

A Fresh Start- Part 1

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bibles, look with me this morning to Psalm 51. Psalm 51, and we're going to read the first 13 verses here in just a few moments. Psalm chapter 51, verses 1 to 13.

I want to begin just a real short sermon series this morning. It's only this week and next week. I want to preach two messages, though, that go together, and I'm calling this a fresh start.

I don't know about you, but I look forward to the beginning of a new year each and every year. The only thing I don't like is writing checks and then continue to put the last year, right?

But I like a new year because it gives us a fresh start. And let me just tell you two things about myself that probably you don't know. One, I'm a little bit of perfectionist.

Now, I'm not a full-blown perfectionist. A lot of things, you know, just don't really matter. But certain things, I am. And in the area of neatness, I'm a little bit of a neat freak. You know, I just like things to be orderly, and I like them to be neat.

[1 : 05] And that's just part of my personality. But there's a contradiction to that. I'm a doodler. How many of y'all are doodlers? You know what I mean? And one of the things I like about a new year is when I was working full-time, my secretary every year would buy me a calendar, and she'd bring it into my office on January 1 and say, Here it is, Pastor.

You have a brand-new calendar. And she knew I looked forward to it because a brand-new calendar is just fresh, right? There's no scribbling on it. There's no marks on it. And you get to plan out the whole year in advance. And it's just always cool.

And with me, because I'm a neat freak, that part of my personality, I would always begin, like on January 1, if I had an appointment, I'd put those down, and I'd just write so neat, you know, either in cursive or in print.

It would just be so neat. And I'd do that for the next few days, the next week. But then in about four or five days, I'd be on the phone talking to somebody, and if that conversation goes more than about two or three minutes, then I'd just start doodling.

And that was always there by my phone. And so I'd start drawing birds, or I'd draw fish, or, you know, I'd draw trees, or I'd draw mountains, or I'd just make triangles and circles and figuring, just all kinds of crazy stuff.

[2 : 14] And so after about two weeks, my calendar just looks a mess. And I just sometimes attempt just to tear out January and go to February, you know, get another fresh start, right?

Any of you like that, you know what I found through the years? Our lives are a lot like my calendar. By the time you get to December 31, boy, our calendars are a mess, aren't they?

Because you've written phone numbers here and there, and little notes that you go back now, you don't know what your note meant, all those kind of things. And my life gets that way a lot of times.

It gets kind of muddled, and the lines get confused, and it's not neat anymore. Life is messy, right? And I don't know about you, but I found a whole lot of times I need a fresh start, not just with a new calendar.

I need a fresh start with a lot of things. Sometimes people need a fresh start with a new job, right? The old one's not working out, and I just need to go find a new job.

[3 : 10] And sometimes you're involved in some relationships that just aren't working out, and you say, you know what, I just need a fresh start here. Or you're in one, and you're not going to walk away from that relationship.

But you know there are some corrections that need to be made, because we need to make this thing better than what it's been in the past. We need to get a fresh new start. I'll tell you something else.

A lot of folks I've found, and this includes me at times in my life, we come to a place in our relationship with God where we need a fresh new start.

If you'd be honest about it this morning, not all of you, but some of you in this room, you look at your relationship with God as it is today, and you just know this, it's just not what it should be.

It's not what you want it to be. There was a closeness you enjoyed once with God, and a fellowship you enjoyed once with Him, and a sense of joy and peace and power that just filled your life.

[4 : 17] And somehow that's gone. You pray now, and it feels as though God's a thousand miles away. You wonder, does He even hear me? And those things that once brought you joy, you just were elated because of your relationship with God.

Now, it's just not like that. And you hear people talk about having a sweet, intimate, personal relationship with God, and you get a little bit envious. I wish mine were like that, but it's just not.

I just kind of find myself going through the motions. And so the million-dollar question is this, what causes us to find ourselves at that place in our lives spiritually?

Can I just tell you this? Most people I know, it's not that one day they get up and they say, you know what, I'm not going to believe in God anymore. It's not that anyone ever just stands up in Sunday school class, I've never heard of this happening, may have happened somewhere, but not in the churches I pastored, where somebody stands up and says, you know what, I just don't hold to the same things I used to hold to.

I'm becoming a liberal as of this particular day in my life. Most times people don't consciously walk away. What happens is they just find themselves getting more and more and more distant from God.

[5 : 31] And there are a variety of reasons why that can happen. But I want to tell you one big one I found as a pastor is this, and this may surprise you, it is because of the presence of unconfessed sin in our life.

Because I'm going to promise you something, if we're to have a meaningful, intimate relationship with God, and fellowship between us and God is to be sweet and pure in what it should be at its height, it requires above everything else transparency on our part, because God absolutely hates hypocrisy.

And God will not deal with us when we're living in a fashion of hypocrisy. So if we sin against God, and it doesn't have to be some big moral sin, if we sin against God and we fail to go to God and say, God, I need to confess this to you and get this right with you, and we harbor that in our heart, and it builds up and builds up and builds up, after a while, it's as though the relationship is strained, and we find ourselves distant from God.

Now, I'm going to preach this message in two messages, because I can't get it all in in one. You'd want to leave before I got through this morning. But here's what we're going to do in this first message.

We're going to look at a guy, a guy you know. I'm confident everybody in this room knows this guy. And you're going to see a guy who allowed that to happen in his life. He allowed unconfessed sin to break his relationship with God, to make him feel distant toward God.

[7 : 04] And when you know who it is, you'll be surprised, because you just think, oh, this guy's been so close to God. And then next week, we're going to come back, and we're going to talk about how do you fix that problem.

Because I'll just tell you this much now. The way you fix the problem is you come clean with God, and you confess your sin to God. And I just got to be honest with you, that's something we Baptists just don't know much about.

We kind of look at our Catholic friends, and we kind of, you know, just almost look down on them, because they go into this confessional booth, and they talk to a priest, and we say, you can't get rid of sin that way.

But you know the Baptist idea? The Baptist idea is this. At the end of the service, when they sing the invitation, you go forward and take a pastor by the hand, and you say, Pastor, I've sinned, and I need to rededicate my life to God.

And the pastor prays. Usually the person doesn't even pray. The pastor prays, and they go back to their seat, thinking, well, now I've got that out of the way. I'm ready for a fresh start with God. And you and I both know, because you've done that before, that only lasts about three minutes, right?

[8 : 09] I mean, you just know that doesn't really accomplish what you want it to. You go back to your seat, and you may feel better for a moment, but it's not long until, man, nothing's changed.

So next week, if you'll come back, I'm going to preach a comprehensive message on confession, and I'm going to show you what confession really and truly involves, and I'm telling you, it's a painful process.

But if you ever want to have peace and power with God again, confession is necessary. So let's jump in, and let's just find out what causes us to lose this relationship.

And as I said, it's unconfessed sin. And the life I want us to look at is the life of a man by the name of King David. Everybody knows King David, right?

You read about King David when you're a little bitty boy or girl in Sunday school. First story you come to is the story of David out tending his sheep, and he reveals this to Saul.

[9 : 10] There were times when he would have to rescue his sheep from the hands of bears and lions. And so, you know, man, this is an unusually gifted young man. He's powerful, even as a young man.

We later know he becomes a great, great warrior in Israel. He goes out to fight Goliath. When all the adults in the Israeli army are fearful, little David, teenager David, musters the courage and says, I'll go in the name of the Lord and fight this great giant, this Goliath of Gath, right?

So we fall instantly in love with David. And we find out he's multi-gifted. He's a great musician. In fact, he writes lots and lots and lots of the Psalms.

He plays his heart for King Saul, and it soothes his nerves when he was troubled by evil spirits. He's a great friend to Jonathan. Remember those early chapters about David?

He creates his friendship with Jonathan, the son of the king. He's a loyal, trusted friend. Even when Saul becomes jealous and turns against David, David will not lay a hand on Saul.

[10 : 19] He won't hurt a hair on his head. He's noble, so much so. You know what one biblical writer says about David? You know what I'm going to say, don't you? He was a man, say it with me, after God's own heart.

Now, I want you to think about this for a minute. God is directing these men as they write the Scripture, and this man says, here's a man after God's own heart.

I want to tell you something. I'd have to think long and hard if I'm writing something that's really important that's going to one day be Scripture. They didn't know that at the time.

But if I'm under the inspiration of God, and I'm writing, here's a man who is after God's own heart, I'm going to be real careful about pinning that, because I'm going to tell you something. I don't want to be guilty of blasphemy.

Who could say of anybody, here's somebody after God's own heart? So I'm going to tell you, David's stature in my eyes just rises as high as it can get with that.

[11 : 25] I mean, how do you top that? He's a man after God's own heart. When you see him worship, remember his wife, Michael, got angry with him because he's worshiping so transparently in the streets of Jerusalem when they bring the Ark of the Covenant back?

I mean, here's a hero of heroes. But you know the rest of the story, don't you? One day his men are in battle, and David is out on his balcony.

He's a good-looking guy, and he's out on his balcony, and he spots this woman down below, and he looks too long, and he lusts after her, and he sends a servant to get Bathsheba.

She's a beautiful woman, and bring her to him. Now, have you ever thought about this? He's not just guilty in doing that of adultery. He's guilty of abuse of power.

Right now, in our land, that's a big discussion, right? Where these powerful guys, they just think they can have their way with any woman, and they just put demands on them?

[12 : 27] You think she thought she had a choice in coming to the palace? It's the king who's beckoning her to come. It's clearly an abuse of power sexually. And then he sleeps with her, and she becomes pregnant with his baby, and now he really sees himself in a bind.

David finds himself in a place he's never been before spiritually. So what can he do? Well, he can confess it. He can come clean with God and with man. But in his mind, I'm sure he thought, this will cost me my kingdom if I do that.

So David decides, I'll just cover it up. And he sends for Uriah and has Uriah come home, and he thinks when Uriah gets home, he'll go in and be with his wife.

But when he gets home, guess what? Even though David has been unfaithful to Uriah, Uriah is faithful to David, and he won't go home to his wife. And now, in David's mind, he's really in a pickle.

I mean, what am I going to do? He won't go home. What's the matter with this crazy guy? Go home to your wife. He won't do it. Well, now he has no recourse unless he's going to come clean, except to have Uriah killed.

[13 : 40] And he pens a note and sends it by the hand of Uriah himself to Joab, the leader of his army, saying, I want you to send him out into the front and then fall back. Can I tell you something? I don't know if you've ever thought about it like this, but that's premeditated first-degree capital murder.

David wouldn't have been any more guilty had they had guns in those days, had he called for Uriah, and as Uriah turned to walk off, he stuck the pistol in the back of his head and blew his head off.

It was that premeditated. It was that intentional. It was that dastardly and cowardly. This noble, noble man who has fought for Israel, put his own life on the line, now takes the life of an innocent man.

He's as guilty as guilty gets. And so, you read the life of David, and can I tell you something?

There's nothing there to indicate, and David fell away from God. And David stopped worshiping God. And David stopped trying to write psalms.

[14 : 46] You know what happened? Next morning, it's business as usual. In fact, can I tell you something? He turns what looked like a possible tragedy into a victory for himself.

I don't know if you ever thought about this. He marries Bathsheba, takes her home. You know what it looked like to the public? Think about it for a moment. Well, that good old King David, he's taken this fallen soldier's wife, and he's made her his wife.

Wasn't that a noble thing for him to do? He's just done a treacherous thing. But now, he looks like a hero. And so, time passes, and he just gets on with his life.

He goes right back to doing probably all the things. I'm just guessing. I don't know this. But there's nothing to indicate otherwise. Then he just goes right on singing, right on doing all the things he's always done in the past.

But I'm going to tell you something. What it doesn't tell us, we know because of what Psalm 51 tells us. Things did change in David's heart and in his life. His relationship with God began to deteriorate.

[15 : 49] And David knew that and felt that. But he doesn't say anything about it. He just says the way many of us do in church, when that happens in our lives, and we just go right on pretending everything is hunky-dory.

Until one day, this prophet of God, Nathan, God discloses to him what's happened. And Nathan goes to David. He says, King David, I need to talk to you.

And he tells him this story about this rich guy who's got lots of lambs. I mean, they're just in abundance. But rather than kill one of his own to serve to one of his guests, he goes to this poor man down the road who only has one.

It's not a part of a flock. It's his pet. And he kills that lamb and serves it to his guests. And boy, when David hears that because he's a man who's after God's own heart, he knows righteousness.

When he hears it, he is outraged. And he thinks, how conniving and how sorry. And David says, tell me who that man is and I'm going to punish him. And you know the story, don't you?

[16 : 57] Nathan points his finger in David's face and says, David, it's you. You're the man. And David, I'm confident, he wept there in Nathan's presence.

I want you to read the psalm he wrote as a result of that conversation with David. Go with me to Psalm 51. We're going to have to move real quickly. Look at Psalm 51.

Be gracious to me, God. Do I need to do something? Okay. Mike's going to take care of it. Be gracious to me, God, according to your faithful love, according to your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion, wash away my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin.

Boy, aren't you thankful we have guys that know about that stuff. Yeah, give him an applause. Good guy. Thank you. Thank you so much, Michael. For I am conscious of my rebellion and my sin is always before me.

Against you, you alone, I have sinned and done this evil in your sight. So you are right when you pass sentence. You are blameless when you judge.

[18 : 09] Indeed, I was guilty when I was born. I was sinful when my mother conceived me. Surely you desire integrity in the inner self and you teach me wisdom deep within.

Listen to this. Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean. Wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Turn your face away from my sins.

Blot out all my guilt. God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore the joy of your salvation to me and give me a willing spirit. Then I will teach rebellious, the rebellious your ways and sinners will return to you.

Boy, what a beautiful, beautiful prayer. I want to show you four things that happened to David real quickly this morning in these remaining moments. Four things that happened to David because he harbored unconfessed sin in his heart.

[19 : 11] The first thing is this. David was eaten up with guilt and shame. David was absolutely eaten up with guilt and shame.

I want to tell you something. When a believer sins against God, the Holy Spirit of God lives within us. He is going to bombard us with conviction which leads to us feeling guilt and shame.

God doesn't desire that we feel guilt and shame. He desires to remind us through guilt and shame that we need to confess our sin to Him. But when we fail to do that, it takes a toll on our life.

I want you to look at verse 1. Just a portion of the verse real quickly. Blot out my rebellion. That's what he says to God. He recognizes he's rebelled.

He says, God, blot out my rebellion. Verse 2, wash away my guilt. Cleanse me from my sin. Verse 3, my sin is always before me.

[20 : 11] You know what he's saying in that? I can't get away from this thing, God. Everywhere I turn, I see me and Bathsheba. Everywhere I turn, I see Uriah.

I see a fallen soldier. I see his corpse that they brought back for burial. God, my sin is ever before me. Now, don't you know, people can be or suffer from insomnia for a variety of reasons.

It's not always guilt and shame. But I'll promise you this, when you're feeling guilty and shameful, you're going to have a hard time resting. You understand that?

Boy, you're going to lay your head down on the pillow and you'll see that sin right there before you. You'll be in somebody's midst and they're talking about something and something will come up related to what you've done and you're going to relive that moment in your life.

David was eat up with guilt and shame and he says, my sin is always before me. Verse 5, I was guilty when I was born. Can I ask you, are you eaten up with guilt?

[21 : 21] Through the years, I can't tell you how many people came into my office and they sat down and they said, oh, pastor, I'm just beside myself and I just need some counseling. I just need some help. Man, I'm down.

I'm depressed. And they begin to tell me about their life and I say, well, what's been happening in your life? And they would tell me one thing or another and I'd say, was there any sin in your life? And they would then begin to tell me about something that had happened.

And they would tell me about this sin and that sin and the other sin. They said, you see, I just think about these things all the time and I just feel so, so guilty. Can I tell you, a lot of times I'd listen to that for a few minutes and after I would, I'd say, can I tell you something?

There's a difference in feeling guilty and being guilty. Sometimes we feel guilty when we're really and truly innocent. That's called shame.

When I, as a pastor at times, needed to be three places, but there was only one of me and I could only be in one of those places, I felt bad that I couldn't be in all three of those places. But I'm going to tell you something, that's shame.

[22 : 23] That's not guilt. I'm doing the best that I can do. But I feel shame about that, but that shame feels very similar to guilt, doesn't it? But I want you to know something.

When I do something that is wrong, I feel that same sense, but then it's not that I feel guilty, it's what? I am guilty.

And I've said to a lot of folk when we would be in counseling sessions, is it that you feel guilty or is it that you are guilty? Have you established the fact that I did this or I did that or I neglected to do this or that?

And as a result of that, it's not just a feeling I have. That feeling is a genuine feeling because it is true. I am in fact guilty. And David felt guilty because David was in fact guilty.

Let me show you a second thing that harboring unconfessed sin will do. It will leave us feeling dirty. And David felt dirty. Look again quickly at the scripture if you have that Bible passage open.

[23 : 30] Verse 2, Wash away my guilt. Now seven times in just six verses, he's going to say something about being clean. Wash away my guilt.

Clean me from my sin. Verse 7, Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean. Verse 7, Wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Verse 9, Blown out all my guilt.

Verse 10, Create a clean heart in me, O God. Do you think it's just coincidental that again and again and again he prays this same phrase about being cleansed and being washed and having his guilt blotted out?

I'm telling you, nothing could be further from the truth. The reason he prays that so often is because it's heavy on his mind because he feels dirty because of his sin.

And you're going to see in the passage we look at next week in 1 John 1, 9 that that's what sin and guilt does. It makes us feel dirty. It makes us feel as though we're impure and we're unclean.

[24 : 34] Years ago, Dr. Graham was preaching in London and he was speaking with a man who was the director of a large mental asylum. And Dr. Graham asked this man who was running the asylum, he said, tell me, why are most of the people in this asylum?

And you know what the man told him? He said, 85% of the people here today could leave if they could come to accept God's forgiveness in their life because they're eaten up, they're ridden with guilt.

They're ridden with guilt. Guilt will leave us feeling dirty. Remember the story of Pilate in the New Testament? Pilate has Jesus brought to him by the Sanhedrin.

They make their charges. Pilate questions Jesus. You know the outcome of that, right? Pilate says, this man's not guilty of anything. He hears Herod's intent. He sends him quickly to Herod because he wants to get this monkey off his back.

And when Herod questions him, guess what? Another guy didn't have any reason to love Jesus. But Herod questions Jesus and he realizes he's done nothing guilty deserving of murder or deserving of death.

[25 : 41] And he sends him back to Pilate. So Pilate questions him a second time, this time even more carefully. And when he gets through, here's the conclusion he reaches. This guy's not guilty of anything.

He doesn't deserve to be put to death. And so he goes out to the crowd and he tries to appease the crowd by saying, hey, it's that time of year I released somebody. Who do you want me to release? Why don't I release Jesus?

And the crowd says, no, don't release Jesus. Release Barabbas. Crucify Jesus. You remember what Pilate does? Interesting thing. He calls for a bowl of water to be brought and Pilate takes that water in front of those religious folk and he washes his hands and he's sending them a message.

He says, symbolically, I'm washing my hands of this because I know and you know Jesus doesn't deserve to be put to death. And so I'm going to wash my hands of this. You know why?

Because he felt dirty. Because he knew he had Jesus' blood on his hands. I want to tell you something. If you could look in the depths of hell today, I believe you'd still see Pilate wringing those hands and trying to wash his hands and rid himself of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[26 : 50] I'm going to tell you today, sin will leave you feeling violated and leave you feeling dirty before God. There's a third thing. It left him feeling apart from God and abandoned.

He had a deep sense of loss. He hadn't lost his relationship with God. But get this, he felt that way. He felt a deep sense of loss in his relationship with God.

He hadn't lost his relationship with God. But that's how David felt. You know how I know that? Listen to verse 11. Do not banish me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Verse 12. Listen to this verse. Restore the joy of your salvation to me. Here's the sad thing. Here's a guy who knows God.

He has a relationship with God. But the joy of that relationship, it's gone. He has a relationship, but he doesn't even know he has a relationship.

[27 : 50] He thinks what he's done is so horrendous that God has removed himself from David. But the truth is, David has removed himself from God.

God still loves David as much as he ever loved David. But David's sin made him feel as though God were far, far away. Can I ask you right now, you don't have to raise your hand, you don't have to indicate to a neighbor, just right there in your seat as you think about this.

Am I describing you? Do you feel as though you really have the joy of your salvation? Do you feel as though God is really close when I pray he listens to me?

I can talk to him about anything because we're close, we're tight. Is that what you feel? Or do you feel maybe what David felt here in this song? You see, I'm convinced that there are lots and lots and lots of us in churches just like this from all over the country where we come Sunday after Sunday after Sunday and rather than admit we've got a problem, we'd rather just go through the motions and pretend that, boy, everything's okay in my relationship with God.

And I want you to know you're robbing yourself of great, great joy, peace and power when you do that. There's one final thing and I close the message. It led to a lifeless worship and a lack of power in serving God.

[29 : 19] I want to show you that from the scripture. It says in verse 13, Then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will return to you. That's what he says in that 13th verse.

You know why he says that? Because he feels as though I can't do that. right now. He says, If you will cleanse me and you will restore this relationship and I'll get this joy back, then I can teach transgressors sinners your ways.

But right now, I can't do it. Interesting thing. I'm really anxious to find out one day when I get to heaven what the answer to this question is. Did God put David on a shelf and just refuse to use him?

That's what we often think in church. Well, that guy's got in sin. God can't use him like that. God will put him on a shelf. Or did David put himself on the shelf? Because either way, he's on the shelf.

You understand that? Whether God just says, I refuse to use you like this, or David says, he couldn't possibly use me like that. And he just withdrew himself.

[30 : 25] I had a deacon one time when I was a young pastor. I was just fresh out of seminary. Had a deacon about four or five years older than me. He came to me and said, Pastor, I want to resign as a deacon.

And I called him by name and I said, man, why do you want to do that? Does anybody hurt your feelings? Have I done something? No, no, it's not about you. It's about me. I said, well, why do you want to resign?

He says, well, I mismanaged my money. I was too selfish and greedy with my money and I started spending more on myself than I should and now I'm in debt and I can't tithe.

And I just, I want to resign because I can't tithe. You see, he felt disqualified from service. You know what I said to him? I said, can I give you a better solution to that? He said, what's that?

I said, why don't you just repent? Why don't you just tell God, God, I've been greedy and I've been selfish and I've misused my money and let us help you to get on a budget and you begin to tithe again.

[31 : 24] Why put yourself on the shelf? And I want to tell you something, I've seen a lot of believers who've done that. They stop teaching Sunday school, they fall out of this, they fall out of that.

Sometimes though, here's the other thing that happens, they just keep doing what they've always done, they're just going through the motions. You see, if David did continue to lead worship, if he did continue to write psalms, can you imagine how empty that must have felt to David?

Can you imagine how he must have stood when he told other people about faith in God? He's sitting there thinking to himself, boy, I don't even have this relationship with God that I'm telling them they need to have.

Can you imagine what that was like? Sin in David's life, unconfessed, led to a lifeless worship and a lack of power in serving God.

Well, what does David do? That's where we are now. What does David do? David prays this prayer we've read this morning in Psalm 51 when he confesses his sin to God.

[32 : 33] And God restores him to a right relationship with himself. But it doesn't stop there. I want to show you something else. I want you to turn to one more psalm with me.

Psalm 139. One of my favorite psalms in all the word of God. Psalm 139. I want you to find that and look at this with me if you will for just a moment.

Psalm 139. And while you're turning there, after you've turned there, I want you to look up and listen for about two minutes and we're done. Ready? In fact, I'm going to come down here.

In Psalm 139, many of you know that psalm, but a lot of you don't. You say, well, what's that about? 24 verses long. First 22 verses, David only talks about three things.

It's a psalm that David wrote. One of the greatest psalms you'll ever read. He says three things and I can break it down for you real, real quick. He says, God, you are everywhere.

[33 : 38] Word we use in theology is omnipresent. God, you are everywhere. I can go down here. You're there. I go up there. You're there. I go over there. You're there. You lift up a rock.

You're there. You're everywhere. You see everything. Then he says, God, you know everything. Word we use there is omniscient.

You know everything. It's not like that champion on Jeopardy. He knows most of the questions. He knows everything. Everything. Everything. He saw it all.

He created it all. He thought it all. He imagined it all. He spoke it all into existence. There's nothing he doesn't know. You know what keeps you from making perfect decisions? Lack of knowledge. If you knew everything, you'd never make a bad decision.

God knows everything. So he says, God, you are everywhere and you know everything and you're all powerful. You spoke the world into existence.

[34 : 39] What kind of power is that? That you just think it and say it and it is. Now, in view of that, here's his conclusion.

Look at verse 22 and 23. Search me, God, and know my heart. Test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

Wow. I don't know if that sunk in. Do you get what he's saying there? In view of what he said in his first 22 verses? Let me put it in perspective for you if you don't get it.

You're a CEO of a company. You go tomorrow morning to your office. You're singing, listening to the radio. You pull up in the parking space and there's the 60-minute truck and it's in your parking lot.

Or there's the 2020 truck and you get out and they got cameras going and they got microphones, they shove it in your face and they said, we're here because we're launching today a full-scale investigation of you because we hear you're practicing corrupt business practices.

[35 : 54] Makes you a little nervous, wouldn't it? I mean, have you ever thought about running for President of the United States? When you sign on to run for President of the United States, I want to tell you something, in about three hours, they know every move you've ever made in your life.

They know everything about, that's government though. This is God David's talking to. And he says, God, you see it all, you're everywhere, you know everything, you're all powerful, I'm inviting you.

He's actually giving the invitation. He's not just subject to it. He says, God, I'm inviting you to do a full-scale investigation of my life. Now you're probably thinking, he's crazy.

Can you imagine what that's going to turn up? Why would he do such a thing? I'll tell you why. Because he knew what it was like to harbor unconfessed sin in his heart and how far away it took him from God and he doesn't ever want to go there again.

And he says, oh God, that's why he's a man after God's own heart. God, I know what it is to be right with you and I know what it is to not be right with you and I don't ever want to not be right with you again.

[37 : 09] And I'm begging you, oh God, reveal to me any sin in my life and if you do, I'll confess it to you. Now, I wish we could wrap this up neatly in just a moment or two but we can't.

We won't even be able to do it next week but I'm going to show you what real genuine confession looks like but I'm going to tell you where it begins. It begins by knowing the truth about yourself and the only way you're ever going to know the truth about yourself if you can't even trust your own memory because you've glossed over many things.

I've glossed over many things but I'm going to tell you something, God hadn't. He saw everything that ever went down in your life and He's not forgotten it. And if you would pray that prayer, if you'd be willing and daring enough to pray that prayer this morning, we could begin that process of your restoration.

You're getting a fresh start with God. If you would be man enough or woman enough to say, God, there are things I've done I don't even remember. I just kind of swept all those under the rug by saying at the end of the night, forgive me of my sins and my shortcomings.

Okay, I'm good but you're not good. Would you pray that prayer and would you begin to get ready for God to show you would you pray it today and tonight and tomorrow and the next day and the next day and the next day until we meet again and just begin to catalog God here's what's wrong with me and I need to write some of these things.

[38 : 34] Show me how I treat my wife, how I treat my husband, how I treat my children, how I treat my employees, how I treat my neighbors, how I respond to what your word says. Listen, you don't get in this shape just by committing adultery and murder.

It's whatever sin is present in your life that you've just kind of covered over and swept behind you. Okay, I'm good to go. I'm an okay guy. It comes down to you want to play church or do business with God.

You really want to have a real meaningful relationship with God or you just want to play at it. Lawrence is going to lead us. I'm going to ask you to stand your feet and I'm going to ask you even, I don't care if you sing a word of the song, what I'd like you to do is at least begin that prayer with God.

Maybe you just need to read those two verses. Just say, God, do a full-scale investigation in my life begin right now today showing me what I need to confess to you. Would you do that?

Let's stand. Lawrence lead us if you will. Thank you.