

Psalm 51:1-12
"The Ugly Truth"

We like tidy things. Things nicely wrapped and put in place. We like things to be sterile, to be black and white, especially life. Considering how messy (metaphorically and literally), we humans can be, this is quite a conundrum. Thank God that God does not hide the ugliness of life from us. His word is filled with messy things, things not nicely wrapped and in place, unsterile things, and gray area. God's word, the Bible, does not hide or dress up the ugly truth of humanity's brokenness, of our sinfulness. Nor does God give us neat and tidy heroes. Abraham, Noah, Jacob, Moses, Sampson, Peter, Paul and King David, among many others, we are flawed. As David writes, from their mothers' wombs they entered the world like that. God does not give just the good stuff, the neat and tidy stuff in the Bible. God gives us all the ugliness, as well. And I am convinced God has done so for our benefit. That is, for our salvation. Fortunately, our business, unlike our biblical heroes, isn't put on front street. King David's was. Considering the ugliness of King David's life, one must ask the question, "How God could call him a 'man after his own heart'?"

1Sam 13:14 "14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him *to be* commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."

Acts 13:22 "22 And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after My *own* heart, who will do all My will.'"

I think this text provides the answer. Three things I see that may give insight as to why David, despite his moral failures, was called by God, “a man after his own heart”.

First, King David never made excuse for his sin. He is honest with himself. **V 1-3** “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.” The backdrop to this psalm is David’s sin with Bathsheba. When confronted by the prophet Nathan, David does not ignore the prophet’s words that he is the guilty one. He does not rationalize his sin; he does not seek to have the prophet killed because he doesn’t like what the prophet tells him. He falls on his face in confession and repentance. David never resists God’s words of judgement. For David, God’s word was always right, and he always responds accordingly, confession and repentance. This is what a man or woman after God’s own heart does. Do we easily confess when confronted by God’s word, or is confession for us like pulling teeth?

2 Sam 12:5-7a, 13 “⁵So David’s anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! ⁶And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity.” ⁷Then Nathan said to David, “You *are* the man!....¹³So David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’”

1 Chron 21:7-8 “⁷And God was displeased with this thing; therefore He struck Israel. ⁸So David said to God, “I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing; but now, I pray, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly.”

Heb 3:12-15 “¹² Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³ but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, ¹⁵ while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

Second, King David always gave preeminence to the sovereignty of God. V4-6 “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.”

In giving preeminence to the sovereignty of God, David gives preeminence to God’s word. Only by God’s word do we know that we are sinners and have sinned. Church, to place the words of man above the words of God is to reject God’s sovereignty. God says we are all sinners in need of saving, man says no, we are progressing to a better state. David knew he was a sinner and that he had sinned against God because God’s word said so.

Isa 5:20-21 “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! ²¹ Woe to *those who are* wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!”

Prov 3:7 “Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.”

Romans 3:23 “²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”
Third and final, King David had unwavering faith in God and in what God could do. V7-12 “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.”

Because of David’s confidence in God he was not abashed about calling on God’s name. No remedy David could offer for his sin and so David takes the only recourse available to him, the same recourse he takes in all his failures. He cries out to God for forgiveness, for restoration, with the full assurance he would indeed receive that from God. Do we do like David cry out? Or do hide out? Remember, we cannot hide from God, from Jesus the Christ, but we can be like David and have unwavering faith in God and in what God can do through His Son, Jesus the Christ. Knowing that when we cry through faith in Christ Jesus, God grants us forgiveness and full restoration.

John 6:37-38 “³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

Romans 10:11-12 “¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.”

Brothers and Sisters, Jesus makes all things new. The ugly truth. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**