

Restored Joy
Dr. Dennis Leatherman

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Mountain Lake Independent Baptist Church
1005 Broadford Road
Oakland, MD 21550

Website: www.mlibc.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/mlibc

Turn with me to Psalm 51, I'd like for us to read together our memory verse, verse 12 and 13. We've been working on memorizing this passage through the month of May. Tonight you'll have opportunity to quote that and get a prize before and after the service tonight. But I'd like for us to read it together. If you would, read with me in unison beginning in verse number 12. Everybody have it there. Let's read this together. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." I've entitled my message this morning, "Restored Joy." Restored joy, joy coming back. It was there, it's gone and getting it back again. Restore joy.

Let's pray together, ask the Lord to speak to our hearts.

Father in heaven, we thank you for a good service this morning. My heart's been blessed by the music and by the fellowship. Lord, we are grateful for our country and we're grateful for those who gave their lives in defense of our country and, Lord, we don't want to neglect the honor and the recognition that these dear folks deserve for what they've done. And Lord, we pray for our country. God, our hearts are broke over what's happening to our societies and, Lord, I believe the responsibility lies on the churches, our church and others and, God, we need revival in our churches, and we're asking you to meet with us. I'm asking you, Father, to meet with us in this hour. I pray you'd stir us and convict us. God, challenge us, help us to see in our church what you've done in churches throughout history, the power of God, presence of God, holiness, godliness, joy. Lord, we're asking you would restore that. Please have mercy. I yield my will to you, Lord. It has to be you doing it so I yield my will to you, I present my body anew. I pray you'd fill me with your Spirit. I pray, Father, you'd speak through me this morning and that our lives would change and those of us that know you as Savior, we'd be more like Christ. God, I ask that any and all unsaved that would be under the sound of my voice, that you bring great conviction on their need of Christ and help them to see eternity, help them to see their condition that they would come to Christ and be saved. So please bless the message. Speak to our hearts. Have your way. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

It's a blessing to have Brother Ed out again this morning. We're grateful for Ed. He's been a blessing to our church for many years. He fell about two months ago now, something like that. He fell and broke his major bone there in his leg, the femur up at the top, and

when he fell, he knew right away something was wrong and he knew right away that needed to be addressed immediately, called the emergency squad, came out, got him, took him in. They said, all right, here's the situation. We have to address this. Here's what I'm trying to say. We cannot neglect this. We cannot ignore what has happened. It has to be addressed. And then once they did the surgery, repaired things up, then it's weeks and weeks, still in the midst of it, weeks and weeks of therapy, getting that leg back in shape, getting up, working, and operating again.

I pray for Brother Ed and all the church every day, and I was thinking about him this week. I was thinking, what happened to Ed, I believe, to some extent, is very similar to what happens when a Christian falls, when a Christian sins. When a Christian sins, that sin needs to be addressed immediately. You can't ignore it. If Brother Ed and Carolyn would have just said, "Well, it hurts, but I'm just going to ignore it," he wouldn't be here now. When a Christian sins, we cannot ignore that. We cannot just act like it didn't happen. We can't just pretend that everything's okay. It must be addressed, and it must be addressed immediately, the sooner the better. Would you agree with me if Brother Ed would have waited two weeks or a month to get that looked at there'd be all kinds of problems, right? Yeah. And then, when we fall, we sin, we need to address it immediately, but then we need to work in getting back to where we were, the therapy part of the restoration of a Christian, get back up.

I like what Proverbs, I think it's 24:16 says, "A just man falleth seven times and rises back up, rises up again." Psalm chapter 51 is David's restoration prayer. I think Psalm 51 is one of the most personal Psalms in all of scripture. David is opening his heart up to God. When you read Psalm 51, there's no pretense here. There's no show. There's no hypocrisy being put on. David is opening his heart. He's failed God. He's failed his family. He's failed his nation. And he doesn't put on a show, he doesn't act the hypocrite. He had up to a point, but now he's just opening his heart up to God, just an honest, just getting honest and sincere before God. I think Psalm 51, as I said, it's one of the most personal Psalms you'll find in all of scripture. David is openly humbling himself before God. This whole, you read this whole Psalm that Pastor Matt read here a little bit ago, and then there's another five verses on there, man, this Psalm oozes humility. There isn't an ounce of pride expressed in Psalm 51. Humility. Nothing attracts God's attention like humility. In fact, I want to be careful. I've said this before and I always try to be cautious. I don't want to be irreverent in any way towards our God but it's almost like God cannot resist humility. You read through the Old Testament particularly and into the New Testament in the gospels, every time someone humbled themselves before God, they got God's attention without fail. Even the most wicked, perverse kings of Israel, Ahab and others, when they humbled themselves, God showed mercy.

David is humbling himself before God. There's no pride in Psalm 51. There's no pride in David's heart. It's just honest, genuine humility before his God. Nothing attracts God's grace and mercy like humility. I don't know about you, but I need God's grace. I need him to be gracious. I need God. I don't know about you. I need God to have mercy on me. I'm just a sinner. My daddy's favorite Psalm, and every time we'd sing, the last 12 months he lived down here with us, he sat over here right in front of where Dave and Joy sit, every

time we sang, "I'm just a sinner saved by grace," the tears just be streaming down his cheeks. We're just sinners saved by God's grace. We need God's mercy. There's no room for pride.

David is humbling himself before God. James chapter number 4 in verse 6, and then again in 1 Peter chapter 5 in verse 5, it says, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." As I said a few moments ago, we're so brokenhearted for what's happening to our country, so brokenhearted for the blatant celebrated sin and dishonesty, the violence that is taking over our streets. I tell you, this is not the time for America to raise our fist in pride against God. This is a time for us to humble ourselves before Almighty God. It's time for the churches, our church, Mountain Lake Independent Baptist Church, it's time for us to humble ourselves before God. We need his mercy. We need his grace. Someone said, I don't know where I came across this, I don't know who said this, but someone said sin came through the pride of Lucifer, but salvation came through the humility of Jesus Christ.

David's humbling himself before God. What a powerful, powerful passage Psalm 51 is. I think every child of God, every saved person ought to be familiar, very familiar with Psalm 51. It's a Psalm of revival. It's a prayer of restoration. David humbles himself. I have three thoughts from our text, verse 12 and 13, I want to share with you this morning. The first one, I'll give you three. First of all, I want us to notice that the acknowledgment of David's sin and then second of all, we're going to notice the absence of David's joy, and then we're going to consider David's affection for the unsaved.

First of all, the acknowledgment of his sin. If you would come back to verse number 4, Psalm 51. Notice what David says. Now he's talking to God. I don't know exactly when he penned this. It would have been obviously shortly after he's confronted by Nathan, those that know the backstory to this Psalm. It would have been shortly after he was confronted by Nathan. I have no basis for saying this other than I just think but I wonder if it wasn't that evening. Nathan confronted him about his sin, he acknowledged it, and he gets alone with God, and he pours his heart out, and he's penning it down under the inspiration of God, but he's pouring his heart out. Notice in verse 4 what he says. He says, speaking to God, probably on his face, laying on the ground, "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." David is acknowledging his sin to God.

Back in 2 Samuel chapter 12 verse 13, Nathan, as I mentioned, confronted David about his sin with Bathsheba and he says, "David, you're the man. You're the one that has sinned. You're the one that has disobeyed God and brought this shame upon your name and upon your family and upon your nation. You're the one, David." David responds, "I have sinned against the Lord." No blame. "Well, you know, she was on that roof there. She wasn't dressed very well." No blame. We get pretty good at blaming others, aren't we? We can finagle some twisted logic where I'm not responsible for my actions. Us humans, us sinners, we've perfected the ability to escape responsibility for our own actions. Am I right or wrong? None of that with David. "Well, my parents, if you knew how I was raised." David was raised in a godly home. He accepts responsibility. He

acknowledges the fact that, "I have sinned against God." He doesn't blame anybody else, no denial.

It's amazing sometimes, and I guess anybody that's raised kids, you've experienced this, but it's amazing how sometimes somebody can be caught red-handed and they say, "I didn't do that." Years ago, I don't do it anymore, years ago, we used to, on Sunday nights, we'd go home, and about 9, 10 o'clock Sunday nights, they used to have a show on, it was called "Cops." Anybody remember that show, "Cops"? Oh, who's your, who's your, who your, what was that? Bad Boys, yeah. And it boggled my mind. They'd arrest somebody and they'd have drugs all stuffed down their pockets and inside their pants and down their shirt, and they'd say, "I didn't put that there." Now we laugh at that and it's humorous, but a lot of us do the exact same thing with God. "There's nothing wrong with this." I don't hear as much as I used to, I guess, or maybe I've gotten used to it, but it used to be, "Preacher, well what's wrong with this, preacher?" The question to ask isn't what's wrong with it, the question to ask is what's right about it?

So David's not blaming anyone else, there's no denial here, there's no excuses going up. No justification for his sin, "Well, I had every right to do this. I know it ain't right, but you know, there's nothing else I could do." No minimizing it, "Well, it ain't that bad. Well, I could have, I'm not as bad as that. Well, it's just a mistake." Sin is not a mistake. It is deliberate rebellion against a holy God. David says, "I've sinned against the Lord." He says, "Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." We mentioned when a man falls, he breaks his leg, breaks a hip, needs to be dealt with immediately. When a Christian sins, when you and I sin, not if we sin, when we sin, we need to deal with it immediately. David tried covering his sin for two years and it brought him misery and it nearly ruined him. The time to deal with sin, the first thing to do when I sin is honestly acknowledge it. I believe the beginning of a healthy relationship with our God is to get completely honest about myself. Just come before God. Quit putting on a show. Quit trying to think more highly of myself than what I really am. Just come before God honestly, "God, this is my condition." Salvation begins with being honest about myself and being honest with God right or wrong.

If you would, keep your place here. I'd like for you to turn with me to the gospel of Luke. New Testament, the gospel of Luke in chapter number 18. Salvation, the finding forgiveness of my sins and eternal life, having eternal life, ending up in heaven and not in hell, begins with being honest about my own spiritual condition, about myself as a sinner. "Well, preacher, I ain't perfect, but I ain't that bad." You're not being honest with yourself. Look at Luke chapter 18. Here's two men and Jesus points them out in verse number 9. One is dishonest to himself and about himself. The other is extremely honest. Verse 9, he says, "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican." Pharisees were considered the spiritual leaders of their day. If anybody was right with God, it was the Pharisees, that was the attitude of society. Publicans were the lowest of the low. They were the bottom feeders. They were the worst. If anybody was a sinner, it was a publican.

Now notice, verse 10, "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus," I think it's interesting, "with himself," he's talking to and about himself, that's his prayer, "God." I think he said it this way, "God. God." Look what he says, "I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner."

Let me ask you a question: which of those two men was honest? The publican. He said, "God, I can't even look up to you." That Pharisee was lying to himself. "Well, I'm pretty good." He's trying to lie to God. I'm here to tell you, you can't lie to God. You're a fool if you try and lie to God, and you're a fool if you lie to yourself, because here's the danger of lying to ourselves, many times we believe our own lies and we convince ourselves we're in one thing when in reality we're something else. David's acknowledging his sin, he's getting honest with God. I think it's time churches and individuals and wives and husbands and children, we just get honest before God. No blame, no shame.

I had a couple years ago, years ago, came to church one Sunday morning, just a young couple. I didn't know them from Adam. Came in, sat down, preached my heart out. They responded to the invitation, came forward, and both trusted Christ as Savior. Went and visited them. Come to find out they weren't married. They were living together in sin. Fornication is what the Bible calls it. So we talked to them, I prayed with them, gave them assurance of salvation and things, and I addressed their situation. I said, "Well, you know, this is what the Bible says." I wasn't hateful. I wasn't jumping on them or anything. I was just saying, "Hey, listen, you ought to know this. It's what the Bible says about marriage, about sin, about fornication, adultery, all that." So, "Well, you know, we think we're OK. We're good." About, they kept coming real faithfully. I mean, this is, we're talking 20 years ago, 25 years ago. They kept coming pretty faithfully. I kept preaching. I'd just preach, prayed for them. Finally, one day, a fellow came to me. I think he's back in my office. He said, "Preacher, I gotta talk to you." I said, alright. He said, "This ain't right. This ain't right. We've got to make this right." I said, okay, let's do it. She came in, I married them back there, and made things right. You know what made the difference? He got honest. He says, "I've got to acknowledge this. I've got to be honest with God. I want God. I need God's blessing. I need God's mercy." He got honest.

We need to be honest before God. If it's wrong, we acknowledge it. "God, this is wrong." That's what David's doing. David acknowledges his sin. Salvation begins with getting completely honest with myself, and restored fellowship with God begins when the Christian gets completely honest with himself. The fact of the matter is you and I as Christians, we can and do sin. Come on now, don't look at me like all pious out there. I wasn't long in the Christian faith, it wasn't long after I got saved I found out I still got an old sinful nature. It wasn't long I found out that old Denny, that old man Denny was still active in my experience. Anybody know what I'm talking about? And we mess up, and we fall, and we say and do things we ought not to do and we've got to be honest with that as a Christian. I can't just ignore it. I can't just act like it didn't happen. I've got to come

and say, "I did wrong." And when we do that, when we get honest about where we're at, even as a child of God, when I get honest, then that brings restoration.

That's what David's doing. He's getting honest. He was a saved man. He knew the Lord. He was a man after God's own heart, but he sinned and he sinned grievously and he finally comes and says, "God, I've sinned. I acknowledge this." And he wanted to be restored back with the Lord. I love it. I'm telling you, I wasn't saved very long. I'm glad. When I first got saved, I got saved on a Monday night and the next Sunday, I went to a church right down the road from where I lived and I'm newly saved. I mean, I'm five, six days old in the Lord. I got my Bible, and you'll be impressed with this. I had my long shoulder-length hair. Seriously. And I wore my platform shoes, 1979. I go walking in the church with my Bible and my getup. I thought I was dressing up good. I got in there and it took me about two minutes to realize I was the only person in the church that had a Bible. I'm six days old in the Lord. I had a good Christian daddy and he was influenced, but I knew something wasn't right. Listen, a church that doesn't use a Bible is not right with God. I'm just being honest with you. So I said forget that. I didn't go back there.

Next Sunday, I went to what was a good church. I walked in there with my hair and my polyester bell bottoms. I'm telling you, I wish I had a picture. I was good looking. Silk shirt. Got my Bible. Everybody's looking at me and there was two fellas, Arden Musselman and Terry Wilcox. They saw me. They figured out pretty quick what was up. They're in their early 20s. I'm 19, they're in their early 20s, mid-20s maybe. And zing! Soon as the service over, they were like, "What's your name? What are you doing in church today?" I said, "Well, I got saved last Monday, two weeks ago." "Oh, that's wonderful. Listen, we want to come and visit you." Those two fellas took me under wing and they started teaching me about the Christian life. They started giving me Bible verses. And I'm telling you, those guys spent time with me. And one of the first things they taught me was to memorize 1 John 1:9. They said, "Dennis, you're going to need it." What is 1 John 1:9? "But if thou shalt confess with thy sin," no, no, no, you got me messed up now. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Woo, what a verse, huh? Oh, I thank God for that verse all these 44 years now. If we confess our sins.

Now to confess, now here's where people mess up, confess doesn't mean, "Well, I just tell God what I did." I've got news for you, God knows what you did. Confessing sin is not giving God information. He knows. Nobody comes and confesses their sin and God says, "What?" No. Confessing sin is acknowledging my sin to God and agreeing with him as to what my sin really is. It's sin. It's seeing it the way God sees it. It's judging it the way God judges it. It's condemning it as God condemns it. And that's what David's doing. "God, I have sinned against thee and done evil in thy sight. I agree with you, God. What I did is sin." And that's when restoration.... "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," and I like this next phrase, "and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I had someone tell me one time, "Preacher, if you knew what I did, you know God won't forgive me." I said, "You're wrong. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Faithful. David acknowledges his sin before God. Second thing I notice here, and I have to give it very quickly, is David's absence of joy. David had lost the joy of his salvation. Now it's important to take note, if you would come back to our text in Psalm 51, it's important to note, verse 12, he says, "Restore unto me the joy of my salvation." Notice what he does not say. You can learn a lot by paying attention to what the Bible does not say sometimes. Notice what it does not say. It does not say restore unto me thy salvation. David lost the joy of his salvation. David did not lose his salvation. Any salvation that is not secure is not salvation at all. Any salvation that can be lost is not salvation at all. At best it's the possibility of salvation, but it is not salvation. If I could possibly lose my salvation, I could never say emphatically, "I am saved," because that may not be true in the end. But every time the word "saved" is used in the Bible, it's past tense, already done, settled, secure. Now that's another message. David is saying, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. David lost his joy.

The word "restore" means to bring back again, to put it back into place. It was there before. It was there. Now it's gone. And I want it back again. "Lord, what I had before, I want it back. God, what you were doing for me before, I want you to come back and do it for me again." Restore. It comes from our English word "refresh." Did you ever get on your program there and something I don't know about computers a whole lot, but I know there's a thing you can hit a refresh and hit that. That thing will spin around and bring it back up and make it the way it's supposed to be. Does anybody know what I'm talking about at all? I don't even know what I'm talking about on that illustration.

There was a day when David was joyful. He was happy. There was a day when David rejoiced in the things of God. There was a day when David was excited to be around God's people. He looked forward to the day. To put it in our context, it's like he's looking forward to when churches, so I can get there and be with God's people again and we can fellowship and we can laugh a little bit and we can rejoice in the Lord and we can join our voices together. There was a day when David thrilled to sing the Psalms of Israel to God. It's all gone. Singing the Psalms of Israel now is just a dry drudgery. Church is something if, "Ah, gotta go to church." Something changed and David said, "I want that back again."

I've been doing this long enough, some of y'all been around, I've been doing this long enough, and I've seen it. I've seen it. People love church. Oh, they're excited. They sing. Then something happens. They sin. They fall. And rather than dealing with it immediately, rather than addressing it and doing what needs to be done to make it right, they just ignore it. They just deny it, cover it up, justify it, excuse it, minimize it. The joy disappears. They lose it. And David says, "I want that back. I don't want to live this way. Lord, restore to me the joy of thy salvation. God, I want it back. I want to be happy again. I want peace in my heart and mind again. I want the presence of the Holy Spirit that I once enjoyed. I want that presence, to sense that presence again."

One of my favorite theologians that I quote fairly often, John Wayne, and you've heard me quote him before, but he made a tremendous statement. He said life is tough, and it's even tougher if you're stupid. There's a lot of truth in that, huh? I modified his quote a

little bit. Life is tough, and it's even tougher if you're sinful. You and I choose to live outside the word of God. You and I choose to disobey God's command. You and I choose to ignore the will of God, the clear stated will of God. We choose to ignore God's plan for my life. You're gonna have a tough time. I tell you one thing, there's no Christian outside of the will of God, there's no child of God living in sin that has the joy of the Lord. I tell you, oh you can laugh. It's like those stupid TV comedy shows. I don't even watch it. We don't even have cable anymore. You watch stupid TV shows, they have to have a laugh track in the background so that you know when it's funny. Christians living in sin and neglecting their walk with God, that joy is gone and oh, they can put on a thing and they can put on a show and all that but I'm telling you, down inside your heart and soul, that joy is missing. And I know, I've been there. Many of you know exactly what I'm talking about.

David said, "I want that back again. I want the innocency. I want the joy and the peace that I once had." Sin steals our joy. Pride steals our joy. Selfishness steals our joy. Neglect steals our joy. Rebellion steals our joy. Bitterness steals our joy. And he's praying for revival, and he says, "God, do for me again what you've done before."

Before I got saved, most of you know my testimony and wickedness, sin, and shame and the months leading up to the time I trusted Christ when I finally got saved. Sunday mornings, I lived with my dad. It was my dad and I. And he was a truck driver, so he's gone most of the week. He'd pull out Sunday night and sometimes he'd show up during the week, not too often, and get back at the end of the week. So I'm there by myself all week. 17, 16, 17-year-old rebel and God began working my heart. My daddy was praying for me. He lived an immaculate Christian life before me. Sunday mornings, he'd come in and say, he called me Denny, he said, "Denny, get up, time for church. I want you to go to church with me today." Blankety, blank, get out of here. "I'm praying for you." I mean, Sunday after Sunday after Sunday, he'd come in, and I'm telling you, I'm ashamed of how I treated him. And after he would leave, I'd get up, I'd sit there, I felt so miserable. I remember on so many occasions, I'd go down, we had a dresser there, a cabinet, and it had all the photo albums. Remember back when you used to print the pictures out? Had all these just boxes of pictures when we were little and family. I'd get them out, Dad would be gone, I'm by myself, and I'd spread them all on the living room floor and I'd go back and see pictures of me when I was little. I'd look at pictures when I was young and happy and just innocent. I remember so many times just crying and praying, "God, please let me go back. God, let me go back and be born again and have a new start." May 7, 1979, I got born again. I didn't go back to be a little baby, but God gave me new life.

David's not praying for a new life as far as salvation's concerned, but what he is praying, he says, "Lord, bring that back again." If he had photos, he'd look back before his sin, and he'd see how happy he was, and the joy, the blessings of God, and it's all gone and he goes, "God, bring that back, please, bring that back." I look at our country. We never were perfect. I look back at the history of a country and sometimes I think, "God, bring some of that back again." I look at churches and I thank God for our church and God has blessed us. I look back and say, "God, do it again." I read of these revivals of years gone by. I'm reading right now of New England, George Whitefield, and the Great Awakening

in New England and it's describing the people's response to the preaching of the word of God. And as I'm reading last night, I was reading, "God, please do that again."

David's saying, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." Psalm 51 is a Psalm of revival. It's a Psalm of restoration. And then I gotta end with this. Notice verse number 13. He says, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto you." I think there's a key word, and I think that key word is the very first word of verse 13, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways." David wanted people to be saved. David wanted sinners to be converted. David wanted sinners to find forgiveness. I tell you, I'll just be blunt, I wouldn't give you a plug nickel for a Christian who doesn't want to see people saved. I have zero tolerance for a church that doesn't care whether people get saved or not. David wanted people to be saved but he knew that if he was out of fellowship with God, his testimony to the unsaved would be very, very limited. He knew that if he did not have the joy of salvation, the effectiveness of his witness to the unsaved would be very limited. He said, "Lord, I need the joy back. I need to get back right. There's lost people. They need to be saved. There are sinners. They need forgiveness. They need to be converted. God, my witness is nothing. My testimony is nothing unless you restore that joy and that fellowship again. Then will I teach transgressors thy way. Then will sinners be converted unto you." A gloomy, grouchy, backslidden Christian is a lousy witness for the grace of God. A bitter, hateful, miserable Christian is a lousy witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. David said, "I want your joy back. I want it back again so I can be a witness to the lost and sinners would get saved."

I never knew anybody who got saved because a Christian was bitter. I've never known anybody come to Christ because a Christian was grouchy and mad. Listen, we ought to preach against sin, amen? From the pulpit and in the streets, we ought to preach against sin but we ought to do it with the grace and compassion of God. Firm, but not bitter. Firm, but not hateful. David said, "If you'll give your joy back, God, if I can get that back, if you'll restore that joy back where I used to be, where I loved the people, God, and sing and walked with you in your word, I loved your word, God, if I could have that back again, my witness will be, then I'll teach transgressors thy way. You'll have an effective witness."

I think Mountain Lake Independent Baptist Church ought to be the kindest church in town. I don't answer for other churches, whatever. But we ought to be kind. We ought to have the joy of the Lord. We ought to be able to laugh a little bit. Amen? We ought to be able to get together and not be angry and bitter and mad at each other, fussing and fighting. David said, "I want that back because there's a whole world of sinners out there that need to be converted." It's not our great abilities, it's not our dynamic personalities, it's not our brilliant minds that God blesses and uses to bring sinners to Christ, but it is a godly, joyful, humble, Christ-like Christian that has that powerful witness that attracts people to Christ.

I saw my daddy, I know I use him probably too much in illustration, but I saw my daddy in the midst of unbelievable heartache and unbelievable pain, emotional pain, and I saw in my daddy the presence of Christ. I saw him back in the '70s, mid '70s, early '70s. His

heart is shattered. I saw the joy of the Lord there in the midst of all of it. He was so hungry to get to church. He was so hungry for the word of God, and he so rejoiced in his walk with the Lord. I saw that and it affected me. I said, "I want that. I don't want to be the man I am. I want what daddy has." It's what David's saying.

I was reading about monkeys. I don't know this firsthand, this is what I'm told. I've never had a monkey. I don't really particularly like monkeys. I don't like cats a whole lot, but I don't like monkeys either. But they say that if you want a monkey, if you take a shiny coin or a piece of candy or something and you put it in a jar that has a very small opening, that the monkey sees that, he'll reach his hand down in that jar and he'll get a hold of that candy or that coin and he'll ball it in his fist and then he goes to pull his hand out of the jar and he can't get his hand out of the jar because his fist is balled up holding on to that little trinket or that little candy. Anybody ever hear about that? And they say some of those monkeys want that so bad that they will not let loose and not get their hand out of that jar. Dumb, dumb monkey. But you know what? I've seen Christians do the same thing. They've got some sin and it brings them a little bit of pleasure, and by the way, sin will bring pleasure for a season, but it will never bring joy. It'll never bring peace to a heart and mind. I've seen Christians reach into the jar of sin and they want their way, and they want what they want, and they don't care what mama says, they don't care what daddy says, they don't care what God says. "I'm getting my way." They try to have the joy of the Lord. They try and have the blessings of God. They try and have the peace of God and they can't get it because they refuse to let go of that sin that is stealing the joy of the Lord. David says, "I'm letting go. I'm acknowledging, God, I'm being honest with you. God, I'm coming to you. I'm asking you to bring that joy back because there's a world of people that are dying and going to hell and if somebody doesn't help them and win them, they're going to spend eternity in hell. God, give me the joy back." Amen? Let's get honest with God this Memorial Day Sunday. Let's just come clean and say, "Lord, I want it back again."

Father, I ask you to help us to follow David's example here. You've promised us forgiveness. You've promised us acceptance. You've promised us joy of the Lord. Lord, we understand we've got to meet the conditions. We can't disregard your word and your holiness. I pray you'd help us to come clean and be honest.

I wonder with our heads bowed and eyes closed. Now this is between you and God. I know this is a personal Psalm and this is a personal invitation but I wonder if there'd be some this morning between you and God and with our heads bowed, eyes closed would some say, "Preacher, I'd like to have back some aspects of my Christian life that I knew in years gone by. Some things have gotten cold, some things in my Christian life have gone dry. I need that back again. I want revival in my life." Is there any like that by the uplifted hand? "Preacher, pray for me. I want that revival back. I want that blessing and presence of God again." Now maybe, and I'm not going to ask you to respond to this, maybe there's an issue in our life that needs to be addressed. Maybe there's something we need to get honest about. We've been excusing it, we've been justifying it, we've been ignoring it. This morning God says, "Let's deal with it, let's be honest." I plead with you as a preacher of the word of God and as a pastor of this church, I plead with you, get

honest with God. Agree with them. Let them make it right and God will bless you. God will restore that joy. I wonder if there's some here, whether in the auditorium or under the sound of my voice and you say, "Preacher, I don't know for sure that God has forgiven my sins and I don't have assurance of the fact that I'm going to heaven when I die and not going to hell." You say, "I don't want to go to hell." God doesn't want you to go to hell and we don't want you to go to hell but you've got to come to Christ. You've got to accept him as your own personal Savior and trust him. I wonder if there's some this morning say, "Preacher, pray for me. I'm not sure about my salvation. I don't want to go to hell. I want that settled in my heart and mind." Is there any like that? Any like that? "Preacher, pray for me. I've got to get this settled. No more playing games. No more putting on a show. I need to get it settled." Any at all? And maybe there's some, you've got a friend or a family member that's lost, unsaved, they need to be converted to the Lord. Maybe you need to make some decisions, get that testimony where it needs to be. I urge you to do that.

Father, bless our invitation, I ask in Jesus' name.

Let's stand together.