

NATIONAL SWORD OF THE LORD CONFERENCE

THURSDAY July 20, 2023

930AM – Dennis Leatherman

Psalm 51

Context: David has 65 chapters dedicated to him. 59 references in the NT to David. He is a man after God's own heart, said by God. The throne Jesus will rule the world from during the millennial reign will be the throne of David. What an outstanding man of God. Yet, the Bible doesn't ignore or cover up his sins. When he sinned, God will deal with it. The Bible is brutally honest.

He committed adultery. Then rather than acknowledging it, he tries to cover it up. When that failed, he plotted the murder of her husband, had him killed. He covered that sin up for several years. Finally, God intervenes and sends Nathan to tell the parable and tells David that he is the man in the parable. David broke down under the conviction of God and says I have sinned.

This Psalm is a prayer of his confession. It's a turning point in the life of David. He pours his heart out to God and thoroughly confessed. We may not commit the same sins as David but we have our own sins and Psalm 51 will help us when we come to confess our sins to God. He intensely wanted to be right with God. He is serious about his condition before God and he wanted things right.

David's response

1. He accepts responsibility – Psalm 51:1 me, mine, my. It would help our churches if we took personal responsibility, not blaming others. If we want God's hand and power back, Psalm 51 is a good place to start.

This is a public confession. This was sung by Israel on the Sabbath. The entire nation knew his confession for thousands of years we have known, read his confession.

We need revival in our churches. America will never be restored until there is revival in our churches and that won't happen until we get serious about the condition of our hearts. When there are more Christians in the movies than the churches, we need revival (more concerned about our cell phones, watching YouTube and playing video games during the reading of the Word, the value of our home is more important than the church).

He needs God's hand on his ministry and his church, as a pastor he can do nothing without that. We need the filling of the Holy Spirit and that begins in our heart.

2. He tears down the façade. Psalm 51:10 create in me a clean heart. We need preachers with clean hearts. We can go through the motions and put on a good show and have a filthy heart. We need to get serious about our spiritual condition.

For 2 years he had been putting on a show, even in front of the nation of Israel. It was a show. And David took the façade down when he was convicted by what Nathan was sent by God to say.

Psalm 51:6 He desired truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part make me to know wisdom. That's where it starts, where the power and relationship is. It's my walk with God in my heart that's where the power is.

Psalm 66:18 iniquity in the heart. Nobody knows, but God knows.

You may not have the biggest crowd but have a blessing of power by having a clean heart. We don't need pastors putting on a show. Hypocrisy is a real danger for believers, preachers, teachers, deacons, etc.

Matthew 23:25 Jesus defines hypocrisy (to the Pharisees). Woe unto you... hypocrites. Outer cup can be clean while the inner cup is filthy. Clean the inner cup first. Full of hypocrisy and iniquity... that's what David was playing.

Matthew 6: Jesus to his disciples. We are trying to live for Jesus, take up our cross, deny self which is a disciple. Apparently it is possible for a disciple to pray as a hypocrite.

Matthew 6:16 don't fast as the hypocrites. We need to make sure our condition is as it should be before we go after the world. We need a clean heart. We need to be careful that we are not just an appearance of Christ's likeness.

3. David focuses on himself.
Generally focusing on ourselves is not what we should do. But here David stopped looking at the sins of other people and looked at his own sins. We are good at seeing the sins of others and overlooking our own. We need to look into the mirror of God's Word.
4. David comes to God in faith. O God, passionately, earnestly coming to God to do something he couldn't do for himself. Only God can cleanse a heart, forgive a sin, take a hypocrite and make him a genuine witness of the Lord. Baptistry, church membership, good works never cleansed a heart. Only God through the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse a heart.

The heart is what God is primarily concerned with. Deuteronomy 6:5. Proverbs 4:23, Proverbs 23:26 The heart is the unseen command center of our lives. Luke 6:35 Proverbs 23:7 Man lies because he has a dishonest heart, steals because he has a thieving heart, etc. It only has to do with our heart, not with other people or circumstances.

An act of submission on David's part. If he had a clean heart he would have clean hands, tongue, hands. Create in me – Genesis 1:1 same word "create" the same way He created the world with His word, that's also how He created a clean heart in a man. Ephesians 5:26, Psalm 1

We need to read His Word for the cleansing of our hearts. Salvation begins in the heart (Romans). Restoration begins in the heart (Prodigal son). Revival begins in the heart. If your heart is clean, God can use you.

1030AM – George Alquist

When God Goes Small

The Lord “gave him” this message to preach.

Zechariah 4:1-10

We live in a time where there is a derision of the small. Our eyes and our fancies are captured by the big, living large. Small stores, pharmacy, hardware store, shoemaker, all lost. Everything is big now, including the megachurches and auditoriums. There are advantages and places for “bigness”. But there is beauty, dignity and advantage in the small. Small doesn’t mean failure, not having what it takes, not enough effort or doesn’t have the blessing of God. We tend to think this of pastors of small churches.

Zech 4:10 who has despised the day of small things? God wasn’t pleased.

We must never get to the place where we despise the small or look on them as being inferior. Zerubbabel’s temple was built by the same God that built Solomon’s temple. God made the universe and the atom.

1. God and small people – the church is made up of small, untalented, unknown people.
Joseph and Mary whom were chosen to bring the Messiah into the world.
Gideon a nobody and nothing, chosen to deliver a nation.
David the least of his brothers, used to defeat a giant.
Abraham a relative nobody whom God used to birth a nation.
Israel His chosen people Deuteronomy 7:7 not because they were more in number because they were the fewest.
Apostle Paul who considered himself the chief of sinners and the least of the apostles.
Benjamin through whom God would send the lineage of David.
Saul said he was a small in a small (small family in the small tribe).
Unnamed widow Matt 12 who’s offering was said to have been larger than all the others.
Rahab, Barak, Jebtha, Samuel. Matt 25:37 “unto the least” you have done unto Me.
Got uses the little to glorify Himself.
1 Cor 1:27 Why would God use such small nobody’s, so that no one could glory in his own flesh.
We are all in over our heads. Every big was once a small. You might be the small God’s looking for.
2. God and small places – He had gone small a majority of the times He uses places.
Zerubbabel’s temple, smaller and less glorious than Solomon’s temple. But it was the one that Jesus would grace with His presence.
Bethlehem Micah 5:2 – little among Judah.

Stable most unworthy to receive the Savior of mankind.
Fishes Matt 8:7-9 they had a few small fishes. It wasn't 2 big fish, it was 2 small fish.
The smaller the fishes the more glory God gets.
Al the small city used to chasten Israel in Joshua 7.

God uses the small.

A still small voice woke Elijah.

There are small towns with small churches through which God uses to reach a big nation. Small town preachers reaching small churches but reaching big places and doing big things for God.

Luke 15:10 joy over one sinner than repents. There need to be men in the small places for the people too. Should they not have someone who cares for their soul. Matthew 16:26 what profit if your soul is lost?

Who cares about the trailer park person or the small town? They need a preacher too.

In this day of big things we have to be careful not to despise the small people and small places that have God's blessing upon them.

3. God and small power – everything that mankind has seen God do or heard of God doing is really God playing small ball. Even outer space is no challenge for Him. He creates the universe with his Word. He will destroy heaven and earth with a nod. He went small to save mankind, confining Himself to a human's body.

He has to go really small to talk to us. He has to baby talk to us, limiting Himself to a human language.

We can't imagine how big He is. We will never get to the end of His power or glory.

He is the God of the small and big churches, the unknown and the well-known. We get so full of ourselves when we need to get full of God.

2 Cor 4:7 the man must never obscure the Master, creature not outshine the Creator.

We need men who are big enough to be small and make Jesus big.

Part of God's greatness is in His ability to go small.

7PM – Shelton Smith

Matthew 14:27-33

Luke 12:27-31

In both of these passages Jesus is rebuking them for doubting.

Charles Findley wrote a song with the line “if you trust and never doubt, He will surely bring you out.”

Eve, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Simon Peter, Thomas all doubted as do all of use at some point. We will doubt some things. There are things we should never doubt, we may question but we shouldn't ever doubt some specific things.

1. We should never doubt the reality of God. He is 3 in 1, the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. When the Bible says God created the heavens and the earth we are talking about the God who made man. He is eternal. Hebrews 11:6 without faith we can't please God. So we shelve our doubts and put everything on Him.
2. The legitimacy of Scripture, never doubt. Genesis to Revelation is all true, every word and phrase. When it addressed history and math, science, it's always correct. Therefore it is authoritative. The legitimacy of His Word is set in stone. We need to follow the Bible on how to live our lives.
3. The simplicity of salvation, never doubt. Ephesians 2:8. If we believe we will be saved. Our help is not needed for salvation, it's a simple matter. Men want to add to and take from salvation. Men have a tendency to unbelief, to doubt.
4. There ought to be no doubt about the security of the believer. He gives everlasting life. You are put into the family of God after the new birth. You are in His family. No one gets in any other way. When we come to Christ we are secure.
5. There never ought to be any doubt about the greatness of godliness. There are great principles in the Bible. Romans 12:9 26 principles for the transformed life. We are living in the world but we ought not to be of the world. If you live godly you won't have hangovers, regrets. What God says is what is good for us, never doubt that.
6. Never doubt the coming Rapture. Amillennialism isn't correct. Comfort one another with the words of awaiting Jesus. The false prophets on TV don't know when He's coming either but one day He will come and we should never doubt that. And everyone alive in Christ will be right there behind Him.
7. Never doubt the promised the great God has given. Every promise in His book is true. We can live, build, work, be His servants because he has laid out so many precious things for us. Every principle is true if you will work it. Our world seems to be on fire, it's burning itself out with crazy, ugly, ungodly things. Our people are plundering toward an eternal hellfire if they don't have a Savior. They need the fire to burn in our hearts so we will stop doubting and go and spread the Word.

8PM – Joe Arthur

There is Nothing

1 Kings 18:41-4

God has always kept His word and He always will.

James 5:17 Elijah was a normal human, subject to like passions. He was a man of great faith but also fear, of assurance but also doubt, to soar and also to be in the valley, to be with God and also to have to wait for God in the valley low. Our geographical location doesn't diminish God's divine ability to meet our need. The God of the mountain is the God of the valley, of the day and of the night, of peace and also of war.

Elijah is going through a nothing season, a nothing time. We will also experience a nothing season. We will pray, hope, trust, witness, preach, and sometimes nothing will happen. Every Sunday isn't Pentecost for a preacher.

1 John 1:9 is in the Bible so pastor's wives can lie to them about how their sermons were???

How to keep going when there is nothing. Nothing time isn't quitting, retreating, throwing in the towel time. In the middle of nothing is the God who is everything who can do anything in the midst of nothing. Because when it feels, looks, sounds and senses like nothing God is up to something.

1. Command – he was told to keep going by the authority figure in his life. That's the only reason he needed. There is nothing wrong with doing right simply because God said so. Preach, go to church, tithe, praise His name, get ahold of God because He said so. That is the only reason we need to be faithful is because our Heavenly Father said so. There is a joy in serving Jesus. We don't serve God for the joy, blessing, benefit, thrill we serve Him because He said so. Because when the burden, fire, joy isn't there, the command is always there and that is reason enough. The sun arose this morning because God said so (other examples: stars, sea, wind, clouds, angels bow). How much more than should the people of God continue, because He said so.
2. Compliance – this servant is simply obeying the command of the master. Everyone is looking for a formula to live the Christian life. We need only to "trust and obey." It is not the man's responsibility to make it rain, he can't do it but if he didn't go he wouldn't see, smell, hear the rain. It was only his responsibility to go, and go, and go. We can't save people but we can declare the gospel that can. We can point them to the Savior who can, will, does. God lets us lift up the Lord, preach the Bible and He can bring revival, not us. God is sovereign, can do anything without our permission but the Bible tells us about man's responsibility to respond to the sovereign acts of God. He can do anything but He lets us get in on it. (Moses, Samson, Gideon, David, disciples, little boy and the 5000, Martha and Mary with Lazarus, disciples and fish all examples of human actions and God's work). We can't raise the dead but we can roll away the stone. We can't feed the 5000 but we can pack a lunch. We can't part the Red Sea but we can lift the rod.

3. Consistency – he said go, go again, 7 times. He has friends that know everything about the Bible, including sermons on the antichrist. He doesn't know everything about the Bible. Elijah tells the servant to go look but we don't know how far it was. But by the time the young man goes up and comes back 7 times he has a well-worn path to nothing. Elijah tells him to look, and he sees nothing, repeated 7 times. The servant followed the instructions and continued to see nothing. Which happens to us as we preach, pray, witness and we need to go again because there is a blessing to those who are faithful even when there is nothing. He didn't quit, didn't give up and he saw the rain. When we are on our well-worn path to nothing, we will bump into someone who is going to take our nothing and turn it into something. Each trip is twice on the same path, making it easy for the man to become weary. God meets the need, solves the problem, takes the burden.

Past experience births present confidence. A preacher has been where we haven't been and seen what we haven't seen. God looks beyond our nothing and gives us something. He is the God who can make it rain when there is nothing. If God can reach further down, then you can reach up. If God can forgive you from your sin, wash you in the blood of Calvary, He can do anything else. God can do it again because He has done it before.

The last time he goes, he sees a cloud the size of a man's hand. This was a small thing but don't despise small things. It was "just" a small cloud the size of a hand. That wasn't a man's hand, but the hand that stepped out on nothing and said shine sun, glow moon, twinkle stars, rain clouds, breathe man. You can believe that out of nothing God can make something. With those hands he was nailed to the cross but He was also raised to victory and holds us with that hand and will one day wipe away all the tears from our eyes.

And there was a great rain. God kept His word. The boy didn't make it rain but he kept on going and hoping and believing and trusting until the God of heaven made it rain. God will keep His word.

He believes that when it started to rain, that Ahab, Elijah and the earth got rained on. Standing in a mud puddle was the servant getting drenched in the fulfillment of God's divine promises. He believed he was splashing in the mud puddles and saying "He did it again." As that boy played in the mud puddle he said he was glad he went, tried, obeyed and was faithful one more time.