7-19 I want to show you first a change in David’s attitude toward his sin and second how that resulted in a change in behavior.

Listen to vs. 7-12:

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit."

It's so clear: David is saying "God I acknowledge that I have allowed other things in my life to define me. But I realize that I am only whole when I derive my meaning, purpose, and sense of well-being from the You." Listen to how he says it:

Vs. 7

- If you purge me with hyssop then you can make me clean.
- If you wash me God I will be whiter than snow.

Vs. 8

- The bones that you have broken...they can rejoice again

Vs. 9

- You God, can blot out all my iniquities

Vs. 10

- Give me a new heart God...a clean heart, and renew a right spirit in me.

Vs. 11

- Let me abide in your presence and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.

Vs. 12

- Restore to me the joy of my salvation that was lost because of my sin.
- Sustain and uphold me with a willing spirit.

His entire attitude has changed towards sin and towards God! He's saying "God I hate my sin and realize that it is against you, I want you to take it away and all I want is you."

Listen, It's only when you hate the sin does sin begin to lose its power over you.

John Owen, the famous Puritan pastor, said, "On Christ's glory I would fix all my thoughts and desires, and the more I see of the glory of Christ, the more the painted beauties of this world will wither in my eyes and I will be more and more crucified to this world. It will become to me like something dead and putrid, impossible for me to enjoy."

But it's more than just a change of attitude. Having a change in attitude always results in a change of behavior. In Luke 3 we find the account of John the Baptist in the wilderness preaching the message of repentance. The crowds have come out to see him and are responding to the message and being baptized. In vs. 8 he challenges them, "Bear fruits in keeping with repentance."

Well, in vs. 13-19 I think we see three distinct 'fruits of repentance' that would now characterize David's life. These show that repentance is real:

1. Evangelistic zeal (v. 13)

- a. Vs. 13, *"Then I will teach transgressors our ways, and sinners will return to you."*
- b. David's saying, I want all people to experience the matchless grace and mercy that I've experienced and so "I will teach transgressors your ways."
- c. Listen, the cross will never be more beautiful than when you see it in light of your own sinfulness. And when you see that you can't help but desire for others to experience the same.
- d. Imagine someone saved your life. There's no chance you would not recount that story and thank that person profusely...singing their praises

2. Worship as a lifestyle (v. 14-17)

- a. Vs. 14, *"Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness."*
 - i. Spurgeon, *"A great sinner pardoned makes a great singer."*
- b. Vs. 15-17, *"O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it to you; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."*
 - i. David is saying, "God I don't want to do anything that is not of you, but if You will open my lips my mouth will do nothing but declare your praise."
 - ii. For what you desire is not sacrifices on the altar. What you desire is that my affections be for You and You alone.
- c. I've shared this with you before, but I think it's worth sharing again. It's always good to evaluate where your affections lie, but it can be hard. So here's a quick question that will help you pretty quickly identify what has captured your heart:
 - i. "What are you most afraid to lose?" Or, another way of saying it is, "What is your greatest nightmare?"
 - ii. The answer to this will reveal what in this moment are your greatest hopes and dreams.

3. Commitment to Disciple Making (v. 18-19)

- a. Vs. 18-19, *"Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem; then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offering and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar."*
 - i. We know that David loved Zion (Jerusalem). He longed to build the temple and see the walls of Jerusalem established.

- ii. But I think David is acknowledging something much greater. I believe David, as King of Israel, is acknowledging that due to his sin he has been responsible for 'tearing down' Jerusalem's spiritual walls.
- iii. And now he is asking God to rebuild them and he wants to be a part of that. He's saying, 'use me to rebuild the walls and establish a thriving community that sets its hope in God and engages Him in the mission.'
- iv. It's then, when people's hearts are turned back to God, He will delight in the sacrifices they bring.

So you see, David's attitude toward his sin had changed and it resulted in a God exalting lifestyle of evangelism, worship, and disciple making. David knew and was grieved over his sin and desired to change.

Not only that, but David was also convinced of God's love and willingness to forgive.

I would imagine that there are some of you here this weekend and you're saying to yourself, "Will, you don't know what I've done. How can I be confident that God loves me and is willing to forgive me?"

That's such a great question, and this psalm gives us such a great answer. You know in the entire psalm, there is only one time where David asks God 'not' to do something. It's in vs. 11.

- David says, "*Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*"
- One thing he begs God not to do...one thing he could not bear to happen...He says, "God, don't remove your presence from me, because life would not be worth living without you."
- And God doesn't.

You want to know why? Because the very thing that David asks God not to do to Him, He did to His only Son.

There Jesus was, the holy, blameless, Son of God dying on the cross. And in His moment of greatest agony He cries out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" In that moment Jesus is cast out of the presence of His father and God pours on Jesus the judgment that David was deserving of...and the judgment we are deserving of.

Jesus was cast out of His Father's presence, so we wouldn't have to be. That's how I know He loves us and is willing to forgive us. So, we have to see the magnitude of our sin in light of the magnitude of His sacrifice. I want to stand

here and at the top of my lungs so there is no sin so great that the blood of Jesus Christ can't cover it. I'll tell you what Peter told the crowd at Pentecost...Repent and believe!

My prayer for us is simple, that we would be a people of continual repentance. A people who regularly put to death the indwelling sin as we delight in the One who was cast out in our place, so that we could become sons and daughters of God.

Amen.

The Lord's Supper:

I'm going to ask our teams to come now and distribute the Lord's Supper. As you know when we take the bread and the cup it's a time for us to look to the past and remember the sacrifice Christ made on our behalf, look to the present and examine our relationship with Christ and where necessary confess and repent of sin, and look to the future as we anticipate his glorious return.

We believe the Lord's Supper is for Christians so, if you are not a Christian, then we want to simply ask you to allow the elements to pass and use this time to consider the sacrifice Christ has made.

While the elements are being passed I'm going to put some prayer points for you to pray on the screens that will guide you in a time of reflection:

Prayer Points:

Reflect on the Past:

Spend a moment thanking God that "*upon Him (Jesus) was the chastisement that brought us peace.*" (Isaiah 53:5)

Reflect on the Present:

Ask God for everything necessary to "*bear fruit in keeping with repentance.*" (Luke 3:8)

Reflect on the Future:

Thank God for the promise of His impending return and the establishment of "*a new heaven and a new earth.*" (Revelation 21:1)

I Corinthians 11:23-24

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

I Corinthians 11:25

“In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Let's stand at all our campuses and continue in worship.