

The King Who Needs a Savior

Summary and Goal

King David fell into sin and experienced all of its ugly consequences. In David we see sin's capacity to enslave us and to motivate us to cover it up. But we also see the possibility of renewal through confession. As believers, we must see all of our sin as an offense toward God and rely on the forgiveness available to us through the sacrifice of God's Son in order to be restored.

Main Passages

2 Samuel 11:1-17,26-27

Psalms 51:1-13

Session Outline

1. The King's Captivity to Sin (2 Sam. 11:1-5)
2. The King's Cover-Up of Sin (2 Sam. 11:6-17,26-27)
3. The King's Confession of Sin (Ps. 51:1-13)

Theological Theme

All sin is ultimately directed toward God.

Christ Connection

Even David, the greatest of Israel's kings and a man after God's own heart, was a sinner in need of redemption. In the story of David, we recognize that all of us need forgiveness through the sacrifice of the perfect King who would take upon Himself the punishment our sins deserve.

Missional Application

God calls us to be transparent about our sin and to live in repentance so that others will know there is hope for forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Date of My Bible Study: _____

Session Plan

The King Who Needs a Savior

Introduction Option

If appropriate for your group, show the video clip “Pastor Testimony” to complement the Introduction’s statements about the empty promises of sin and the particularly destructive nature of sexual sin. Encourage your group as the study progresses to reflect on the similarities between the pastor’s experience of temptation and David’s.

www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/sexmoney/pastor-testimony

? For Further Discussion

Do you find that you face temptation more during busy or slow seasons?

What sort of habits or rhythms in life can we cultivate in order to minimize and avoid temptation?

Introduction

Use the “Sin ain’t fun!” anecdote from the writer to begin the session. Remind the group that sin can be pleasing initially but always leads to the same place—despair (leader p. 70; PSG p. 55).

- ? Consider the sin of losing your temper and lashing out at someone with words. What is sin’s promise to you in this situation? What is the appeal in that moment?

Mention that what is true of sin generally is especially true of sexual sin (leader p. 70). Summarize this session about David’s fall into sin and how restoration is possible through God’s Son (leader p. 70; PSG p. 56).

Referencing Pack Item 4: David’s Enemies, highlight here at the outset of this session that David became his own enemy by giving in to his lust.

1. The King’s Captivity to Sin (2 Sam. 11:1-5)

Ask a volunteer to read 2 Samuel 11:1-5. Note that King David fell into sin after receiving blessing from God (leader p. 71; PSG p. 56).

- ? What are the blessings God has provided you that are most likely to make you forget your dependence on God, if you let them?

Address David’s disengagement from his work and how boredom can make us vulnerable to temptation. Then point out David’s being in a place where he could be tempted (leader pp. 71-72; PSG p. 57).

- ? What are the most vulnerable times and places where people are most likely to face temptation?

Describe further David’s descent into sin, calling attention to why the biblical author provided these details about Bathsheba (leader p. 72; PSG p. 57).

2. The King’s Cover-Up of Sin (2 Sam. 11:6-17,26-27)

Read 2 Samuel 11:6-17,26-27, highlighting that David is at his most ingenious and devious in this passage (leader pp. 72-74; PSG pp. 58-59).

- When have you had to cover up your own wrongdoing? How did events spiral out of control?

Provide an overview of the ways that David’s life began to unravel at this point (see “Point 2 Option” sidebar). Stress that sin can always be forgiven, but we can’t always undo the damage it has caused (leader p. 74; PSG p. 59).

- What are some consequences you have experienced because of your own sin?
- What are some consequences others have experienced because of your sin?

3. The King’s Confession of Sin (Ps. 51:1-13)

Explain why the question is not “Do you sin?” The question is “What do you do *after* you sin?” (leader p. 74). Say that God was gracious to expose what David covered up. Then read Psalm 51:1-13 (leader pp. 74-75; PSG p. 60).

- What stands out to you as the necessary components of confession based on Psalm 51?

Recall Pack Item 5: Our Spiritual David, and ask group members to point out phrases from Psalm 51 that show David recognized his need for a “divine righteousness” to take away his sin.

Show first how *gospel-centered repentance makes its sole hope the mercy of God*, and second, how *gospel-centered repentance owns the truth that the sin we commit is deeply inherent to who we are* (leader pp. 75-76; PSG pp. 60-61).

- What are some ways we “water down” repentance by bargaining with God or by explaining away our mistakes?
- How does true repentance differ from a watered-down version?

Note, third and finally, that *gospel-centered repentance is directed toward God*, realizing how our sin offends Him in His holiness and majesty (leader pp. 76-77; PSG pp. 61-62).

- What happens when we minimize the severity of our rebellion against God?

Conclusion

In closing, accent the beauty of the gospel: sin requires us to pay more than we can give, but God in Christ pays what we cannot give. No sin is so heinous that God cannot cleanse it (leader p. 77; PSG p. 62). *Apply the truths of this session with “His Mission, Your Mission”* (PSG p. 63).

Point 2 Option

Prior to the group meeting, enlist a volunteer to study 2 Samuel 12–18 and to summarize for the group the story of Absalom’s rebellion. Reference **Pack Item 4: David’s Enemies** to show how David’s own son became an enemy as a result of his sin with Bathsheba.

Point 3 Option

Read aloud the “Voices from the Church” quote by Trevin Wax (leader p. 77; PSG p. 62). Then ask groups of 2-3 to discuss the following questions (consider writing them on a board or sheet of paper for groups to have; also available on the DVD in *The Gospel Project for Adults: Leader Pack*):

- Why is distaste for and resistance against sin in one’s life an essential mark of a Christian?
- How could this quote be used to encourage someone who is struggling with a particular sin?

Christ Connection: Even David, the greatest of Israel’s kings and a man after God’s own heart, was a sinner in need of redemption. In the story of David, we recognize that all of us need forgiveness through the sacrifice of the perfect King who would take upon Himself the punishment our sins deserve.

Missional Application: God calls us to be transparent about our sin and to live in repentance so that others will know there is hope for forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Expanded Session Content

The King Who Needs a Savior



Voices from Church History

“In our members there is a slumbering inclination towards desire which is both sudden and fierce. With irresistible power desire seizes mastery over the flesh. All at once, a secret, smouldering fire is kindled. The flesh burns and is in flames... At this moment God is quite unreal to us...Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God...The lust thus aroused envelops the mind and will of man in deepest darkness.”¹

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)

Introduction

Growing up, I remember a country preacher who used to come to our youth group and warn us about the dangers of sin. One of his favorite tactics was to point his finger at us and shout, “Sin ain’t fun!” I never corrected him, but even at the time I thought, “Well, if sin ain’t fun, you ain’t doing it right.”

Let’s be honest: sin can be pleasing. We don’t rush toward sin because it’s painful but because it’s so promising. Sin begins with a thrill, with a rush. But even though sin starts off with the excitement of endless possibility, it *always* leads to the same place: brokenness, agony, disappointment, and despair.



Consider the sin of losing your temper and lashing out at someone with words. What is sin’s promise to you in this situation? What is the appeal in that moment?

What is true of sin generally is especially true of sexual sin. Sexual sin is so powerful, so destructive—and yet so easy to access—that it can bring the strongest believer to utter ruin. That’s what it did to David, a “man after God’s own heart.”

Session Summary

In this session we see how King David fell into sin and experienced all of its ugly consequences. In David we see sin’s capacity to enslave us and to motivate us to cover it up. But we also see the possibility of renewal through confession. As believers, we must see all of our sin as an offense toward God and rely on the forgiveness available to us through the sacrifice of God’s Son in order to be restored.

1. The King’s Captivity to Sin (2 Sam. 11:1-5)

Sin doesn’t exist in a vacuum. It takes place in specific times and in specific ways. Let’s take a look at David’s temptation and sin, which gives us insight into how we fall into captivity to sinful desires.

¹ *In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.*

² *It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful.* ³ *And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"* ⁴ *So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house.* ⁵ *And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant."*

The first thing we should note about how King David fell into captivity to sin is that this temptation came after he had received the blessing of God. At this point in the biblical narrative, the kingdom of Israel is firmly established. David is at the height of his popularity. In the preceding chapters, David emerged as the victor of many battles.

Does it surprise you that David's sin came after his receiving so much blessing? We tend to think that adversity is what precedes sinful behavior, as if sin becomes merely an escape from reality. But blessing can be just as dangerous.

The danger in times of blessing is that we forget just how dependent we are on God. When life showers us with goodness, we assume that we have caused it. So God gets pushed to the periphery. This is why the author of Proverbs 30 prayed to God, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," but rather "feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, 'Who is the LORD?'" (vv. 8-9). The more self-sufficient we feel, the closer we are to disaster. As the apostle Paul said, "Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).



What are the blessings God has provided you that are most likely to make you forget your dependence on God, if you let them?

A second element of David's temptation is that he was disengaged from his work. The king had just sent Joab and the whole army out to battle. But David stayed back. David the warrior had become David the vacationer, and his lack of engagement made him susceptible to cheap thrills.

One way to successfully resist the enticements of this world isn't by force of will. It's to be busy with a higher purpose. For many people, their lives are so empty, so pointless, so devoid of something more, that the excitement of sexual sin promises a fulfillment they desperately crave. It's not always that sin is incredibly alluring; it's often that we're so unbelievably bored.

Further Commentary

"David noticed that 'the woman was very beautiful,' and his desires were aroused...Bathsheba 'came to him,' perhaps because she was naive or simply lacked the will to resist the powerful king's request, or perhaps because she desired to be unfaithful to her husband. The writer's omission of an explicit motive behind Bathsheba's action reinforces the conviction that this story is not so much about Bathsheba's actions but David's...David's sinful encounter with Bathsheba occurred 'after she had purified herself from her uncleanness' (cf. Lev. 15:19), that is, during the part of her monthly cycle when she was not menstruating and thus was more likely to conceive, which she did. When she had become aware of the bodily changes that accompanied the pregnancy, Bathsheba sent someone to David informing him of her situation."²

—Robert D. Bergen

Voices from the Church

“When you allow your eyes to feast on the forbidden, the result will be great folly.”³

—Johnny Hunt

Voices from Church History

“The sin of immorality is not one we are instructed to fight. It is one we have been told to flee. Run from that compromising situation. Saturate that place with your absence.”⁴

—Adrian Rogers (1931-2005)

We simply weren't designed to live our lives on the sidelines. God created us to engage in battle, to pursue His mission with zeal and courage. Only a vision of what God wants to do in you will give you a sense of purpose strong enough to free you from the boredom that leads to sin. Only a vision of what God has done for you in the gospel will keep you from giving your soul away to idols.

The third element of this temptation is that David was in the place where he could be tempted. It is far easier to avoid temptation than it is to resist sin. Don't get me wrong; resisting sin is important, immensely so. We must cultivate a habit of coming face to face with temptation and still resisting sin. But the world throws enough temptation our way; do we really need to go seek out more of it?



What are the most vulnerable times and places where people are most likely to face temptation?

David's dark road continued. His descent into sin wasn't immediate, and even here, we see how he was given a chance to escape. “Isn't this Eliam's daughter?” someone told him. “Isn't that Uriah's wife?” Why these details? This is the author pointing out to us—even if David didn't quite catch it—that Bathsheba was someone's wife, someone's daughter. The anonymous person who answered David was trying to say, ever so subtly, “David, I know what you're thinking. And someone is going to get hurt.”

Sin hurts people. It affects someone's mother, someone's daughter, someone's son—even if that someone is just you. God's rules, we have to remember, are never arbitrary. They are given to us for our good, to show us the most life-giving way of interacting with others. God doesn't want to keep us from sinning because He's out to ruin our fun. He wants to keep us from sinning because He knows how deeply it will wound us. Sin disintegrates. Sin wounds. Every time. Without fail.

2. The King's Cover-Up of Sin (2 Sam. 11:6-17,26-27)

⁶ So David sent word to Joab, “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” And Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going.

⁸ Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ When they told David, “Uriah did not go down to his house,” David said to Uriah, “Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?”

11 Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.”¹² Then David said to Uriah, “Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next.¹³ And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

14 In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.¹⁵ In the letter he wrote, “Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die.”¹⁶ And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men.¹⁷ And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite also died.

.....
26 When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband.²⁷ And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

As the story unfolds, we see David at his most ingenious—and at his most devious—as he schemed and hatched plans in order to hide his sin.

Plan A is an obvious one, but a tricky one to accomplish: David attempted to trick Uriah into thinking the baby was his.

At any other time of year, this might not have seemed too difficult. But Uriah, you’ll recall, was miles away fighting David’s battles. So David needed to “create a moment.” He invited Uriah home from battle, asked for a briefing on the war, and then sent him home. David thought he had it covered.

But he was wrong. Uriah was a noble guy, and he was thinking of all his comrades sleeping in the field. They didn’t have the pleasure of sleeping in their own bed and being with their wives. So Uriah camped out with the palace guards for a night. Imagine how convicting that was for David.

David, however, wasn’t a quitter. He plotted Plan B, which was an upgrade on Plan A. It now included the step of getting Uriah drunk. Uriah, despite his nobility, walked right into David’s plot. Still, he would not go home, choosing instead to sleep again among David’s servants. Strike two for David.

Further Commentary

“The good news of this tragic chapter of history of God’s people did not finally rest even on David. Despite being a man after God’s own heart, and despite the fact that David knows how to repent sincerely in the wake of grievous sin (Psalm 51), David cannot save God’s people. He too is weak. He fails. A son of David needs to come who will not fail. In Jesus Christ, this Davidic heir arrives.”⁵

—V. Philips Long,
Gospel Transformation Bible

Proverbs 28:13

“Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”

So David started Plan C. He wrote a note to Joab that told him to put Uriah in the front of the battle and to abandon him. It was a death sentence for Uriah, *and Uriah himself carried it to Joab*. In the end, David’s plan succeeded. Uriah died in battle, and it looked like David was going to get away with it.

But then comes the chilling end to the chapter: “The thing that David had done displeased the LORD” (2 Sam. 11:27). No one else may have seen what truly happened. David may have convinced himself that it was all behind him. But God’s eyes were watching. They always are.

- ❓ When have you had to cover up your own wrongdoing? How did events spiral out of control?

David’s life from this point forward began to unravel. His family started to fall apart. His newborn son with Bathsheba died, and his grown children rebelled against him. What does this show us but that sin has an enormous capacity to destroy?

Sin can always be forgiven. As we will see in a moment, David came to God and received healing for what he had done. But we can’t always undo the damage caused when we freely walk into sin. Sin is a plague—by its very nature, it destroys. The whispers of sin that promise joy are lies, and the end of that road is disaster.

- ❓ What are some consequences you have experienced because of your own sin?
- ❓ What are some consequences others have experienced because of your sin?

3. The King’s Confession of Sin (Ps. 51:1-13)

Few of us have sinned as egregiously as David did, in open adultery and murder. But we all sin. And every one of us is capable of David’s heinous crimes.

When confronted with the results of our sin—as David was when Bathsheba got pregnant—we can hide it, rationalize it, or blame-shift. And that may work for a season. But there’s only one true remedy for sin, and that is to repent. The question is not “Do you sin?” The question is “What do you do *after* you sin?” The answer to that question is a matter of life and death.

Fortunately for David, God chose to expose what David had covered up. He sent the prophet Nathan to remind David that although he thought he had gotten away with everything, God wouldn’t let it end there. And in a moment of profound humility, David finally came clean. The result was one of the most beautiful and exemplary songs in Scripture—Psalm 51. In this psalm, David shows us the keys to gospel-centered repentance and confession.

- ¹ *Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.*
- ² *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!*
- ³ *For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.*
- ⁴ *Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.*
- ⁵ *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.*
- ⁶ *Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.*
- ⁷ *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*
- ⁸ *Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.*
- ⁹ *Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.*
- ¹⁰ *Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.*
- ¹¹ *Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*
- ¹² *Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.*
- ¹³ *Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.*



What stands out to you as the necessary components of confession based on Psalm 51?

First, look at how gospel-centered repentance makes its sole hope the mercy of God. David began precisely where he should, by centering on God's grace. He prayed "according to your steadfast love" and "according to your abundant mercy." This is actually a rather risky thing to say. What if God decides *not* to be merciful? Shouldn't we make our case with God first? At least, this is how many of us approach God.

Further Commentary

"[Verse 5] has prompted a variety of interpretations. Some have interpreted it to mean that marriage and childbearing are a curse; this is untenable in light of the rest of Scripture (127:3; Heb. 13:4). Another interpretation is that this refers to a specific sin, perhaps adultery, committed by David's mother, but there is no evidence of this in the biblical texts. Others connect this verse with ceremonial uncleanness in childbirth (Lev. 12:2,5; 15:18), but this is not the same as sin. Some say David is using rhetorical overstatement to describe his sinfulness. One of the most common interpretations in Christian history is that this verse teaches the doctrine of original sin. While not aiming to strictly identify the origin of human sinfulness with events at biological conception, David recognizes that sin pervades humankind as a universal condition from the very outset of our existence. Sin is everywhere and in everyone, and David confessed that it had been with him since birth. Far from forming the basis of an excuse (i.e., 'Why should I be blamed for my sins when I was born this way?'), David's confession contrasts the 'blameless' (Ps. 51:4) ways of God with the innately evil ways of men."⁶

—Kevin R. Warstler
and Sherri L. Klouda,
HCSB Study Bible

Voices from the Church

“The difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is not that a Christian never sins; it’s that when he does sin, he confesses it and fights against sinning again. He takes God’s side against his sin instead of sin’s side against God.”⁷

—Jonathan Leeman



99 Essential Christian Doctrines

37. Sin as Rebellion

Because the Bible portrays people as responsible beings, called to respond in faith and obedience to God’s revelation, the Bible often portrays sin in terms of defiance and rebellion toward God the King. Isaiah 1:2 is one of many passages that describes sin in terms of rebellion against God: “Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.” Seen in this light, sin is personal and willful disobedience, the raising of a clinched fist toward the One who made us.

But that’s not repentance. Repentance begins where blame-shifting, bargaining, and rationalizing end. Nothing in this prayer suggests that David came to God looking to make a deal. He was not bargaining with God, trying to commute his sentence. He was not reminding God of all the great things he did in the past. (Remember Goliath?) He was not trying to explain away his sin. He was not even promising to do better in the future. No, David appealed to God on the only ground that won’t crumble, the ground of God’s grace.

Second, gospel-centered repentance owns the truth that the sin we commit is deeply inherent to who we are. When we’re caught in our sin, our natural inclination is to explain it away: “I’m not really as bad as all that,” we want to say. “It was just a moment of weakness.” But David went the complete opposite direction: “I know my transgressions,” he said. “These sins weren’t a mistake I made; they’re at the core of who I am.” In verse 5, he took this about as far as it could go: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” In other words, “Hey, you think I’m bad? You don’t know the half of it. This sin stuff? It’s in my blood.” Each one of us is born a rebel against authority—especially God’s authority.

-  What are some ways we “water down” repentance by bargaining with God or by explaining away our mistakes?
-  How does true repentance differ from a watered-down version?

Third, gospel-centered repentance is directed first toward God. We might need to take off our Sunday School hats for a second to realize just how bizarre verse 4 is: “Against you, you only, have I sinned,” David said. Really? Against God *alone*? What about Bathsheba? Or Uriah, for crying out loud? On the face of it, this doesn’t make sense, but it’s actually the heart of David’s entire prayer.

David realized that his sin began as a sin against God. What was it about Bathsheba that David wanted? Was it the feeling of power? Her beauty? A moment of physical pleasure? Ultimately, David wasn’t swept away because he wanted something specific. David was seduced by Bathsheba’s beauty because he was no longer captivated by God’s.

All of our sin starts as a dissolution in our relationship with God. It begins as we grow dissatisfied with what God has given us, as we doubt His goodness toward us. So we start to feel God’s boundaries as restrictive, not life-giving. What this means is that the way to deal with sin in our lives isn’t merely to suppress the sin; it’s to increase our delight in God so that we love Him more than we love the sin. The only way to overcome sinful urges is not by learning to love them less but by learning to love God more.

David also realized that God was the most significant one he had offended. What he did to Bathsheba was shameful; what he did to Uriah was despicable; but what he did to God was the most heinous of all. God was the very One who had created David, who had raised him up from the position of a shepherd to that of a king, who had given him every good thing in his life. In light of God's goodness toward him, as David reflected on his sin, all he could say was, "God, have I really done this to *You*? After all You've done for me, this is my response?"

Many of us don't realize how large and majestic is our God. But think, the bloody cross was the price for our sin. Jesus didn't have to die because of what we did to each other but because of what we did to God. Have you ever sensed how much He has done to create you, to save you? He took you and me, His enemies, and brought us close, calling us His friends. That should change how we think of sin against God—not merely as treason against a mighty king but as a betrayal of a close friend's trust. Sin should upset us not just because of its consequences but because of what our sin has done to God; otherwise, our repentance will only be a smokescreen.



What happens when we minimize the severity of our rebellion against God?

Conclusion

Throughout Psalm 51, David pointed out that our repentance needs to flow from the heart. But there's a problem—our hearts are wicked. We can't change them, and David knew it. So he cried out for God to cleanse him: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (v. 7).

Here's what is so beautiful about the gospel. David was crying out to God, asking God to purge *him* and wash *him*. But he also knew how deep his sin was. To be truly purged, truly cleansed, he would need to pay far more than he had to give. The penalty for his sin—and ours—was death. But in the gospel, God in Christ takes the penalty of our sin upon Himself on the cross. The cross is God's promise to us that there is no sin so heinous, no heart so wicked, that God cannot cleanse it. And the resurrection is God's promise that there is no situation so dead that He cannot renew and restore it.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Even David, the greatest of Israel's kings and a man after God's own heart, was a sinner in need of redemption. In the story of David, we recognize that all of us need forgiveness through the sacrifice of the perfect King who would take upon Himself the punishment our sins deserve.

Voices from the Church

"The victorious Christian life is not the sinless life, but the repentant life."⁸

—Trevin Wax

Further Commentary

Hyssop was mentioned in connection with two significant commands in Scripture. In the exodus story, the Hebrews were told to dip hyssop in a lamb's blood and spread that blood on their doorposts (Ex. 12:22). Also, hyssop was prescribed as a tool to be used in the ceremonial cleansing of one who had been healed of leprosy (Lev. 14:1-7). To a Jewish reader, the connection David was making here would have been obvious. David was saying he needed something to free him from sin's slavery (like the slavery in Egypt), something to heal him from sin's disease (like the disease of leprosy). But literal hyssop wouldn't be enough. What David was crying out for was the hope of the gospel—an internal cleansing and restoration from sin effected by God Himself.

Additional Resources

The King Who Needs a Savior

References

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4. Adrian Rogers, in *Adrianism: The Wit and Wisdom of Adrian Rogers*, vol. 1 (Memphis: Love Worth Finding, 2006), 114.
5. V. Philips Long, in *Gospel Transformation Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 395, n. 11:1-27.
6. Kevin R. Warstler and Sherri L. Klouda, in *HCSB Study Bible* (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 931, n. 51:5.
7. Jonathan Leeman, "Psalms," *The Gospel Project: Adult Leader Guide* (Winter 2012-13): 97.
8. Trevin Wax, "The Gospel and Repentance," *LifeWay Pastors* [online], 12 May 2015 [cited 8 October 2015]. Available from the Internet: www.lifeway.com



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Grow with other group leaders at the Group Ministry blog at LifeWay.com/GroupMinistry.

Study Material

- "The Seventh Commandment"—Chapter 7 from *The Ten Commandments* by Mark Rooker
- "4 Reasons Why God Forbids Adultery"—Article by Rey De Armas; find a link to this article at GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources
- Previous *Biblical Illustrator* articles, including "The 'Great Sin': Adultery in the Ancient Near East," can be purchased, along with other articles for this quarter, at LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator. Look for Bundles: The Gospel Project.

Sermon Podcast

Eric Mason: "Characteristics of a Deeply Repentant Man, Part 1"

Find a link to this at GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

Tip of the Week

Great Commission Praying in Your Small Group

When it comes to prayer, every small group operates at one of three levels: class, community, or commission. At the class level, prayer requests tend to be general and safe. At the community level, prayer requests become more personal—and a little less safe. A group sticks its toes in the commission level when it begins to pray about missions in general. It goes deep when it starts praying for people who are far from God right in the offices, schools, stores, teams, recreational centers, and neighborhoods where group members do life every day.