

“Confession of Sin”
2 Samuel 12:1-15a & Psalm 51
February 21, 2021
Faith Presbyterian Church – Evening Service
Pastor Nicoletti

We come tonight to Second Samuel chapter twelve for a second time.

In chapter eleven we have the serious moral fall of David. He commits adultery with Bathsheba, and then, to cover up his sin, he commits murder against Uriah, her husband, in a way that callously leads to the deaths of others as well.

Then, in chapter twelve, God sends Nathan the prophet to David.

We considered this passage a few weeks ago and focused on the importance of prophetic voices in our lives.

Tonight we will focus on David’s initial response, as it’s recorded both here in Second Samuel 12 and also in Psalm 51.

Please listen carefully, for this is God’s word for us this evening:

First, from Second Samuel:

^{12:1} And the LORD [Yahweh] sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, “There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had very many flocks and herds, ³but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.” ⁵Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As Yahweh lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, ⁶and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.”

⁷Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. ⁸And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. ⁹Why have you despised the word of Yahweh, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ ¹¹Thus says Yahweh, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. ¹²For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.’” ¹³David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against Yahweh.” And Nathan said to David, “Yahweh also has put away your sin; you shall not die. ¹⁴Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned Yahweh, the child who is born to you shall die.” ¹⁵Then Nathan went to his house.

And now, from Psalm 51:

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

^{51:1} 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 words
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.

This is the Word of the Lord. (Thanks be to God.)

Let's pray ...

Lord, your word is a lamp to our feet
and a light to our path.
And we, as your people, have committed ourselves
to keep your righteous commandments.
In the trials we face,
we ask you, Lord, to give us life according to your word.
As you have accepted our praises this evening,
so now teach us the way you would have us to go.
Your testimonies are our heritage forever,
for they are the joy of our hearts.
Incline our hearts to perform your statutes
forever, to the end.
This we ask in Jesus's name. Amen.
[Based on Psalm 119:105-108, 111-112]

Introduction

I was recently reminded of competitive cup stacking. I don't know if that's still a thing, but I remember it was kind of popular eight or nine years ago. Kids would have these cups, and they had to arrange them into a series of different pyramids – quickly constructing one arrangement, taking it down, building a second arrangement, taking it down, and then building a third one, and taking it down. And they'd learn to do it incredibly fast – in just a few seconds.

And if you watch a video of some of the fastest people who do this, it's hard to even tell what they're building. By the time they've made it, it's gone again. You need to slow the video down to actually see clearly what they are building in each arrangement.

It might seem like a silly comparison, but that split between a flash of significance in just a few seconds, and a slowed-down, clearer replay of the same thing in more detail, is kind of like what we have here in Second Samuel 12:13 and Psalm 51.

In Second Samuel we get just five words of David's confession: "I have sinned against Yahweh." In Hebrew it's actually only two words.

We have had all this buildup to David's confession, and then his confession flashes by in a few seconds, and things move on.

Or so it would seem. Until we stumble upon Psalm 51. And Psalm 51 gives us David's confession in much more detail. It's like that slow-motion version of the five-second clip. We knew there was a lot going on in that shorter clip, but we couldn't quite see it. But here, in this psalm, we get the same thing slowed down, and stretched out, and we can see its different movements and stages more clearly.

Now, we don't know when exactly David first prayed these words. It's possible that Second Samuel 12:13 is giving us a summary of this prayer, or that the prayer came between those words and Nathan's, or that the prayer came at some other time. But whenever it came, we can say with confidence that Psalm 51 gives us a fuller, fleshed-out picture of what is contained in David's short sentence recorded in Second Samuel. [Hahkem, 412]

This evening we will look at the movements of David's confession, found in Second Samuel 12 and Psalm 51.

And we will see eight distinct movements.

And they all start with C. I'm sorry ... that's probably lame ... but when I was first listing them out, I ended up with six Cs, an R and a W, and I just couldn't stop myself from finding words that started with C for the other two.

So here is what we have – we have:

- the call
- the covenant
- the confession
- the objective cleansing
- the new creation
- the consecration & communion
- the community
- and the confidence

Now ... eight points is like five points too many, I know, but I'll ask you to bear with me, because I think each of these aspects and movements of David's confession is important. Some of these might be obvious to you, but others might be things that you don't think about as often.

These items are not a check list to go through every time we confess our sin. But our overall life of confession to God should contain each of these elements in some form. My encouragement to you tonight is to listen for those that are maybe less present in your thinking or your spiritual walk, and consider how you might incorporate them more into your life.

With that said, let's consider these eight elements or movements in David's confession of sin.

I. Call

The first element we see is the call: the call to confess his sins.

And this comes in verses one through twelve of Second Samuel 12. And we need to note this step, because it is extremely significant.

There is a huge difference between the cynically calculating David we see in Second Samuel 11 and the penitential David of Psalm 51. What made that change? What brought about that transformation?

The answer is the Word of God, calling David to repent: The Word of God spoken through the prophet Nathan. One commentator writes: “The power of God’s word is nowhere more strikingly evident than in this transformation” [Kidner, 2017] God’s word calling David to repent transforms him from a cold cynical man, to a broken, penitent man.

Do we open ourselves up to the Word of God that it might have the same effect on us? Are we willing to hear God’s call?

Some churches call the congregation to confession with Scripture every Lord’s Day – which is certainly not a bad idea. Other churches, like ours, call the congregation to confess by summarizing a relevant aspect of Biblical truth. But whether in a quotation from Scripture, or a paraphrase, when we come together on Sunday morning, God himself calls us to confess our sins.

And he doesn’t just call us to confess on Sundays. One of many reasons to read God’s Word regularly between Sundays is that we need to be called to confess our sins. We rarely seek to do it by our own initiative. But God’s word calls us to confess our sins again and again. That call transformed David. It can transform us as well. The first thing we must do is hear that call.

II. Covenant

The second thing we see, after God calls David to confess through the prophet Nathan, is that David immediately turns to the covenant.

The covenant, remember, is God’s special relationship to his people – the formal commitment he has made to his people about how he will relate to them. And as we turn to the opening verses of Psalm 51, we soon see that David has the covenant on his mind.

There he prays:

¹ 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!

There are two important truths expressed in these opening verses. The first is that David knows that he has no inherent right to the forgiveness he is pleading for. He knows he depends on mercy, and has no right in himself to God’s grace.

And yet, he also approaches God with confidence to make this bold request. How is that? On what basis can he come before God and ask for forgiveness?

Well, the hint comes in the phrase “steadfast love.” Steadfast love – *hesed* love in the Hebrew – is not just a strong form of love – it is more significant than that. It is covenantal love. It is the kind of love that God promises his people in his covenant with them. [Kidner, 207]

God has made a covenant with his people. By his grace, he has committed himself – placed obligations on himself – to love them, to hear their pleas, and to forgive their sins, if they repent and trust in him.

David knows that in and of himself he has no claim to be heard by God. But he also knows he does have a claim to make, based on the covenant. And so, though he knows he is unworthy to come before God to ask for mercy, he knows he still can come before God to ask for mercy, based not on his merit, but on the covenant promises that God himself has made to his people. [Kidner, 207]

Rooted in that promise, David comes forward and makes a bold request: that his sin be blotted out, and that he be washed thoroughly.

The language of “blotting out” refers to wiping something away – as in the case of removing writing from a book. [Kidner, 207] One commentator actually translates it as “erase my transgressions” – that is the idea being expressed here. [Hakham, 403]

The language of being “washed thoroughly” is the language of laundering clothes – of deeply washing a cloth that has become deeply stained. [Kidner, 207-208]

David’s request here is bold. He’s not asking for partial forgiveness or partial cleansing. He’s not asking God to meet him halfway. David here is asking for his sins to be erased, and for himself to be completely cleansed.

And he asks it not in self-confidence, but in confidence in the promises of God.

And we are to approach God in the same way.

When you get down on your knees before God here on Sunday mornings, it is neither your humble posture, nor your earnest sorrow, nor your good intentions to do better, that get God to listen to your prayer for forgiveness. It is only on the basis of God’s gracious covenant through Jesus Christ that he hears you. It is only through what he has already promised you in the gospel that you can seek his mercy.

And that’s not just true here on Sundays – it’s also true when you offer those secret prayers of confession as well. You don’t deserve God’s forgiveness. But you should boldly seek it anyway, because God has made bold promises to you in the covenant. He has promised to erase our sins from his book. He has promised to thoroughly wash our souls. And so when we make those bold requests, as David does here, we do it, not confident in ourselves, but confident in God’s promises to us.

That’s the second thing we see: We come before God on the basis of his covenant with us.

III. Confession

The third thing we see here is the actual confession.

We see that in verses three through five of Psalm 51. There David says:

- 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 words
and blameless in your judgment.
⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Each verse there is significant.

In verse three David says that his awareness of his sin is now not just a passing thing, but a sustained awareness. [Calvin, 284; See also Hakham, 404]

And that sustained awareness of his sin leads to even deeper realizations in verse four. There David sees and confesses the reality that in what he has done, he has sinned primarily against God.

The language David uses there is not meant to deny or minimize the harm he has done to other people, but to focus on the heart of the matter. [Kidner, 208]

At the heart of all his sinful actions is rebellion against God – a rejection of God and God’s callings, and an attempt to overthrow God from his life. David sees that his sin is not just heinous at a human level, but also at a cosmic level.

And as he does, the next thing he does in verse four is accept God’s judgment over him without qualification. [Kidner, 208]

Whereas human nature is to excuse our sins, David accepts God’s judgment. And not only that, David raises God’s judgment far above anyone else’s. [Calvin, 285-286] And that is significant, because in Second Samuel 11 David’s whole focus was the judgement of other people. In that chapter David seemed to pay no attention to God’s judgment at all. Instead, what kept escalating his sin was his attempts to avoid human judgment. Because David feared human judgment over his adultery, he decided to have Uriah murdered. Because David feared human judgment over his murder of Uriah, he accepted Joab’s plan to allow for other soldiers to be killed in the process. It was avoiding the judgment of other humans that drove David as those events unfolded.

But not anymore. Now there is only one judgment that matters to David, and that is God’s. We’ve been told twice in Second Samuel that God has judged David’s actions as evil [11:27 & 12:9 (Hakham, 404)]. And David professes God’s judgment to be both just and supreme.

As David confesses his sin and considers God’s judgment of his actions, he then is able to see himself even more clearly, and to identify the roots of his sin, in verse five. As one commentator puts it: “This crime, David now sees, was no freak event: it was in character; an extreme expression of the warped creature he had always been, and of the faulty stock he sprang from.” [Kidner, 208]

David is not making excuses. He is owning the depth of his sins.

And we are called to the same sort of confession.

We are called to confession that sees our sin not as just an abnormal blip in our otherwise good lives, but that sees the persistent presence of sin in our hearts, and is distressed by it.

We are called to view our sin rightly, not just as human or petty, but as cosmic rebellion against our very Maker.

We are called to value God’s judgment so far above any human judgment of us, that other people’s evaluations of our actions fade into the background, and God’s assessment of us fills our vision in their place.

And as we see our sin clearly, we are to recognize that it is not an aberration from our hearts, but typical of our hearts – rooted in our descent from Adam and his first rebellion against God.

In all those ways we are called to confess our sin fully and properly. That is the third thing we see here.

IV. Objective Cleansing

Fourth, David turns his attention to objective cleansing.

In verse six he acknowledges that this process began in his secret heart. He says:

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

David here is giving God credit for David’s initial repentance – it was God who brought the thoughts and the wisdom of repentance to David’s heart. [Hakham, 406]

But then, in the verses that follow, the cleansing that God gives is neither secret nor hidden – instead it is a public and objective cleansing.

David says:

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.

David's words there, in verse seven, allude to the cleansings described in Leviticus 14 and Numbers 19 for a leper or one ritually defiled by a dead body. [Kidner, 209]

In both of those passages from the Law of Moses, hyssop is used to cleanse someone who is unclean. Hyssop is dipped in water mixed with blood or ashes from a sacrifice, and then applied to the one who needs to be ritually cleansed. In both cases the unclean person then is to wash their body and their clothes in water. And in both cases the passage declares that, at the end of the rite, the one, who was unclean now "shall be clean."

In the ceremonial life of Israel, ritual cleansing was public and objective. Being ritually clean wasn't a subjective state based on the person's feelings, but an objective status. When God cleansed someone this way, they *were* clean.

David looks at those objective rituals and rightly sees in them a picture of how God cleanses the repentant of sin. And so he can say, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

David knows that God's cleansing is objectively true, and that is what he seeks.

The effect is to remove his sins from God's sight, and to erase his sins from God's record.

And that truth makes David want to rejoice.

Using the metaphor of his bones, David says that the same heart that has broken for sorrow over sin will rejoice at his cleansing. One commentator translates the end of verse eight as: let the bones you have broken "dance." [Kidner, 209]

As we hear the kind of cleansing David seeks and anticipates, we should ask ourselves if we believe in the same kind of cleansing as he does.

Do we really believe in an objective cleansing? Do we believe that if God cleanses us, we are in fact clean – regardless of how we feel? Do we believe that if God erases our sins from his book, those sins really are erased – regardless of whether we or other people have kept a record of them?

We seek not primarily a subjective cleansing, but an objective cleansing. That is the fourth thing we see here in David's prayer.

V. New Creation

Fifth, David turns to ask God for a new creation.

We see that in verses ten through thirteen. There David says:

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.

That first line especially struck John Calvin. He wrote: “By employing the term ‘create,’ [David] expresses his persuasion that nothing less than a miracle could effect his reformation” [Calvin, 298]

In these verses, David is asking God to change him. But he recognizes that what he needs is not just a few improvements, but the work of new creation.

Of course, David is already a believer, so he is not praying for the initial regeneration of the new convert. He is instead praying for God’s ongoing process of new creation in his heart. David is asking God to continue to make him new. [Kidner, 209-210]

And as he does, he asks God both to help him put his sin to death, and to bring to life a deeper faithfulness to God.

In verse eleven David asks God to keep him from such sins going forward. Derek Kidner points out that it can be easy for us to treat David’s words as if he had abstract doctrinal questions on the forefront of his mind ... when what is much more likely is that David here had Saul on the forefront of his mind. [Kidner, 210]

David had watched Saul’s decline. He had seen him not only sin, but compound his sin ... again and again ... until God’s Spirit left Saul, and God’s special presence would no longer remain with Saul.

David does not want that for himself – not at all. And so David is praying for a heart of repentance – one that will resist the pull into deeper sin that might further estrange him from God.

And then, after praying that God would keep him from further rebellion, David also prays that God would increase his love for and dedication to God.

He asks that God would help him again to find his joy in his relationship to God. He prays that God will give him a spirit of “willing” obedience and loyalty – not one that grudgingly follows God, but one that follows God from a willing and enthusiastic heart.

Finally, as the last piece of his prayer for new creation in his heart and life, David expresses in verse thirteen an eagerness to tell others of the mercy and the ways of the Lord. Derek Kidner comments that we should “note the close connection between a joyous faith and an infectious one.” [Kidner, 210]

David’s prayer here reminds us that our confession and our repentance is not supposed to stop with cleansing, but as surely as we pray for forgiveness we should pray also for God to work in our hearts and lives: to miraculously reshape our hearts, to keep us from further sin, to grow our love for him and our joy in him, and to make us people who are excited to tell others what the Lord has done for us, and to call them to receive the Lord’s blessing as we have.

In all these ways we are called to pray for God's work of new creation within us.

VI. Consecration & Communion

Sixth we see David turn his attention to consecration and communion. Another way to put this is that David turns his attention to worship.

We see this in verses fourteen through seventeen. There David says:

- 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.

Here David puts his deliverance in the context of worship – of consecration to and communion with God.

In verses fourteen and fifteen he acknowledges that the forgiveness he receives will lead him to declare and to sing God's praises.

And then, in verses sixteen and seventeen he turns to how this relates to sacrificial worship.

Now, animal sacrifice was a central piece of worship at this time in redemptive history, and so David's words can be confusing here. What's going on? Is David rejecting the sacrificial system of Moses?

Well, no. First of all, there are a number of cases where the Scriptures say something like "not that, but this" and what they really mean is "not that without this." And that is what is going on here. [Kidner, 211] God does not delight in such sacrificial worship *without* there first being a broken and contrite heart. With such a heart, God *will* delight in sacrificial worship – as David himself says in verse nineteen.

But actually, David's words on sacrifice go beyond merely speaking against hollow worship. He also seems to be saying something about the logic of worship.

David seems to be referencing two types of sacrifice in verse sixteen: the peace offering, and the ascension offering (which is translated here as the "burnt offering"). [Kidner, 211]

The ascension offering was an offering of consecration or dedication – of rising up into God's presence to be shaped by him. The peace offering was the offering of communion with God – where the people would eat in God's presence. David is pointing to the reality that we cannot be consecrated for God's purposes or have communion with God in his presence until we have first

been cleansed. And so David will not bring an ascension or a peace offering to the Lord until he has first been cleansed through genuine confession of his sin.

And our worship follows the same logic. That is one reason, among several, why one of the first things we do in our Lord's Day morning worship is confess our sins and seek God's cleansing. *Then* we can move on to consecration and communion: to conversing with God and letting his word shape us, and, after that, eating in God's presence and at his table.

And that is not merely liturgical direction, but gospel truth.

If we want to be instructed by God – to ascend to his presence by his word and to be consecrated to his purposes – we first must be cleansed through earnest confession of our sins.

If we want to experience communion with God – intimacy with our Maker – then we first must seek the cleansing blood of Jesus.

It is once we have approached God with hearts broken over our sin, and been cleansed by Christ's grace, that we can then enter into true and full worship of God.

That is the sixth thing we see.

VII. Community

Seventh, David turns to the community.

We see that in verses eighteen and nineteen. There David says:

- 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.

Here David turns his attention from himself, to the people of God.

First, David knows that his sin affects others. Here he prays for the people of God, seeking their blessing instead of the trouble that his actions would have brought upon them.

But second, these verses remind us that this psalm is intended for the community of the people of God.

Though this psalm of confession sprang from specific events in David's own personal life, what we find here is not just the record of a personal prayer. The Psalms are not a prayer journal, they are a hymnal – a prayer book – for the people of God to use. This prayer is intended for corporate use. [Kidner, 206-207, 212]

Which reminds us that we must confess our sins privately, but also corporately. We must confess our sins personally as we seek our personal transformation and spiritual growth, but we also must confess our sins corporately as we seek our transformation as a congregation.

There are reasons why every Lord's Day we both confess our sins privately and corporately.

And, in fact, every time we confess our sins, we should do so with our connection to the covenant community in mind – both to the global Church *and* to our particular congregation, and the people our sins affect. We should pray not just for our good, but for theirs.

That is the seventh thing we see here.

VIII. Confidence

Eighth, and finally, we see David's confidence.

And this grows out of the second half of verse thirteen of Second Samuel 12. There the prophet Nathan says to David: "Yahweh has put away your sin; you shall not die."

Now, Nathan goes on to speak of the fact that there are still going to be worldly consequences for David's sins – and we will get to that next time.

But those worldly consequences do not negate the declaration of Nathan in verse thirteen. Nathan proclaims forgiveness over David. And so David is forgiven. And he should believe that with confidence.

And again, he should believe it with confidence not because he has earned it, or because his sins are of little consequence, or even because he feels in his heart that he is forgiven. He should believe it because God has said it. And if God has said it, it is sure.

If God has declared him forgiven, then he is forgiven.

In the verses that follow, David will plead with God over the worldly consequences of his sins. But we are not given any indication that David doubts the proclamation of Nathan that he is in fact forgiven – that he has eternal peace with God, whatever may come in this world.

David exhibits confidence in the forgiveness of God.

Do you?

When you hear the declaration of pardon on Sunday morning ... do you believe it with confidence?

When you read words of assurance in the word of God ... do you believe them with confidence?

Or do you doubt?

David here reminds us that there is no place for such doubts. For to doubt God's forgiveness when we have confessed is to doubt God's word and to doubt God's character. And we have no right to doubt him.

If God declares you clean, you are clean, and you should be confident in your cleansing. It doesn't matter if you feel clean. It doesn't matter if you don't deserve to be clean. It doesn't matter if others think you are not clean. If God declares you clean by the blood of Christ, then you are clean.

This is the grace of the gospel.

Hear this word and believe it. Hear it with joy and gladness. Let your bones that were broken with sorrow rejoice in your salvation. Let your joy overflow so that you tell others what the Lord has done for you. Open your lips and declare the Lord's praise. Open your mouth and let your tongue sing aloud of God's love and righteousness. Praise your savior, so that he might delight in your worship, rejoicing with you over your salvation.

Amen.

This sermon draws on material from:

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