

## **“A Cry in the Night”**

One of the most famous and significant characters in all of God’s word is David. He was, of course, one of the great kings of God’s people, Israel. Unfortunately though, when we think of David, we often think of his great transgression: his sin with Bathsheba, which set off a series of sins in his life, that brought him very low. And, in fact, David paid dearly for his crimes. In the Psalms, many of which were written by David, we have several psalms of his repentance. One of them is found in **Psalms 6**.

**Psalms 6:1-10 “O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies’ sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer. Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.”**

As David pours out his heart to God in this penitent prayer, we can certainly hear the words of a man in great anguish. All of this because of David’s infamous series of sins that began with a night of adultery with a woman named Bathsheba. Today for a while, we’re going to look at some lessons that we learn from David’s experience. If I could title this psalm, it would be “A Cry in the Night.”

The late Mosie Lister was a prolific songwriter. He wrote a song entitled, “*Where No One Stands Alone*,” and if you watched our broadcast, you heard that beautiful song. Many years ago, I heard him tell the story of how that song came to be. He was driving down a dark, lonesome road in Georgia where he lived, and the words to the chorus just came to him:

*“Hold my hand all the way, every hour, every day, from here to the great unknown...”*

But the song lacked a specific context. And he thought about it and struggled with it, finally laying the song aside for several years, if I recall correctly. Well, one night, he was up late reading the Bible, and he happened to be reading **Psalm 51**, another of David’s psalms of repentance, and by far his most familiar one. He read that psalm and then stepped out of the house and around the block. He said that by the time he returned home, he had composed the two verses that make up the song, and they’re based on the transgression of David and the state of grief that he finds himself in as he is now wrestling with and dealing with his sin and his repentance. Mosie Lister wrote these words:

*“Once I stood in the night, with my head bowed low, in the darkness as black as could be,*

*And my heart felt alone, and I cried, Oh, Lord, don’t hide your face from me.*

*Like a king, I may live in a palace so tall, with great riches to call my own.*

*But I don’t know a thing in this whole wide world that’s worse than being alone.”*

Well, that's the anguish that David was feeling after his sin with Bathsheba and his sin against her husband Uriah was exposed. This was the darkest hour of David's life. His days were filled with sadness and the long, sleepless nights were spent talking to God and crying from the depths of his soul. **Psalm 6** is the first of at least seven psalms of repentance that include **Psalm 32, Psalm 38, Psalm 51, Psalm 102, Psalm 130 and Psalm 143**, I believe. And all of these psalms are hopeless and helpless wails as it were, from the mouth of a disgraced king, wrung out of his tormented soul in the darkness of his bedroom. But, here in **Psalm 6**, David cannot sleep. He is on the rack of emotional torment.

You know, there's something about the night that makes our burdens seem heavier and our grief seem more overwhelming. Maybe it's the quiet and stillness of midnight that allows our minds to dwell on the things that bother us. The noise, the commotion of the day is not there to drown out our sorrows or our conscience. It's just us and God, alone. And here David is, alone with God. He is alone with God and he's pouring out his heart to God. The theater of his mind is doubtlessly flashing the scenes of the day he first saw Bathsheba, reliving the moment that he told his servants to go get her, the decision to seduce her and commit adultery with her; remembering the cold chill that swept over him when he learned that he was fathering her child and the cold, calculated plot he hatched to kill her husband, Uriah, in order to hide his sin from others and have Bathsheba as his own wife. But now, the chickens have come home to roost and David is paying dearly for his crimes.

**Psalm 6:6-7 "I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies."**

A doctor can look into your eyes and tell a lot about your health. An observant man or woman can look into your eyes and they're looking through a window into your soul. When you look at David here, things are not well and the handsome, young king looks different now: his eyes are weary and bloodshot, and now, etched on his face is the picture that sin had painted. He wasn't worried about the bills or where his next meal was going to come from. He wasn't worried about a sick loved one, as distressing as these things can be. David is crying his eyes out over his sin, and it's about to destroy him.

You know, there are some lessons that we should learn from David's cry in the night. I'm going to talk about three of them.

### **I. Our sin will find us out.**

Sin is deceptive. The Bible tells us not to be deceived by it, but we often are. One of the great deceptions of sin is the idea that we're getting away with it, that nobody knows, and that somehow, even God has overlooked it. Sometimes because there are no immediate consequences, no immediate devastating consequences to our sin, we just dismiss it and we don't think much of it. David must've thought that. David DID think that, *Well, I've gotten by with this. Nobody ever has to know.* You see, after he committed adultery with Bathsheba, and once word came to him that they had conceived a child together, Uriah had to be gotten out of the way. So, David hatched this plot to kill Uriah. Think about this now: he wrote a letter, sent by the hand of Uriah himself, to Joab, his military commander, telling him to take Uriah and put him in the front of the battle, in the heat of the battle, then draw his men

back and let Uriah die. Joab followed orders, the arrow found its mark, Uriah died not only on the field of battle, but on the altar of David's pride and dishonesty. I'm sure that when word got back to the palace, to David that Uriah was dead, he must've sunk back on his throne and thought, *Whew, that was close. But, crisis averted, and now nobody will ever have to know. My sin is hidden.* He forgot, though, that there is an eye in the sky that saw every step he took, knew every thought that he thought, heard every word that he said, and beheld every deed that he did. As the old preacher Robert G. Lee used to say, "There is a payday, someday." The saying goes, *the mills of God turn slowly, but they grind exceedingly small.* Your sin will find you out.

Adam, the very first sinner in all of the world, hid from God. He and his wife, Eve, they tried to hide from God, but that was futile. They still faced the awful curse that came upon all of mankind as a result of his sin. His son, Cain, killed his brother, Abel, and buried him in the ground. But what does the Bible tell us about that?

**Genesis 4:10 "And he said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."**

We read over in **I Samuel 15** how that God had a mission for King Saul to go and to destroy the Amalekites. The Amalekites were a wicked nation who had made life difficult for God's people, and God waited a long time before He finally decided to settle the score, and He appointed Saul to go and execute His ultimate judgment upon those people. Saul was told to go and utterly destroy them, but, of course, Saul went and disobeyed the Lord, if you recall the story. Instead of destroying the Amalekites, oh, he killed many of them, but he saved the king, and he saved back some sheep and oxen, and he thought, *I'll offer these as sacrifices to the Lord.* Saul thought he had gotten away with that, but Samuel the prophet comes and inquires about it. To paraphrase, Samuel asked Saul, Did you do what the Lord commanded you to do? Did you go and destroy the Amalekites? And Saul pounded his chest and he said, Oh, yes! I went and I obeyed the voice of God. We destroyed the Amalekites. And about that time, there was a sheep bleating off in the distance. There was a cow lowing off in the distance out in the field. Samuel heard that and he said, If you obeyed the Lord, then what's this bleating of sheep and goats and the lowing of cattle that I hear? Saul didn't get away with his sin. God, in His due time, and in His own way, exposed his sin.

Achan hid the spoils of Jericho and thought nobody knew about his sin, but Joshua knew because God exposed Achan and his family, and he and his family died (**Joshua 7**).

Well, David thought he had gotten away with his sin, but God sent His prophet, Nathan, to him. You remember how Nathan painted that picture of the poor man who just had a little ewe lamb, and a rich man came and stole that little ewe lamb and gave it away as though it were his own. Nathan asked David, What would you do about this? Of course, that was a picture of Uriah. But, David was so furious at whomever had done such a horrible thing, and was blind to the fact that that was what he himself had done, he told Nathan that whoever did this thing should die after he's restored the lamb fourfold because he had no pity. That's when Nathan pointed his finger in the face of the king and said four

words that brought King David down and made him feel so small. Those four words, Thou art the man. That's what brought David to the point of this psalm that we've read.

Rest assured that your sin and my sin will come out in the wash. The more we conspire, the more we hide, lie and deceive, the worse it will be when it is exposed. David could've confessed to God after the very first sin of passion, but what did he do instead? He kindled the wrath of God and he set himself up for a humiliating fall by hiding his sin. We should learn from David that our sin will find us out.

## **II. Our sin hurts others.**

This little baby that was conceived with Bathsheba died. Not only that: God told David that the sword would never depart from his house (**II Samuel 12:10**). And we see a series of events unfold in the life and the family of David that is heartbreaking. David's family was mostly ruined, and it all goes back to David's sin. Absalom, David's son, later rebelled against David and tried to kill his father. All of those events go back to that awful sin that David committed with Bathsheba, and in murdering Uriah.

You know, sin hurts the people that you claim to love the most. And first and foremost, don't forget that our sin hurts God. That's the number one issue with sin that many are absolutely oblivious to. David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord" (**II Samuel 12:13**). That's issue number one. You may sin against your husband or your wife, your mother, your father, your children. You may sin against your country, your community or society in general, a friend...Whomever you may sin against, and that may damage that relationship, there is nothing worse and nothing more significant than what sin does to your relationship with a holy and righteous God. God does not and cannot take sin lightly. He does not brush sin off or simply look the other way. Sin severs our fellowship with a holy and righteous God, and it takes the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed in His sacrificial death in order to atone for that sin.

Not only does your sin hurt God, but often, it hurts your family. It often hurts the people that you claim to love, and so many people so selfishly rush headlong into sin; sins of the flesh, that cause such devastation to their homes. Their children bear the scars of their sin, and will bear those scars all of their lives. They grow up in a home with a drunk father or mother, or parents strung out on drugs, or unfaithful to one another and living lives of promiscuity. They grow up in houses of deceit and crime and immorality and sin, and the course of their lives is often determined by the decisions and choices of their parents. That's another lesson that we learn from David's cry in the night. David would regret his sin for a long, long time because he would see the evidence and the scars of it in his own children and in his own family.

## **III. One sin can cause a lifetime of destruction.**

Sometimes just that one sin in and of itself causes all kinds of destruction that we never outlive. Sometimes one sin sets off a chain reaction. The dominoes begin to fall because of that sin, and we wreak a lifetime of destruction. Look at the one decision by David and what it did in his life. He was a popular and a successful king. He was a man after God's own heart! But the trouble that came into David's life, including the death of his children, was the result of that one decision on that rooftop when

he allowed lust to fill his heart. That decision led to another, and to another, and ultimately to the death of an innocent man.

One decision can destroy your life; one dishonest deed. One dishonest deed can send you to prison. One dishonest deed can cause people all around you to lose trust in you, to never trust you again, and to close the door of all kinds of opportunity for you. One evil association, one compromise can open up a world, a 'Pandora's box,' that otherwise might have been closed and have forever gone unseen by you. One single act of immorality, one night of sin can leave you with a child to raise or a deadly disease. One drink sets off the process in so many people to ruin their lives through alcohol. One drink leads them to a night that ends in an accident that claims or destroys a life, or maybe the beginning of an addiction that ruins one's life. One sin, one decision can reap consequences for as long as you live, and ultimately, eternity.

**Psalm 51:3 "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."**

Even as a forgiven man, David could still say that, because of the scars of his sin. But thank God for His patience and for His grace. David came to learn the forgiveness of God, and, oh, aren't we thankful for that?

I want to end in **Psalm 51**, because there's a great message of hope that rises out of the ashes of David's sorrow. I want to mention three things that we learn from David's repentance.

### **I. Sin can be forgiven.**

Because you've sinned, because you have seemingly ruined your life by sin, doesn't mean that all hope is lost. There could be a new beginning for you. There's forgiveness. There's grace. There is mercy. All of these, if you confess your sin to God, if you come to the Lord in obedience and are willing to admit where you are in life, and yield in contrition and in obedience to the Lord's truth, to God.

**Psalm 51:1-3 "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."**

You see David's attitude? David isn't trying now to hide his sin. David is not trying to blame somebody else for his sin. David is not trying to excuse his sin or argue his way out of the guilt of his sin. David just lays it all out before the God of Heaven and he says, "I have sinned." My sin—not her sin, not somebody else's sin, not the servants who brought Bathsheba to me, not Bathsheba's or Uriah's sin—nobody else's sin but his. He owns up to it, he confesses it.

### **II. The sinner can be restored.**

David came to God in brokenness and repentance.

**Psalm 51:10,12 “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me...Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.”**

There can be a new beginning; but you're going to have to have a clean heart. Something led you into that sin to begin with, and the Lord's going to have to purify your heart. You're going to have to let the Lord go to work in your life and in your heart by turning to and immersing yourself in His word—not only asking for His forgiveness, but letting His truth transform you, and letting His spirit *through* His truth transform your very heart, and thus your life.

### **III. The redeemed person can still be of great use to God.**

David was, and that's the wonderful ending to the story. Though there were scars from David's sin, you can't necessarily do anything about that. Sometimes the consequences of sin last a lifetime, but that doesn't mean that the person redeemed and washed in the blood of Christ, who comes in contrition and confession and repentance and obedience, doesn't mean that they can't be of great use to God. Sometimes they'll be of greater use to God after they come back to the Lord than they were before they left.

**Psalm 51:13-15 “Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.”**

You know, it can be a new beginning in your life today, if you've been living a life of sin. Is your life in a mess? Has sin left you broken and hopeless? Turn to the Lord in faith, repentance and obedience, and know the peace and the joy of His forgiveness.