

# A Prayer for Forgiveness

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[ 0 : 00 ] This is the morning service on the 25th of October 1998 The preacher is Phil Millman and his sermon is entitled A Prayer for Forgiveness from Psalm 51 Please be seated A few years ago the media launched an attack on English actor Hugh Grant After being caught and charged with lured behaviour in a public place in America I think it was And at that time it created huge attention And our society largely deplored his actions More recently the President of the United States Has had a horrendous time with the media

As they have disclosed intimate details Of an affair that he had with a staff member from the White House Now Western culture loves to follow these issues And the media They use it as a feeding frenzy and they love to report it And what it tends to do I think is create us all Normal human beings As moral upstanding people within the community It makes us all look squeaky clean And gives us the opportunity To point the finger at someone else who should have known better Now without condoning the action and behaviour of those two particular incidents I think that these people knew that what they were doing was probably wrong But they never thought for one moment that they were going to be caught And I wonder

How often have you deliberately done something that you know was wrong And thought that you could get away with it Because no one had seen what you did Or how often have you thought about doing something That would be an offence to others If they knew what you were thinking I could go on with our thoughts and our improper actions And the truth is I've said you and now I'm going to say me I have those sorts of thoughts like that all the time But because no one can read my mind And no one can read my thoughts I often don't worry about it Let me tell you of an example of something I did as a child Outwardly And thought that I would get away with I was I think about five years old And my folks had just bought a brand new lounge It had lovely upholstered cushions

It was really trendy for something in the 60s It had cedar polished arms on it And the whole thing was a really magnificent lounge It was the icon in our lounge room I guess And one night they were out somewhere I have no recollection of where they were And I was sitting on the lounge With a ballpoint pen in hand And I decided that I needed to draw on something And this lounge is a great lounge Had these beautiful red cedar arms staring out at me And they looked terribly inviting So they said please come on out And so I said okay I took up their invitation And I proceeded to draw quite heavily On one of the arms I was thoughtless then And some people say I'm thoughtless now But I was very thoughtless then And suddenly I realised what I was doing And immediately I tried to rub it off with my thumb Tried to rub off the ink Well that wasn't a problem

The ink came off no problems at all But it was a ballpoint pen that I used And it had left this huge scratch And indentation in the lounge Well I panicked That's the first thing I did So what I did I panicked I quickly put a cushion over my vandalism And I left the scene of the crime I went and did something else Well nobody had seen it So I thought I'd got away with it And I forgot about it Until we were put through the third degree The next day or whenever the time was My father Poor dad gets a cane in today But anyway My father was furious And he put my two older brothers And my sister And myself Through a line of questioning To try and get one of us to confess Well no one confessed And I didn't confess either For fear of the consequences But I'm sure That they knew I was the guilty one

[ 5 : 06 ] Because I was the youngest in the family And the youngest always gets blamed Well That's right isn't it Fortunately for me Dad wasn't a judge Or a fingerprint expert So He didn't obtain the physical evidence To convict me of my deceit Anyway The point is I had done something wrong That I thought I could get away with And even though I did at the time I paid for it By feeling guilty For some time After that event Well let me tell you That there have been Many other areas in my life Where guilt has played A role since that One particular incident And today I want to look at how The author of Psalm 51 And you may like to look it up On page 452 Responds to the conviction Of sin in his life

Now this psalm As we've heard Is one of the great prayers In the Bible And it covers a lot of ground It's a prayer about a person David Who is seeking forgiveness From God Now I want to look this morning With you at three points Firstly The nature of sin Secondly How we deal with the sin That we have committed And finally What are the results Of dealing with our sin Now to help us understand The psalm a little bit more I'd just like to fill you in A bit about the background To this psalm Firstly It's agreed that the psalm Is written by David When he was the king of Israel The earthly king of Israel And the occasion of this psalm Comes sometime after David Has committed adultery With Bathsheba Who was the beautiful wife Of a person called Uriah Whom David King David Had actually arranged To have killed in battle And the reason he arranges

For the death of Uriah Is because Bathsheba Falls pregnant To David Now David does try To get Uriah to sleep With Bathsheba To cover up his sin But he is unsuccessful Because of Uriah's loyalty To the Lord And his troops At the battlefield Whom he has left behind And David thought That he covered up his sin Pretty well By killing Uriah And then marrying Bathsheba Because that's what he did He arranges to have Uriah killed And he ends up marrying Bathsheba But then in steps Nathan Who was the prophet At that time Of David's reign And he took David For a walk Sometime after All these things Had happened And he tells David This story Which I want to read to you From 2 Samuel Chapter 12 And it's Where Nathan

Condemns David And I'll read from verse 1 And the Lord sent Nathan To David He came to him And said to him There were two men In a certain city The one rich And the other poor The rich man Had very many flocks And herds But the poor man Had nothing But one little Yew lamb Which he had bought He brought it up And it grew up With him And with his children It used to eat His meager fare And drink from his cup And lie in his bosom And it was like A daughter to him Now there came A traveller To the rich man And he was loath To take one Of his own flock Or her To prepare For the wayfarer Who had come to him But he took The poor man's lamb And prepared that For the guest Who had come to him Then David's anger Was greatly kindled

Against the man He said to Nathan As the Lord lives The man who has done this Deserves to die He shall restore the lamb Fourfold Because he did this thing And because he had no pity Nathan said to David You are the man Thus says the Lord The God of Israel I anointed you Keen over Israel And I rescued you From the hand of Saul I gave you Your master's house And your master's wives Into your bosom And gave you The house of Israel And of Judah And if that had been Too little I would have I would have added As much more Why have you Despised the word Of the Lord To do what is evil In his sight You have struck down Uriah the Hittite With the sword And have taken his wife To be your wife And have killed him With the sword Of the Ammonites Now therefore The sword Shall never depart From your house For you have

[ 10 : 09 ] Despised me And have taken The wife of Uriah The Hittite To be your wife Well imagine If you were David And you were convicted Of your own sin By someone Who you have respect for And know Is a godly person What sort of things Could they convict you of Perhaps Not giving in proportion To your income Perhaps sexual sin Or maybe something else That you think That you can get away with Because only you know About it And it's personal Well on a human level I guess many people Would think that's okay If no one is ever Going to find out The question That has to be asked However Is whether sin Is directed against Other people

Or against God So here I move on To my first point What is the nature Of sin In this psalm David acknowledges His sin And pleads for mercy Or God's great compassion Because he realises He realises That his sin Is directed Against God And only Against God In verse 4 Of Psalm 51 It says Against you You alone Have I sinned And done what is evil In your sight So that you are justified In your sentence And blameless When you pass judgment Although David's sin Has affected Bathsheba And has Killed Uriah They're the victims If you like David says here That his sin Is only Against God If we say That we have sinned Against someone else

And only them Then we have Failed to understand I think The concept of sin You see David's God God who we're Talking about here Is also the God Of the poor He's the God Of the defenceless He is the God Of Bathsheba And of Uriah And in running them David has done Something even more Outrageous He has scorned And despised The one who Declares himself To be their God Now to commit Adultery with Bathsheba Was to commit A blasphemous crime Against God Adultery As wrong as it is Is as nothing In the face Of David's defiance Of his God Now I'm not denying That all sin Doesn't affect Or hurt others In some way It does But ultimately It offends God Because sin

In any form Is rebellion Against God's Way of living Now I Would suspect That I doubt That any of us Here have gone As far as David And actually Killed someone But adultery Or fornication Is something That some of us Here could well Be aware of In our own lives Of course There are Many other sins Which creep Into our lives And our ways Of thinking What about Those times When we haven't Been bothered In welcoming New people Into our church Or the times When we make Value judgments On people Which ends up Shutting them Out of our group These things All affect Other people They are the Victims But it is Primarily sin Against our God And only Against God Now in the

Second half Of verse 4 David recognizes That the sin He has committed Against God More than Justifies him To judge David With the full Penalty of the law And the kind Of judgment According to Old Testament law For David's sin Here Is death And the apostle Paul makes it Even plainer In the book Of Romans For the cost Of sin In Romans Chapter 6 The wages Of sin Is death Now if we Confess our sin To God And seek his Forgiveness As David does In this psalm Then we can Be certain Of forgiveness However There are still The consequences For our sin That on a human Level Need to be Sorted out Let me Illustrate this Again My poor dad I borrowed My father's Boat once And accidentally Damaged it By running it

[ 15 : 13 ] Into another Boat The boat I crashed Into Unfortunately For me Wasn't Well fortunately I guess Wasn't damaged But dad's Was And what I Did is I Ripped off a Huge chunk Of wood Along the Side of the Boat And that's Called the Gunnel And it's Very obvious When you Make that Sort of Damage Well this Time I Plucked up The courage And told my Father that I Had damaged The boat Before he Found out And I Told him And sincerely How sorry I was I was really Embarrassed as Well But telling him What I'd done I think Helped to Calm him Down somewhat Because he Forgave me And he Really wasn't All that Angry But And I Think this Is the Point I had To fix It I had To fix It out Of my Own Expense The same

Goes for Sin God Forgives us Our sin But there Still may Be Consequences David as Well Had to Face the Consequences Of his Sin For instance The Pregnancy Of Bathsheba Just didn't Disappear Did it However Once we Have faced Up to Our sin It will Be easier To deal With the Consequences Of it Because of The assurance Of God's Forgiveness Now An Australian Church historian A guy By the name Of Stuart Pigginer Who's up In Sydney Has written A book On revivals In Australian Culture And so On in The 19th Century And I Heard him At a Conference Once And he Said that An ingredient For revival Within Ourselves Is to Have an Awareness Of the Sin In our

Life And to Have an Absolute Assurance Of Forgiveness From God But if we Go around Like I Did Say after Having Scratched The furniture And not Admitting To it Then we Are going To have A load Of guilt On our Minds Until we Do something About it And that Leads me Into my Second point How do We deal With our Sin As we Look at This psalm We see That David Here in This psalm Is wanting Restoration With God And the Only way Restoration Can come About Is if God was To as In verse One Blot out His Transgressions And David Says And to Be washed Thoroughly From his Iniquity And to Be Cleansed David Also Wants God To hide His Face From his Sin To take Away The blood Guilt That is Hanging Around Him David

Wants To be Cleansed From all The sin That is Within His Life And the Extent To which He has Sinned Is not Atonable Or able To be Met With the Old Testament Sacrificial System In verse 16 He says Here And he Was involved In the Sacrificial System He Would have Used it Quite a Lot In verse 16 He says You do Not Delight In the Sacrifice Or I Would bring It You do Not Take Pleasure In Burnt Offerings God Wants More Than That The way He wants Us to Deal With Our Sin Is As Verse 17 Says With A Broken Spirit A Broken And Contrite Heart And with This Attitude God Will not Despise Us So Getting Right With God Then Is not Just Words That We Say But it Is also

A matter Of the Heart And by Coming to God In this Manner Shows That we Are wanting To deal With the Sin That has Affected Us It Acknowledges That we Cannot Save Ourselves From Our Guilt And it Also Recognizes That there Is someone Greater Than us Who can Deal With Our Sin One Thing That will Never Please God Is by Trying to Deal With sin By our Outward Actions Alone In verse 10 David's Desire Is that God Would Create A new And pure Heart Within Him And there's A lot For us To learn From that If we Keep From our Guilt Or sin By escaping From the Reality Of the Situation That we're Placed In Perhaps Even Talking To others About the Guilt Confronting Us But not Confessing Our sin Or not Confessing It to God Then we Are only Putting a

[ 20 : 17 ] Band-aid On the Problem We are Not really Solving The problem Of sin Now since This psalm Has been Written God has Made known To us A more Excellent Way Of dealing With our Sin Than the Sacrificial System That we See in The Old Testament Our hearts And our Minds Can be Sprinkled Clean From an Evil Conscience By the Work of Jesus Death On the Cross Jesus Death Is enough For us Our sins Are wiped Away Or blotted Out Not by The thoroughness Of our Confession But by God's Total Acceptance Of Jesus Christ His Son As our Perfect Saviour Go and Read Hebrews Chapter 9 And 10 Which fills Out all That sort Of thing They're great Chapters in The Bible God wants

Us to Stop running Away from Our sins And to Lay our Burdens On him He wants Us to be Restored In a Right And a Meaningful Relationship With him If he Didn't Then why Would he Have gone To all The suffering That he Did By becoming Man in The form Of the Lord Jesus Christ So our Sin demands A response By us To God We need To admit That it is Him Whom we have Sinned against And that in Our own Ways We are Unable to Deal with It God shows Compassion On those Who have A broken Spirit A broken And contrite Heart Before him Repentant Or sorry Might be Easier for us To understand So to my Final point What is the Result Of bringing

Our sin To God The result Of these Actions Is firstly A total Assurance Of God's Forgiveness We are Somehow Made right With God We are Justified And a Knowledge of This forgiveness Will also Help us To stop Looking at Our own Self-pity And desire To serve The Lord In not Only our Praises But also In our Actions To others In other Words A knowledge Of God's Salvation In our Lives Should lead Us on To Sharing With others About God's Ways So that They too Those people Too Can gain Full assurance Of salvation If our Bodies are Not able to Give praise To God Then maybe We haven't Taken on Board the Power of God's Grace When Jesus Rised from The dead He commanded The disciples To make

Disciples To make Disciples of The Father And of the Son And of the Holy Spirit If we are Living a life That is free From guilt Or sin That is in the Past Then as Christians We will be Effective vessels For Christ However If we still Have that Cloud that is Hanging over Us Then chances Are We aren't Living effective Lives For Christ John White In his Little book On prayer Says that You cannot Deal with Sin Until you Look it In the eye And that Until we Wake up To that Fact Then progress In godliness Is impossible Let me Repeat that You cannot Deal with Sin Until you Look it In the eye And that Until we Wake up To that Fact Then progress In godliness Is impossible David Was a godly Man Read the

Stories Of his Life Yet he Sinned Against God He abused His kingly Power He lusted He committed Adultery And he Committed Murder Yet God In his Steadfast Love and Compassion Forgave him Because David Was able To tell God That he Had sinned Our growth As Christians Is difficult If there is Ongoing sin In our lives Now that sin Can be realised In our Outward actions As well As within Our inward Actions What we might Think It may be in The area of That list That Marina Read out To us From Mark's Gospel Pride Lust Greed Mean Spiritedness Slander Self

[ 25 : 21 ] Pity Doubt The list Is endless It goes On and On Growth For us As Christians Occurs When we Are willing To let Go Of those Things Which cause A barrier Between God And us Jesus Jesus Says To his Disciples In Matthew's Gospel Come to Me All who Are weary And carrying Heavy burdens And I Will give You rest Take My yoke Upon you And learn From me For I Am gentle And humble In heart And you Will find Rest for Your souls For my Yoke Is easy And my Burden Is light Friends If a Guilt Problem Has you In its Grip Then can I encourage You

To use Psalm 51 As a Prayer And be Assured of God's Forgiveness For those Who come To him With a Broken Spirit A broken And contrite Heart Create In me A clean Heart O God And put A new And right Spirit Within me We're going To I'm going To come Down in a Moment And just Sing this Song Which will be Put up On the Overhead On the Behind What I will Do I will stigma To I will Save My Soon ■■■■ In a Tree Bend Fail w What The W Echo Schoolother Watch