

Confession

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[0:00] This is the last week of our Spiritual Disciplines series as it's Palm Sunday and we're looking forward to this Easter week. And it's been a long season, especially for those of us who have been fasting.

And I have experienced so much love from God this whole Lenten period after choosing to go on a fast and then having God love me so much to close McDonald's downstairs to renovate for a good few months.

And I think it opens next week. So it's as if he is in control of everything and that the world is all about me. I cannot wait. It is that day.

It's going to be a good day. Oh, Jesus. So we did fasting. We did lamenting. We did reading the word. We did worship.

Actually, you know what's fine? Every time I present the discipline that we're going to talk about, I found myself saying, hey, fasting is a lost art in the church. Lamenting is a lost art in the church.

And I realized, you know what?

[0:58] Everything seems to be a lost art. Discipline seems to be a lost art in the church, full stop. What are we actually doing? What do we spend our times doing when we are doing church? What does that even mean? And so this week's one is different again.

And actually, this week's one, we're going to have Bibles handed out to us later. Not yet, but because we're just going to go through the word of God here. And it's something that is definitely a lost art in the church.

But I'll start with this. Just to make us feel really good. The thing that unites us all here is that we are sinners.

We are sinners. Trevor, you're a sinner. Like a serious one. Just as serious as Josh. You're a sinner. That's why you're both side here. You're a sinner.

We have all sinned. We've all made mistakes. Some of us to big degrees, we feel, and some of us to smaller degrees. Yet we're all sinners.

[1:58] Now, when we sin, the next thing that really happens is that we just feel guilty. Right? Not your head if you felt guilty before about something. The question then becomes, well, when you feel guilty, what do you do?

What do you do with that guilt? Do you basically throw yourself into an addiction? Because that helps you numb those feelings of guilt so you don't feel bad anymore? Or you just feel worse at the end afterwards?

But you just, is that what you do? Or do you run away? Do you run away and you just veg out on Netflix? Is that how you kind of numb that guilt? For some of us, it actually is the trigger that causes us to fall into depression.

For us, it falls into anger. Isolation. I don't know if we, as the church, have really, truly figured out what we do with that guilt.

Hence why there's a lost art, at least in the Protestant church, there is the lost art of confession. The lost art of saying, sorry. Martin Luther says this, when I urge you to confession, I'm urging you to be a Christian.

[3:03] That's really what it is. The whole Christian faith, the whole premise is on basically that you are a sinner, that you have guilt. And it's Jesus who freezes from that.

And yet, somehow, we know it's that important, yet we don't do it anymore. We don't say sorry anymore. Maybe we're not even very good at saying sorry. I've been trying to teach my kids how to say sorry and to be more specific when it comes to saying sorry, because when they do something wrong, which we all inevitably do, it's like, you're sorry.

And then I find myself being that really annoying dad that says, well, who's sorry? Oh, I'm sorry. Oh, you're sorry. What are you sorry for?

And then I'm that patronizing parent that kind of walks them through. When we confess, when we apologize, we have to be specific with what we're doing. Otherwise, are we truly sorry?

So we're talking about the art or the discipline of confession here. Last week, I shared a quote with you, which is we generally, John Ortberg says this, we generally sin alone, but we heal together.

[4:08] Right? We generally sin alone, but we heal together. This week, there's another quote that maybe just adds on top of that, which I think is really nice by Bonhoeffer. And he says this, he who is alone with his sin is utterly alone.

Confession is the breakthrough to community. If we generally sin together and we heal together, sorry, sin alone and then we heal together, how we heal through community is through confession. The book of James chapter five says, hey, confess your sins to one another and therefore you will be healed. Who wants to be healed? We all want to be healed of our sin and shame and guilt. But the question is, do we, are we willing to put in the hard work to confess?

And it's hard. Anyone who's been married will know saying sorry is hard. But yet it is a must.

Confess is the only way your marriage will continue to grow and be healed.

And Jay, Emily just shot a really strong look to Jay. Just that was a really strong, piercing look. Jay, you can come and sit here at the front during ministry time. So we're going to talk about confession.

[5:14] But I realized, okay, so one of the promises I made to you at the beginning of this series was, hey, when we preach on this topic, it's preaching from a place of authority. Why? Because we've gone through it. We are going through it and we are doing it as much as we can.

And we have experience in this. You know, that's why I had Gabe, who knows scripture so well, be the one who comes up to share scripture with us. Honestly, with this one, I'm not sure. Because growing up in the Protestant church, it's not something that you really, really think about.

We don't really, really do. And so really, actually, as I look more into it, there is a different wing of the Christian faith that is much more well-versed, much more experienced than this, and that is the Catholic Church. And so actually, what we're going to do is actually invite Ellen to come up and have a conversation with me, where I'm just going to kind of prod and probe her mind to see her experience when it comes to confession.

Can we give a round of applause? Thank you, Ellen.

Which you guys know is probably a very traditional church. Your idea, a stigma around the Catholic Church is that it's just a dying church, that there's not a lot of young people.

[6:40] So a big part of my role is to connect the students who are going to Catholic schools to the church, essentially, to build up their relationship with Jesus and invite them there.

And so, yeah, a lot of my formation is through the Catholic Church. I've been picking our mind a little bit. We worked together at Young Life, and I went to work one day. I watched The Two Popes for the first time.

That was really cool. I was like, there are so many things I don't understand about the Catholic Church. And then last week, we watched the Conclave. You did see it. So I've just been going on this journey, just going, what is going on? And if I find all that really weird, Ellen must find us really weird as well.

Is that right? It's taken me a while to get used to it, yeah. What's one thing that's jumped out at you coming from the Catholic Church and coming to a church like this? Admittedly, maybe we are a little bit more chaotic than we should be.

But what were some of the things that come out? Wow, that's different. I guess the concept of planting a church was really new for me, especially because I joined the gathering at such an initial stage.

[7:43] It was really small when we were meeting at the Young Life base, and there was all this conversation about what kind of church we wanted to be. And that was a new conversation, right? Because I come from a church that there's doctrine, there's tradition, there's liturgy.

That has stemmed all the way back from the first disciples. So, yeah, I was struck by that, like watching people wrestle with which traditions they wanted to keep, how they wanted to do things like communion and baptism.

Yeah. I was at a dinner actually recently, City to City. It was a fundraising dinner that Aidan's uncle invited me to, and it was church planting, it was by Tim Keller's kind of church organization, just

church planting around the world.

And then I was sat next to a lady who'd been a Catholic for the whole of her life, and she was like, at the end of the dinner, she was like, James, I have no clue what just happened. What do they mean by planting a church? And then she looked over to her husband and said, can you imagine if we told Father Thomas that we were planting a church?

Like, for me, I realized it's something that I'd taken for granted, that actually I hadn't even thought about, that actually the Catholic Church, this isn't a thing. Because there's so much history, rich history, when it comes to liturgy and tradition.

[8:51] And maybe the one I wanted to really bring you up to talk about was confession. Yeah. Tell us a little bit about what confession means to the Catholic Church and what your experience about it. Yeah, so the Catholic Church has seven sacraments.

Maybe if you went to Catholic schools you would have learned about this, but one of those sacraments is the sacrament of reconciliation, and that is the act of coming to a priest and confessing your sins. And so when I was nine, I think, nine or ten, we did it as I went to Catholic schools.

And although my family is not a practicing Catholic or anything like that, we still did our sacraments because it was just kind of like the thing you did if you went to a Catholic school. And so I didn't really have an understanding of it, but essentially you go to a priest, and I remember it was Father Paul Ghouley, who's still a really good friend of mine.

He sat me down and I was there, and you kind of are sitting with the priest, and I just said to him I was going to make up a lie or like a sin because I didn't know what to say. And instead I was like confronted with the fact I was about to lie in confession, and I was like, Father Paul, I don't know what to say.

I can't think of anything. He's like, that's all right. We'll just forgive your sins anyway. And he was just so kind and gentle, and he prayed the prayer and gave me a blessing, and then I went off, and I always remember that moment. I still remind Father Paul of that kindness he showed me.

[10:06] But then the next time I went to reconciliation was probably ten years after that. And this was after my conversion. I had really come to understand what relationship with Jesus looks like.

I wanted to live my faith. It wasn't just a school subject anymore, but it was very much a lifestyle.

And confession was just one of those attributes of the lifestyle that I wanted to live.

So I remember going to the priest and saying, because part of the confession, you start by saying the last time that I went to confession. So, Father, forgive me for my sins. It's been ten years since my last confession.

And I remember in that moment I didn't want to waste it. And I had been told, like, in the talk before, we had just heard a preaching, to be honest. It's almost as if, like, you're going to a doctor, and you don't want to hide your wounds.

Because if you hide your wounds, then the doctor can't heal them. So I was told that. So I went into confession, and I just kind of was very honest and kind of listed out a bunch of things that were weighing on me.

[11:04] It's not just my sin, but some of the brokenness that I was feeling from sins that others had done unto me. Yeah, it was a lot of that. So talk, and now I'm getting really interested.

Talk me through what it looks like. Because, okay, my ignorance here is going to show, because when I think about confession, I think about a dark church, and it's raining outside, and it's night, and then someone walks in and dripping, and they walk in, and they go to that booth.

They just killed somebody. They killed somebody. They walk into that little kind of thing that they sit in, and magically there's someone sat next to them in the other side who they can't see, but they kind of can. It's like a grill, and they're, like, shadowy.

Because you kind of can see them, because, I mean, I guess you, I don't know. But anyway, or maybe for movie purposes, it's important that you can see both people. And then there's just this deep, dark confession that happens. Is that how it is, or is it a much more day-to-day thing?

Or what is it now? Is there a WhatsApp line? Or what does it look like? It could be that. Honestly, most of the churches you'll see, if you go into a church, you'll see the confessionals, and it's built into the church.

[12:05] So you definitely can go in and still experience that, where it's a lot more anonymous. You know that the priest is there, but they can't see your face. But then more traditionally, probably for the past 60 years, there's a bit of a shift in the way confession's done, and you can also choose

to sit like you would a conversation with a peer, and just face-to-face.

And you're either sitting on a chair, or you might decide to kneel. Depends on, I guess, how repentant you are. Yeah. Sometimes I have heard a story of a friend of mine.

He was struck with his sin one day, and he was like, I really need to go to confession. And he looked up, and a priest walked past him. And in that moment, he's just like, oh, Father, Father, would you hear my confession?

And this was on a university campus, and he just sat down on a park bench and heard his confession. Wow. So I'm guessing this is foreign to a lot of us who haven't grown up in the Catholic kind of church scene, but I also know there's probably a lot of people here who have grown up in Catholic churches.

So you actually know this somewhat as well. Tell us one thing that we're missing out on. If, you know, as the Evangelical Protestant Church that doesn't do this discipline, what are we missing out on?

[13:20] I think, I think if you've never confessed your sin to a person, you're missing out. Like, on a number of different levels.

Like, it's like, I was saying to me this morning, it's like the perfect combination of accountability and freedom. It's like you have the discipline.

I know that seems like a contradiction, but the accountability is that the discipline is organized for you, and there's like a real liberation in that, just knowing that you can come, confess, and it's, you know when you're in worship and you feel the Holy Spirit and sometimes you feel lighter?

I know that that's kind of articulated a lot. I've heard it this week, a young person say that, right? So it's like that feeling when you leave the confessional. It's like you are lighter for it.

You can trust that God has heard your confession, that you are forgiven, and it's just a very tangible experience of that. but in saying that, I remember an encounter I had with Chagall actually early on in the gathering, and sorry, Chagall, I should ask you permission for this, but she turned to me, and she's like, would you hear my confession?

[14:30] And in that moment, I was really struck, this is the first time right outside of the Catholic Church, someone wants to like confess their sins to me, and I was like, I don't know if I agree with this, I also know that this is a very, very sacred moment, and I just said to Chagall, I'm like, can we pray before we do this?

And she shared, and then I prayed, and the whole day, I was thinking about how sacred that was. So, I think maybe the sacredness, maybe, yeah? If that's an answer to your question.

What did she confess? No way! That's a good point. Another one is, you can be sure the priest is going to be super confidential, right? They take a vow. So this person is totally anonymous, there's no like feelings, there's no residual like guilt, or anything like that.

Although sometimes, I have definitely avoided priests that are my friends, and I would go to maybe a different parish, just to like kind of stop that awkwardness, but I know that theologically, maybe that's not good.

Anyway, yeah. Well, hey, thank you very much. I think my goal was just to, hey, this is a whole different world out there, that actually has spent thousands of years even, just committing to the discipline of confession, that I think it was helpful for us to even hear about.

[15:39] So thank you very much. Can I just say one more thing? Sorry. The frequency that I did it definitely helped me to become more sensitive to when sin has entered my life. So I appreciate that.

So whatever format you do confession, like I pray that it would form your conscience quickly. And I think confession did that for me. In the early years of formation, it was confession that helped me to create a pure heart so that I could love people better.

Yeah. Thank you. Round of applause for Ellen. Thank you. So we're all sinners. You're a sinner. I'm a sinner.

And hopefully on the process of sanctification, we've become, we've become more and more like Jesus. But the eye of confession is so important. But do we do it? And it's not just that we're not alone as the only sinners in the history of mankind here.

This book is filled with sinners. In fact, if you were to have a look at this book and go, what's, look at the people in this book. Why did God choose to share these stories with us? What's he actually trying to show us?

[16:40] I think if anything, he's trying to say is the way to get to me, the only way to get to me is through repentance. Because if you look at all the people that go to him and get to him, it's, it's just, I mean, these heroes have committed all the different kinds of sins.

And so God's showing us, I'm going, wait, this is actually the only way. So I wonder whether actually through this, through this book here, through our community here, we should try and normalize confession. We should try and normalize to the point where we can actually go to one another and go, actually, hey, I've had a really bad week.

This, this happened and it wasn't, it wasn't good. And I actually experienced the freedom that Ellen was just telling us about here. And we're going to go through a Psalm, probably one of, again, one of the most famous Psalms. A couple of years ago, Kimon and I took a Sabbath memorizing it together, Psalm 51.

And it's super powerful. One of the old songs that I grew up in the church listening to, that actually Uncle Anthony would have led, would create in me a clean heart. Oh God. Psalm 51.

But just maybe give you a little bit of context here. If we go back to the story of David. Oh, you know what? We've got some very strong ladies who are passing out the Bible. So I'm going to actually ask, I haven't done this.

[17:44] And last week I kind of flew around everywhere. This week I want to just to focus on this chapter here. So I've asked our ladies to pass them around. I know some of you have these cute apps that you use. That aren't truly Bibles.

But can we just, can we just pass them around? And if you really have your own Bible, if you really have an app that you take notes with, feel free just to pass it along. But I just wanted the act of just, let's get the Bibles out.

And if you're passing it to your, your friend next to you, say, Hey, this is the word of God. This is the word of God. And this is a big, this is a big deal. What I want to do, part of the reasons why we gather is, is we're trying to learn how to read the Bible together.

We're trying to understand God's word together. And so actually having a Bible and going, wow, this is what it looks like. I don't even have to scroll. I think the pages is, you can see it all in one go. How cool is that? Right. And so we're going to go through Psalm 51, but whilst I buy some people some time and some are now going to the contents page to look for where Psalms is.

[18:52] Yeah, there are, there are different versions. Okay. So ESV is the one that traditionally, uh, well, the one that I use right here. It's probably the one. Uh, and then there's another one, which is NIV, which is if you grew up in the late 1900s like me, that was the most popular one back then.

Uh, but it has evolved a little bit. Uh, and there is, and if you, and there's an NLT that is, um, let's say just a little bit more accessible. Okay. Personally, I don't use it as my first go-to. I use the ESV first.

And then when inevitably I do not understand what I'm reading, I will then go to the NLT to help me understand a little bit. Okay. Uh, I probably, that's the way around. I do it. Some people start with the NLT. Some people start with the message, which is like 90s slang.

I mean, it's, it's, it's, it's aged, I feel as though, but it's 90s slang, right? Uh, but hey, this is the word of God. But before I, we, we, I invite you to stand to read it. Uh, let me, let me pay you the picture. David here, a young David here is out in the wilderness. He's running. He's escaping from Saul. He's trying to kill him. Okay. During that time, he has a few friends. He has a few friends who are actually wanting to protect him and look after him.

[19:56] And one of those friends, actually there were 37 of them. One of those friends is a guy called Uriah. Uh, and actually, so he would risk his life to go out into the wilderness to the cage, to go and protect David, to give him food, to protect him and look after him.

So Uriah was David's good friend. Fast forward, David becomes the king. Uriah is still a very strong gifted fighter and leads the armies. And then there's one time where David decides to apply for some annual leave and does not go out to battle and stays at home.

Uh, and he lets his friend go out to do the work for him. Uh, David was maybe procrastinating and being a bit lazy. And unfortunately, whilst they're out in battle, his friends are in battle.

David one day comes out onto his rooftop and looks over and sees in another building, a beautiful woman. He sees a beautiful woman and he goes, okay, well, I would like to meet that woman. So he ends up meeting this woman whose name was Bathsheba and ends up having an affair with her.

Much later, uh, Bathsheba sends a message to David saying, hey, I'm pregnant. And so David's like, oh, that's bad. That's bad. Because Uriah is a big guy and he's strong and he's out there fighting.

[21:05] So then David's like, David does what you and I do when we make a mistake. How do I cover this up? How do I, fix this without anyone knowing about it? How do I cover it up?

So he thinks of an idea and it's not a bad idea. He's like, maybe I'll get Uriah to come back. I'll have a meeting with him because I want an update about how the battle is going. And then maybe I'll send him home. And then when he's at home, he'll spend the night with his wife. And then he'll find out later that she's pregnant. And he'll think it's, he'll think that it's just their baby. And so he invites Uriah back and he sits down.

He goes, how's it going? Update me about the war. And they have a good meeting. And it's like, good, good, good. Right. Anyway, done. Thank you for the update. Hey, go home, go home and be with your wife. Of course, this is all his plan. And then Uriah, the guy who had the courage to go out to go protect David when he was still in the wilderness.

Uriah's like, no, never. Who am I that I would go back to be with my wife when my troops are still out on the front line? I am not doing that. And he ends up sleeping outside. And David's like, that's not what you're supposed to do.

[22:11] And then Uriah goes back out to fight. You can kind of see the difference between the two men right now. And David's like, well, this is still going to be a problem. So then he tells Joab, he says, hey, who's on the battlefield as well.

Hey, send Uriah out on just like a little special mission right at the front, where it's the most dangerous. And at the moment where he needs your help, pull back, pull back and then let him go. Because if we, if I can get rid of Uriah, then maybe this problem won't be a problem anymore. And it happens. And it happens exactly as he plans. And Uriah dies. Bathsheba goes into mourning because her husband has died.

Soon after the morning, David marries Bathsheba. And hey, we're expecting a child. David does the next thing that you and I do when we try and cover up our sin and we clear our history.

We realize, oh, I'm done. I'm clear. No one's going to find out. And that's when Nathan comes up. Nathan, the prophet, goes to David.

[23:12] Nathan knows about this because God told him. Of course, God knows the whole thing. God knows all the things that we're doing as well, by the way, just in case you didn't know that. Nathan goes, hey, David, let me tell you a story.

There's a rich man and a poor man. The rich man has just so many, so many flocks of sheep. The poor man only has one. And actually, the poor man looked after his sheep so well and cared for his sheep and actually treated his sheep as though it was his daughter.

The rich man comes into town and takes that poor man's sheep. What should he do? David's just furious. He's like, what kind of man would do that? Oh, oh.

Nathan says, well, he's standing right in front of me. And at that moment, David realized that there is no sin that I can commit that won't come to light.

Nothing that's done in darkness won't at one point be exposed into the light. And that is the context in which he pens Psalm 51. I'm going to be talking about confession today, but really I'm actually just going to be going through Psalm 51 because you and I both know when we've screwed up and we've made mistakes and we get to the point where we've been found out, that is our true self.

[24:28] That moment there is when we're like, it all spews out. And actually what we see here is David's very, very honest confession, not a voluntary one, might I add. I'm not convinced that he would have confessed if he was, if he's been told that he'd managed to get away with it.

And yet here we are with David actually sharing his heart. So that's how we're going to read Psalm 51. So can I invite you to stand for the word of the Lord? And as we read this, I pray the Lord will give us the, just the gift of being able to just see how David found, see what he wants to show us today as well.

Psalm 51. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone into Bathsheba. 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.

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. Behold, you delight in truth, in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.

[25 : 53] 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. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise, for you will not delight in that sacrifice, or I would not give it.

You will not be pleased with the burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Do good to Zion in your good pleasure. Build up the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you will 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. Please take a seat.

[26 : 58] So we see laziness, we see lies, we see lust, we see all of it happen, and finally, David, who thought he'd gotten away with it, has not. We have our sins that we think we've gotten away with.

We have our sins that are filling us with guilt, driving us into all these different addictions and pains that we have that we can't get out of, that we're trying to numb ourselves from. What does this passage teach us about what we can do when it comes to dealing with our sin?

What does this passage teach us about confession? And actually, that's why I love the fact that you've got Bibles in front of you now. We're just going to go through. And some bits I'll fly through a little bit quicker than others, but I think this actually gives us the template that we need.

So feel free to follow along with me. Have mercy on me, O God. So Nathan exposes him, and straight away, he says, have mercy on me. What's our definition of mercy? Grace, your name is often mixed with the word mercy.

In your eyes, what's the difference between the two? Grace is giving us something we don't deserve, and then mercy is giving us... Yep, you're right.

[28 : 02] Mercy is forgiving us what we do deserve. Yep, so grace is giving us, us getting something that we don't deserve. Mercy is sparing us from something that we do deserve. So sparing us from the punishment that we do deserve it.

So David's like, hey, and actually, just a quick note on that. Nathan confronts David. David is apologetic. Of course you would be. You've just been exposed, and someone told Nathan about this. And actually, he does get forgiven. But even though we get forgiven, there are still consequences.

Okay, so that baby actually still dies. And actually, from then on, David's family is just an absolute mess. Okay, so just because we're forgiven doesn't mean the consequences that we've done are not there.

Okay, so that's... But he says, have mercy on me, O God, so please spare me. Spare me of the punishment. Why? Because I'm repentant, because I'm sorry, because I feel bad that I've been found out.

No. Why? According to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. God, have mercy on me. Forgive me. Not because of me, not because I'm worth forgiving, but because you have an unfailing love.

[29 : 04] Because you have unlimited grace and love for me. You... Actually, it doesn't run dry at all. Here's something else. When we sin, the first thing that we do is hide, and then we think, God, I don't want to be near you, God, because of how it makes me feel, because if you find out, you're going to punish me.

But that's not what Scripture says. According to your steadfast, unfailing love, according to your abundant mercy, I think sometimes we've got our picture of Father God completely wrong. just like the prodigal son who messes up and spends all his dad's fortune, comes sheepishly home, sees his dad from afar, and he thinks, oh my goodness, I'm going to get such a big rebuking. And yet his dad runs, runs, not with a stick, but with arms open wide, going to hold him, hug him, embrace him. I think we lose sight of that when we sin.

That we think, every time we sin, we're going to get beaten with a stick, and yet what we see here, what we see in Scripture here, is that actually God's arms are open wide, always for us, according to your steadfast love and abundant mercy.

[30 : 18] And then he says this, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. This isn't just an act, this isn't just one thing I need you to clean, this is right deep down, this is the deep clean that I need.

This isn't just on the surface. Christine and I, we have a very big difference in our marriage, is that we value, or we perceive cleanliness in very different ways. And so when I think I've cleaned something, I have not cleaned something.

It is not clean. Because Dettol isn't involved. Dettol must be involved in everything. If it's not Dettol, it doesn't make sense. So she values the deep cleaning.

And so David says here, wash me thoroughly. Verse three, for I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Something about when we deal with sin is that we actually just have to acknowledge it.

The therapist will say, hey, you can't heal what you cannot actually articulate and name. God says, actually I know what it is that you need to admit to, but actually the very fact that you just need to share it out.

[31 : 16] And you need to acknowledge that hey, that was on me. Brene Brown is of course a favorite author for some of us, would say the same. But the pathway to vulnerability is just to kind of go, hey, that's on me.

How often do we do that? Or when you make a mistake or when I make a mistake, the first thing we do is someone else. This goes, this isn't just you either.

We've inherited all the way this down from Adam. When he eats the apple and then he blames God and he says, well, I only ate the apple because of the woman that you gave me. The first man did not take responsibility.

Part of confession is going, hey, I'm owning this. This is me. This is on me. This is on you, Jay. Like whatever sin that you had, whatever mistake that you made, you've got to say, Emily, I'm sorry. It's on me. That's the way to a happy, healthy marriage. For Jay, just say, hey, it's on me. And he doesn't say this and he says, my sin is ever before me.

[32 : 16] My sin. I know this is me. I know I did this because of what's going on in my heart. That's why I need to be washed thoroughly. And then he says this, against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

And then I'm like, wait, did you really just sin against God, just God? I think Uriah would probably have something to say about that. I think Bathsheba would probably have something to say about that. And yet what he's saying here is, here's the thing, we do sin against other people but if we keep peeling back, if we keep peeling back about why are we doing this, ultimately the biggest violation is with God.

He hasn't just broken rules, he's broken a relationship with God. Did you notice when Ellen was talking about confession, what was the ministry called? It was called reconciliation. The whole point of confession is that we would be reconciled with God.

The whole cause of sin at the beginning is that we've been disconnected with him. So that's why he's saying, hey, against you, and only you. Because on the surface we have sinned and done different things but there is a deeper sin underneath.

So when we confess, when we apologize to God, it isn't just, God, sorry, I lost control again and I went to the website that I shouldn't have gone to. That's one thing.

[33 : 37] But what we should do is say, God, I'm so sorry. Out of my lack of mistrust for you. Out of my lack of loving and honoring my fellow sister or fellow brother, out of my worry that you won't provide for me someone that I need, I ended up conceding and going to that website.

God, I'm sorry that I cut that corner at work because actually that's not, the act isn't just the problem. The act is that actually I don't trust you. That I think that I have to cut this corner otherwise my boss won't show me favor.

and because of that I'll get fired and then I will die alone and hungry. Really God, actually my sin is that I don't trust you. Can we get to that point?

I remember a conversation with you Pauline I think a few years ago when you were talking about actually how to even praise kids. It's not just to say how to praise kids but to actually be specific about, be specific and constructive with your feedback.

both in a positive way and a negative way. It's not just how to ■, how to yay but actually what is the act that you actually did and why did you do it? We need to get to the heart of the problem when we come down to sin.

[34 : 48] When we come down to confession it's not just saying oh God I messed up again. I know I shouldn't be doing it. Ask yourself why and then go to God and go hey I think I did this because ultimately I don't, you know, if we go all the way back it's really just because we don't trust God that he is who he says he is.

And that he doesn't love us in the way that he says he loves us. Let's get to that in our confession against you and you only have I sinned. And then he says this behold, okay so this language if I'm you especially if I'm a younger person I read this Psalm 51 I'm like man this language that's why the NLT is helpful that's why the message is helpful and you kind of go okay what does he even mean there?

Behold I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. What he's saying here is this I messed up but it's not just because I did that one act that I messed up I am just messed up as a whole.

It's not just the sin I'm committing I am a sinner. There is different the sin is the act but sinner is what's just going on deep inside us. And he said hey I know I messed up here but it's because actually deep down right now there is so much sin in me I was brought forth since the moment I was born I was a sinner.

You were born into sin. I was born into sin before I even came into this world I was a sinner that's what David was saying. And I've said this before I mean we have a really cute baby in our house right now and there's oh he's perfect and I assure you he is not perfect.

[36 : 12] MJ is an incredibly selfish sinner. Babies are filled with sin. The moment the kids the moment they don't get something that they don't want they cry they scream.

Selfishness I tell you. Sin. Babies are not perfect. Babies are not. David recognizes that. He's like sin isn't something that we do later sin is something that we're born with.

But then he kind of turns a little bit. Verse 6 Behold you delight in truth in the inward being and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. What he's saying here is this actually even though there is sin deep down inside us God has a desire to teach us truth to teach us goodness.

But in order to access that truth and that goodness we first have to acknowledge that there is bad inside us. I told you about the book I was reading The Anxious Generation just been on this journey of just and of course I because that famous guy that came through town who has a lot of speed comes through I started watching as an uncle in this society now I was googling what's the big deal about eye show speed and I watch it and I'm like I am so confused.

I am just gaps no nothing you're just shaking your head like you're confused too okay I'm just I don't know and then I look and I'm like oh man the depravity in our world that we're chasing after these kinds of things well what is it that we're even chasing I don't know and then I realize and then I start saying oh what has the world become and then I watch Gladiator 2 and then I'm like oh the world's been pretty bad for a long long time it's not just now we have to acknowledge deep down in our hearts there is something that causes us to mistrust God to turn away from God when we're called to love others we actually end up just cheating on others there's something deep down inside us we were born in sin yet God desires to teach us truth not just on the surface not just to modify our behavior but in our most inward being so we would know we would have access to the goodness that will bring us life and not death you delight in truth in the inward being and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart and then he says purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean wash me and I shall be whiter than snow

[38 : 43] I think that's fairly understandable there just the more we sin our garments just get dirtier and dirtier and to the point where you actually it's very hard to clean today the t-shirt I'm wearing is

actually on the colorful side for me because you've probably noticed that I wear two colors when it comes to t-shirts black and white that the black ones are safe but the white ones my wife always laughs at me because every time I go to eat or anything it's just another one bites the dust it's just thank God they're \$99 from Uniqlo but of course then we invented the pen the Tide pen we all need a Tide pen in our pockets we can't clean these things ourselves we need an external source to help us clean these stains that we have and then we will be whiter and then verse 8 and then he's starting to turn and he's like let me hear joy and gladness that the bones that you have broken rejoice he's like whoa

God I am just in despair because of my sin but let me hear joy and gladness again let the bones you have broken rejoice this reminds me that God disciplines those he loves he's not trying when he confronts us with our sin the whole point isn't just to make us feel terrible it's actually it's for reconciliation it's to bring just come back to me you've strayed what you're doing what you're relying on that's not going to help you you know it's not going to help you because every time you go there it doesn't help you and it just makes things worse come back to me and so David's saying yes I want to hear joy and gladness again that season of me covering up was just so just devastating for my soul I just want to be experiencing the joy and gladness again let the bones that you have broken rejoice again you realize when we confess it's the freedom that comes from it that it's just the true joy that he doesn't make us feel any worse but then he lifts us up so why don't we do it because we we still have the wrong perception of who the father is we think he's here to punish us when actually he's here to forgive us and to love us and then he says this and this is the famous one well hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities

I'm going to come back to that at the end verse 10 create in me a clean heart oh God and renew a right spirit within me create in me a clean heart oh God and renew a right spirit within me this is he's saying hey I need a factory reset I need it completely changed this isn't just edit your home screen and try and tidy things up again this is I need to start the phone all over again and again if you grew up in the same area as me and you used something like Windows 98 there was something called disk defragmentation yeah yes the older people are just nodding he's like that's cool and you just saw the little jigsaw puzzle for some reason you know that your computer is messed up and everything's in the wrong place and you press the defrag and you just see it just kind of like tidying itself up and you just feel better for it that's not what David is asking for David is saying I need a new Mac I need a completely new thing because however much I tidy even if I use that disk defrag every day the processor is still slowing down there is still sin he's saying

I need a new one renew a right spirit within me so he's not saying hey stop me from doing that thing again stop me from taking someone else's wife again stop me from lusting after another woman he's not saying that he's saying renew a right spirit within me change me from the inside out is what he's saying this isn't behavior modification this is heart transformation and now he starts talking about the Holy Spirit and he brings in the Holy Spirit because this is the same Holy Spirit in Genesis 1 that breathes life into the world this is the same Holy Spirit who looks at the pile of dry bones Ezekiel 37 and breathes it to life it's the same one as chapter 36 in Ezekiel where actually he removes your heart of stone and gives you a heart of flesh he's saying that's all I want I need that I need a complete reset I need everything to be new again cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me I just want to be close to you I realize that my sin what it did as well as well as hurt other people and caused destruction and has consequences it took me away from you he's probably got

Saul's experience ringing in his ears here before he was king how he even met Saul was because the Holy Spirit departed from Saul do you remember that and Saul was just a mess and then they brought this young man to come and play him the harp to kind of calm him down and he's saying oh man I've seen what it's like when the Holy Spirit leaves the king I do not want that God I want you can you bring me close to you again something you can have to notice about all of this when David's asking for action he's not asking for action for himself he's not saying God tell me what to do tell me how to make this right one key thing about confession is that it's not what we can do to make things right it's what God can do that actually he's the one who's going to give us the new heart it's him that's going to renew the right spirit within us so as a sinner all we actually have to do the only requirement that the Bible tells us is open up your hands and open up your heart and say create in me a clean heart oh God and renew a right spirit within me cast me not away from your presence take not your Holy Spirit from me I just want you only you can make this right no one else

not even me restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit
[44:11] Lord I want this have you been there where you're just about to sin you're like God I I really don't want to do this I can't help it I want to do it or I know what I should do but I can't do it I just want that willing spirit well you're in good company there Romans 7 Paul says hey that's me what I know I should do I don't do and what I don't do I should do like Paul says that what a wretched man I am Jesus himself said my spirit is willing but my flesh is weak uphold me with a willing spirit restore to me the joy of your salvation do you know when you sin do you know when I sin it's because I've lost the joy of my salvation it's because I've lost sight of God because I've lost sight of how good he is I've lost sight of how good he is to me and when I lose sight of how good he is to me that's when I sin David's saying hey I sinned because I completely took my eyes off you I took some time off work and ended up leading me to take my eyes off you and that's what led me down this road and I forgot what it means to be joy filled with joy because of what you did God because of who you are so he goes to him and he goes

God please let me have that joy back again and then there's a final part see I'm two thirds of the way through just going through the Bible how fun is that he turns and he says then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will return to you so first he acknowledges what he did and after that he then asks for action and says God can you do this and then he goes hey do this for me and I won't shut up about what you've done for me see when you confess your sins when you when you acknowledge what they are when you articulate what they are when you share what they are when you ask for action from God the next thing that you can do is you can't help but announce what he's done for you that freedom that's what comes in he say hey I am now qualified to give a master class in failure I've done everything murder lust deceit everything I've done it all and here I am and what I want to do now is I want to tell people about it I hope that's what separates us as people in this world that we are people who are willing to acknowledge that we mess up we screw up we make mistakes that we share with the one who actually helped covered all those things for us and what he did and then we just don't stop talking about it he says look then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will return to you deliver me from but guiltiness of God of God of my salvation and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness

Lord open my lips he's just saying I will just keep sharing about it what is that that is just the good news that we the bad news is that we are dead in our trespasses and sins that we were following the course of this world following the prince of the power of the air carrying out the desires of our flesh and by nature children of wrath but God but God but God rich in mercy because of the great love which he had for us made us alive together if we truly believe that passage in Ephesians 2 we would not shut up about it every time our friend our family our colleague makes a mistake I'd be right there next to him going hey don't worry you're a screw up but so am I but let me tell you about Jesus that's what David is saying here that's what we all should be doing here whenever we have people around us we're going hey you're bad I'm bad but tell you what there's one who isn't bad do we have that kind of spirit and I think you can only have that kind of spirit when you go through confession

Luke 7 talks about those who are forgiven much love much if you sit here right now and go well James I can't I mean I can't even think of what I'm what I've done wrong I don't know if I have anything to confess that just tells me that actually we've become so numb to our own self-centeredness our own selfish desires that we don't even the only entry requirement to the kingdom of God seems to be humility seems to be just this repentant heart going God I am messed up and how do you how do you get through that without confession it's us going to God and saying God I am so so sorry Henry Nouwen says this confession is the way to freedom it breaks the chains of self-deception and invites God's light into our darkness and you see the moment that confession happens that change happens man there is transformation Peter denied Jesus three times ends up being the one that leads the church

Paul goes around killing Christians and then ends up making Christians because of the transformation and they become people who announce this good news as well and that carries on here verse 16 for you will not delight in sacrifice or I would give it you will not be pleased with the burnt offering have you done that when you've messed up and you've sinned the next thing you try and make up for it by doing lots of different good things oh man I'm such a sinner you know what I'm just going to open up my Bible now and then you and then you read Leviticus and you're like okay that didn't help I think okay okay I'm saying I need to just I need to I just do it go to church I'll

sit there and I'll just that'll help me feel better or maybe I'll go and do this good work or maybe I'll give this amount of money and you realize oh man but if you do all those things but you you don't confess then it doesn't mean much

[49:53] God's saying hey you can come to me with all your sacrifices I don't delight in the sacrifices I'm not pleased with your burnt offerings verse 17 here if there's a verse you want to memorize for this week scripture club the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit a broken and contrite heart oh God you will not despise that's all he asks would you come to me not with a broken discouraged defeated spirit but with one where the pride is finally broken where you can finally admit that you can't do this on your own is what it's saying if you get to that point God is just pleased if you can get to that point where you go God I just need you nothing else I just need you then he is pleased and then he finishes with this do good to Zion in your good pleasure build up the walls of Jerusalem then you will delight in right sacrifices in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings then bulls will be offered on your altar what David is saying here is that just completely tear away everything

Lord you clearly are confronting me through Nathan already you're breaking down all my walls just build it up again start again and what he's actually saying is actually build it up that when you confess what it does lead to is transformation and ultimately it leads to renewal that your life will be built up in a different way that there will be goodness that is on display for all to see Augustine says this too narrow is the house of my soul for you to enter let it be enlarged by you it lies in ruins build it up again and of course Augustine is most famous for his book Confessions what he's saying is when we confess we basically acknowledge that actually our hearts are simply too small and too sinful to even contain God and so when we confess we're saying God I want you here but I need you to enlarge this heart so you can actually be here I'm trying to make room for you so would you it lies in ruins already so would you just clear it all out and start again and build up a new Jerusalem within me so that I can be your dwelling place that's what he's saying are we willing to take that journey that Psalm 51 has just taken us on from acknowledging calling out our own sin to recognizing that it's not just the action but it's deeper it's deep within to rejoicing when he disciplines us because we know that he's doing it for our good because we know the sins that we've chosen aren't leading to life and peace they're leading to death and then after that when we receive that love and mercy when we're transformed by it then we can't help but announce it and God will then use all of that to build something new inside us hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities why do we not need sacrifice anymore why does he say

I don't delight in these sacrifices it's because he's like that's not enough you won't be able to do it your attempts are flawed because you are flawed but ultimately there was one sacrifice and I told you I've been going through Hebrews during my Lenten period just talks about the high priest and then it talks about the great high priest the one who was without sin who was tempted in every way who sympathized with our weaknesses and once and for all paid the price for us that's why we don't need to do any more sacrifices that's why you doing all the things that you think you're trying to do to redeem for your sin won't work doesn't need it we don't need it to work because the thing that needs to be done has already been done Jesus came Jesus died Jesus paid the price he says hide your face from me I mean isn't that imagery just quite interesting hide your face from my sins well he already did that he already did that when he hid his face from Jesus why did Jesus on the cross say my God my God why have you forsaken me it's because he took on the sins of the world my sin your sin he took it on and God couldn't look at Jesus anymore because he was following what David was saying here hide your face from me don't look at my sin and the cost of that was that God couldn't look at his own son Jesus taking on that right into the grave and now because of that if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation you have a new heart you have a new spirit the same Christ that died and rose again is now the same Christ that lives inside you and I'll finish with this one John says this if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness do you get it Psalm 51 is not about how we mess up it's there because it's showing us that even when we mess up there is a God who is gracious and compassionate abounding in steadfast love slow to anger and we can go to him and we can confess to him and it's through that confession we will have freedom now there were a few ways that

I was wondering where we could go with this we could turn around now and just confess all of our sins to one another but ideally we do that with people who we know and who we love us and maybe within our life groups and right now you're probably sat to someone who you don't even know their

name which is a different devastating value by the way can you make sure you know the person's name that you're sat next to yes Mark Veronica Veronica Mark but it'll be wrong for us to not spend some time maybe short of confession can we at least follow the Catholics in another thing that they do so so well which is examine Psalm 139 says this search my heart oh God test my thoughts see if there is anything anxious anything offensive in me do you realize that you don't know your own sin I had a friend who recently sadly realized that they have a tumor growing inside them the only way we find out those things is if we go to a doctor and get the scan to see inside what's going on you can't do it yourself you can't find your tumor by just looking and staring in the mirror you need to go to the doctor to get that scan and so Psalm 139 is that God you are the great physician would you search and would you scan me what is in me in my heart in the very depths of my heart since the moment I was born that mistrust of you that mistrust of other people that I need to bring to the surface and recognizing that I can't really do anything about it God but you can would you create in me a clean heart

[56:51] God would you renew the right spirit within me and most of all don't cast your don't leave me stay with me and God says that's all I've been wanting to do all along I've known your sin and I've loved you despite it the whole message here is that he knows and yet he runs towards you he runs towards me we still have to bring it to him though we still have to confess so I'll ask you now and Alex is going to come back up and the team are going to lead us in some type of musical reflection let's call it today but you can I invite you to spend a few moments just to examine it's funny it's the Holy Spirit that will identify to you what's really going on that's sin that you don't want people to know about there's actually a deeper one and you don't know it and I don't know it but the Holy Spirit can reveal it to you so would you ask and don't be afraid

I'll start just as I finished we are all sinners you me the worst kind to the very depths of our soul but praise be to God there is Jesus our Saviour who paid for the sins any sin every sin once and for all and he just wants us to bring it to him it's what every parent just wants their kid to do to just admit that they can't figure it out on their own and come back to his loving arms would you spend that moment now sometimes it is bigger and we don't want to underestimate that either but I want to show you the freedom that comes from just getting it off your chest and having the guts and courage to go hey that was me thankfully

I have a whole book of people who seem to be just like me but it all points to the one person who isn't the only one who is good so I encourage you I encourage you as you go from here don't keep it to yourself find that person that's a really cool tune I've got to say find that person who you know cares for you and won't judge you and just share it with them and honestly the freedom you feel anyway this is the end of our discipline series spiritual disciplines we're done next week is Easter Sunday so of course remember this week let's keep going on this journey is there anything here that you dealt with on the cross that I should bring to you this week and we'll see you on Good Friday and then we'll see you on Sunday as well and have a wonderful week bye bye bye