

Prestonwood Connection

Living In The Shadow Of The Almighty #5

Failure

Psalm 51

Wednesday, September 17, 2003 • Dr. David McKinley

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Thanks Rick and Connection Singers, instrumentalists for a great job and leading us tonight to worship and good evening it's great to see you here, so thankful that you've come to be a part of this service tonight and as we gather each week we do come with a great sense of expectancy of God's a..., move to touch us at our point of need and a..., tonight we are continuing our series in the book of Psalms in *The Shadow Of The Almighty*. And a..., if you have your Bible you might wanna take it and open it to that middle book in the Bible because we're gonna be there in just a few minutes. I wanna ask you a question though as we begin tonight. How many of you have ever, ever failed at anything in your life? How many of you have ever failed? All right now just keep em up a minute, look around, cause you're sittin in room full of losers tonight. I just wanna [slight congregation laughter] be sure you all see that and know that. You failed, I failed, it's amazing how common the life experience of failure is for each and every one of us. It's not the most becoming part of our lives and it's certainly not the part of life that we want to expose a..., to everyone else. But the truth of the matter is, is that every one of us sitting in this room tonight know and understand the implications of the word failure.

For some of us failure has been in the realm of performance, we have failed to **PERFORM**. I can remember, so well as a child, how I felt the first time that I had an "F" on a report card. I underscore it, the first time that I had and "F" on a report card and it did happen a few times in my life. And if there was nothing that grieved my mother's heart more because she was a school teacher and obviously I think she felt as though she was a failure both as a mom and as a teacher any time that I didn't get it. And a..., I can so well remember, you know, either on that paper that you'd get back, that big red "F" and why did they do it in red? You know, just "F" you know and it was just this sense of, you're a failure. And I can remember that so well and the struggle of dealing with that as a child. A..., some of you maybe even tonight failed on the way a..., a..., to this parking lot. You a..., were going through an intersection and the light turned ~~rail and you...~~red and you failed to stop. You just went on through the intersection and a..., I know that many of you have done that and I've passed a few of you along the way when you were doin that as well, and a...,

so anyway I can just say that failure us something that happens many times in the realm of our performance.

At other times in life a..., failure is in the realm of communication. We fail to **COMMUNICATE** and so many times a..., what happens in life, the conflicts of our relationships and the tension points of our relationships really come out of times where we had hoped to communicate and we simply failed to effectively communicate.

I heard a story about a..., one evening when a..., D. L. Moody, a great preacher of yesteryear stepped to a pulpit, just like I'm standing at tonight and when he got there, there was a note sitting there on the pulpit and when he looked down at that note, it just said one word, big letters, FOOL, FOOL, and Moody with a gleam in his eye, looked at the crowd and said, "You know I've had one of the most amazing things happen in my life tonight." He said, "Many times I've had people send me critical letters and not sigh them, but tonight somebody signed it and didn't give me the letter." [pause for congregation laughter] Well, what we have there is a failure to communicate. Actually we had a very wise pastor in that situation who knew what to do with a difficult situation. But I say that to say that one of the big areas of life that we struggle is in the area of communication.

So we fail to perform, we fail to communicate, sometimes we fail to **FINISH**. A..., failure in life just comes because we didn't finish things and probably most of us can walk to rooms in our houses and places in our garages and piles on our desks and we can feel, at times, overwhelmed and frustrated because we feel as though we are failing in areas of life just because some things haven't been finished.

And then at other times we struggle with failure because of **CHANGE**. A..., we fail to change and we realize that there are changes that need to be made, physical changes, financial changes, all kinds of changes and yet in dealing with those changes we struggle because we fail to change and to engage change in life and the result of that is that we ultimately experience failure.

And then there are the **FAILED THINGS** of life and there are failed businesses, there are failed marriages, there's failed health. And when you step out of just the sort of surface area of life and get to some of the real hardcore issues of life, the word failure can take on an even deeper and a more sobering meaning. But for every Christian who is in this room tonight one of the greatest and most significant areas of failure is failure in your relationship with God. And if you have been a Christian for any period of time you know that one of the most frustrating, one of the most defeating, one of the most discouraging of all life experiences is to come together in a gathering like we're in tonight or one of our incredible weekend worship services, the energy that is there, the sense of the presence of God that is there, the clarity of the preaching of the Word of God, the prayer time that you spend with people in Bible Fellowship classes that resolve that commitment that I'm gonna go out, I'm

going to make a difference, my life is somehow going to be better this week, I'm going to be stronger, I'm going to be purer, I'm going to be more for God and then the result is that it's not very long until you have tripped, you have slipped and you have failed. And there's nothing that is of more serious consequence in the life of the Christian than the issue of spiritual failure.

And so tonight we're going to address this subject of spiritual failure, by looking together at Psalm 51, Psalm 51. Because Psalm 51 is one of the penitential Psalms in the Bible, a Psalm of repentance, a Psalm of confession and it is one of the Psalms that really sort of uncovers the spiritual condition a..., of a man who was actually said to be a man after God's own heart. What you see and what you feel immediately in the reading of this Psalm is a sense of exposure and of spiritual exposure because of failure in the life of, of a man who had been a man who had sought after and followed after God in his life. Of course we believe that the backdrop of this Psalm was clearly and evidently the experience that we knew David so well for in the Bible. While we would wish that the only thing we knew about David was David and Goliath, the boy and the giant, faith in the sight of overwhelming odds. But the other side of the coin that we know about David is David and Bathsheba and we know that because of the sin of adultery and the sin of immorality in the life of David that ultimately this man who was described as a man after God's own heart was a man who sinned against his family, he was a man who sinned against his friends, he was a man who sinned against his nation as a king and ultimately he was a man who sinned against God. And what we find in Psalm 51 is David dealing with failure. Now the Bible gives us a promise, a promise that relates to spiritual failure and in particular the stain of sin in our lives and I wanna be sure tonight that before we begin anything else about what this Psalm says that we clearly hear the principle and the promise of what God tells us about sin in our lives. Proverbs chapter 28, verse 13 says:

He who covers his sin will not...

What's the next word?

...prosper. But he who confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

Let me read that one more time.

He who confesses ~~or excuse me he who~~ covers his sins shall not prosper...

That a promise! If you claim to know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and you claim to be a child of God and you are living with unresolved, unrepented of, unconfessed sin in your life the Bible gives you a promise that God will not let you prosper. But that those who confess their sin and forsakes them will find what? Mercy and tonight I want us to call upon the name of the Lord for His mercy in our lives. Lets read together Psalm 51 beginning in verse 1:

¹*Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to*

the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. ⁴Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done what is evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when you speak, And blameless when you judge. ⁵Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. ⁶Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. ⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸Make me to hear joy and gladness, That the bones which You have broken may rejoice. ⁹Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all of my iniquities. ¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me away from Your presence. And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me with Your generous Spirit. ¹³Then will I teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You. ¹⁴Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. ¹⁵O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. ¹⁶For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; And You do not delight in burnt offering. ¹⁷But the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise..

Here we see this man uncovered in this moment, as he cries out to God for His mercy and His grace and His forgiveness, as he acknowledges the failure of his life and the condition of his life because of sin. And tonight I want that issue to be the formative issue, the beginning issue, as though it were in the original part of the thought of this message and that is simply to ask and to answer the question based on this Psalm; what does this Psalm teach us about failure in the life of a believer? What does it teach us about failure? Because as I read this Psalm I am immediately mindful of the fact that I could also go and find other portions of Scripture in the Old Testament and in the New Testament that would echo the impact, the stain and the power of sin at work in the life of a believer. You could go to Romans chapter 7 where Paul is struggling between what he wants to do and doesn't do and the realization that it is sin within him. Just as David said:

...in sin my mother conceived me...

And so ultimately what the Bible is, is asking and demonstrating here is for us to understand and to ultimately see what is the impact and what is the power of sin in our lives as believers. Let me suggest several things based on this Psalm tonight.

Number 1: I believe the Bible is teaching us tonight that un-confessed sin **SCATTERS THE ENERGIES** of my life. When sin is not confessed, when sin is not dealt with the result of sin in my life is that it scatters, it dissipates, it distracts the energy of my life. Instead of having focus, instead of having strength, instead of having confidence in my walk and in my life with Christ; instead I am in that condition of life, in verse 8:

...That the bones which are broken...

There's a sense of brokenness inside of me. There's a sense of injury that I am nursing on the inside that keeps me from having the strength and confidence in my walk with the Lord. That statement:

...the bones You have broken...

...is a vivid statement. If you hold your hand here in Psalm 51, but go back over to Psalm 32 and in Psalm 32 beginning in verse 3 we read these words:

³*When I kept silent, my bones grew old and my groaning all the day long.*

⁴*For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.*

Have you noticed how just in the last week it's just easy to have a little more energy in the day because it's just not so hot? Have you noticed that? It's true, as we've had these wonderful temperatures that have dropped just a little bit here where it's typically been more in the mid 80's or even dropping down into the 60's and in the 50's in some areas at night. You know, you just feel better and yet it's so different from those days back in August when it was 100+ degrees and all you could think was just let me get up under air-conditioning, get a glass of lemonade, lay on the couch and do nothing, because heat takes away your strength. Well, that's exactly what the heat of sin does within your body, within your bones; is that instead of having energy and vitality and strength, sin when it is inside of our lives causes us to feel weak and sa...scattered. It's like a stalker, that everywhere I go it is stalking me, it is there to remind me that I have failed, that I'm not right with God, that there's something that needs to be dealt with and not only is that true of the reality of sin in my life it is also true of how Satan works in my life. Because you see I have an adversary who loves to keep me in the condition of defeat because of un-confessed sin and that's why the Bible calls him the accuser of the brethren. So that everywhere I look I feel accused, everywhere I look I feel as though I am bound, I...everywhere I look I'm reminded of what I'm not and so whether it's un-confessed sin in my life or just the work because I have sinned in the past of Satan to keep me tripped up, un-confessed sin when it is present in my life ultimately takes away my energies.

There's something else that the Bible teaches us here in the Psalms about un-confessed sin and that is that un-confessed sin **SHADOWS MY FELLOWSHIP** with God, it shadows my fellowship with God. No longer do I feel open, no longer do I feel free, but instead I am confused, I am tense, I am distant. I'm wearing on my left hand on my ring finger a wedding ring. March the 3rd 1979 I stood on an altar and on that altar and at that altar I said, "I do" and Connie said, "I do" and together we exchanged vows and we exchanged rings and we were married and began an incredible journey of life, building of a home and of a family together. That means we will have been married 25 years this coming March. It's wonderful, it's hard to believe. But you know there was one day back in 1984 when we had a

disagreement, the one and only time in our entire marriage [pause for congregation laughter] and I remember how bad I felt that day and every other day just like it, because you see when conflict comes into a relationship when things are not right with your mate there is a brokenness in the openness of the relationship. You just are not comfortable and casual, you know there's something wrong, you know there's something between you, you know you need to get it right. And yet in pride and frustration and making the point and all those things you allow conflict and ultimately isolation to grow in that relationship and the result of that isolation is that it can break or shadow the fellowship of that relationship. Now it doesn't break the relationship itself and whenever we have had a disagreement or if...whenever we have had a conflict, it's not meant that we were not married it just simply meant that we weren't together and that's exactly what happens in your relationship with God. When you are not right with Him well...He says here in verse 11:

Do not cast me away from Your presence, do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

He's realizing that there is an alienation that he's feeling and he's afraid that he's gonna lose the standing of his relationship with God and sin un-confessed does that to you and to me. It shadows our fellowship with God and when I sin it will suspend my fellowship with God, but never, never does the Bible teach that it will sever my relationship with God. No where does the Bible say you can sin up to this point and then that's it, you're out! You see the Bible never teaches that. The Bible teaches that once we become a child of God we belong to Him. But when sin comes into our lives, sin can ultimately begin to injure the ability that we have to have communion and oneness and rightness with God. Well, a lot of people have looked at this verse I've just read to you and said, well what does he mean when he says:

...do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

Doesn't that mean that, that David was gonna lose his relationship with God? Absolutely not! You will recall that before David there was another king by the name of Saul. Saul had been anointed and appointed the king over Israel. But Saul because of his sin was ultimately rejected and David was anointed as king and what David saw as losing the Holy Spirit would be losing God's hand of blessing and anointing upon his life as king, never that he would no longer have a relationship with God. And so in an effort to make that right he called upon the Lord and cried out to the Lord. And yet so many of us in life go through seasons of life where we sin, where we stumble, and instead of getting right with God we let that shadow our fellowship with God and it's makes us miserable.

Many years ago as a teenager I wrote in the front portion of my Bible that I used at that time, a statement that I heard my pastor Dr. Adrian Rogers make over and over and over again and I've never forgotten it because I've experienced it far more times than I would like to admit standing here tonight and this is what he said:

"The most miserable man on the face of the earth is not the unsaved man, but it is the saved man who is our of fellowship with God."

That's exactly right. You see the unsaved person just lives according to their instincts. They live without God, they live in darkness, they enjoy their darkness. There is pleasure in sin for a season. But the Bible makes it very clear that to be saved, to have a relationship with God and to ultimately know that that relationship is real and true, when sin comes into that relationship and my fellowship with God is shadowed by sin then I become a very miserable, unhappy, irritable person and therefore I have to understand that un-confessed sin shadows my fellowship with God.

Number 3: The Bible teaches me that un-confessed sin, listen to this, **STEALS THE JOY** in my life. Just this past Sunday our pastor was bringing a message on joy and on the recipe for joy. And he even referenced at that point, this verse over here in Psalm 51 where David cried out and said in verse 12:

Restore to me the joy of my salvation...

You talk about what brings joy, it is when you are right with God, but what robs your joy is when things are not right with God. And not only is it the issue of joy that our pastor dealt with last Sunday, it's the same issue as we get to peace this Sunday. There's a lot of disturbance and a lack of peace, a disturbing of the peace in our lives because of the fact that we do not have things right with God and un-confessed sin steals and robs the joy and the peace of life and instead of being grateful and being peaceful and being joyful, I am sore and I am sour about everything in life.

And then there's one more thing that this Psalm teaches us and that is that un-confessed sin **SILENCES MY WITNESS** for Christ. David cried out to the Lord to cleanse him and to make him right but then he clearly said:

Then will I teach transgressors in new ways, And sinners will be converted to You.

God when You make me right then ultimately I can once again stand up and talk about You and being right in You and a relationship with You. And I'm convinced that one of the primary reason that our enemy, the adversary, the Devil wants to keep Christians living in the...even the most subtle of un-confessed sin is so that it will silence our witness. There will be no boldness, there will be no freshness, there will be no zeal for Christ but instead we, because of our own vulnerability to the virus of sin will live entrapped and enslaved instead of being confident and bold in the name of Jesus Christ. And therefore we have to see that virus that has attacked itself and attached itself to the programming of our lives. I mean, David described it here when he said:

...I was brought forth in iniquity, in sin my mother conceived me...

Literally he says, there's evil inside of me and that is true of everyone of us, the nature of sin. But I can be made right with God. Though I am a sinner by birth and a sinner by choice and a sinner by practice I can be made right with God. And that is the great hope of this Psalm.

So having seen what this Psalm teaches us about what un-confessed sin does in the life of the believer, let's now turn the page and let's just take a few minutes and consider what does this Psalm teach us about starting over again? Because I do believe that this Psalm is a picture of a fresh start, it's the turning of the page, from an ugly dark chapter in life to a new beginning, to a blank page, to a new and a fresh start in a relationship with God. And I believe that in the Christian life one of the things that is so important is seeing the Christian life as a series of new beginnings. Dr. George Sweeting, who our pastor referred to on Sunday has often said that, that the, that:

"The Christian life is a series of new beginnings."

And what we see with David is a new beginning in his life and a new start in his walk with God and I really believe that is all shaped around one key verse that stands out in this text and it's Psalm 51, verse 10, look at it together, let's see what it says:

Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

God I want my heart to be clean. I don't wanna be dirty, I don't wanna be defiled, I don't wanna be defeated; God I want to have a clean heart. So the question is, what does it take to be clean? Well I couldn't resist, C-L-E-A-N, the word clean. [pause for slight congregation laughter] How can we be clean before the Lord? Number 1:

Confess the guilt of your sin to God. Confess the guilt of your sin to God. Psalm 51 begins with these words:

³...I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. ⁴Against You and You only have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight-

David so openly said, I have sinned against God and confession is agreeing with God about sin. Now let me make this very clear, confession is not admitting that you've sinned. Yeah, I blew it! That's an admission, but that's not a confession. Confession is not just admitting that you sin, yeah I lost my temper, yeah I didn't tell the truth. You can admit sin without confessing sin. Confession is agreeing with God about your sin and beginning to see it in light of His standard, of His holiness, of His righteousness and ultimately saying, God I see it as it is, I'm gonna call it what it is and it's what I have done against You. That's why the Bible tells us in the New Testament, 1st John 1, verse 9:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just...

Confessing, agreeing with God. It's something that needs to happen immediately, as soon as I realize I've crossed the line, as soon as I realize I've stepped out of bounds, in that moment I need to stop and say, Lord I've done it, Lord You know, I know and You know that I've just stepped over a line and You...that You've told me in Your Word. And so it needs to be something that is done immediately. It needs to be something that is done specifically. We need to call sin by it's first name, pride, selfishness, vanity, ambition, anger, bitterness, lust... **< turn tape >** ...need to speak to it specifically and then we just need to deal with it honestly, getting honest with God. You see, confess the guilt of your sin before God. But then very quickly we want to look away from ourselves and our sin and focus on God's mercy. Yes, I am going to agree with God about my sin, but I am going to...

Look away from myself and my sin. Oh I know it, it's an imprint, deep within me, but I'm going to focus on God's mercy. And I love the fact that the way this entire Psalm begins is David appealing to God based on His mercy. David knew he didn't deserve it. David knew he had done wrong. David agreed with what God said about his sin. But there was only one basis by which David could appeal to God and that was on the grounds of His mercy and he said God would You look upon me in:

...the multitude of Your tender mercies,...

And I look to God on the basis of His mercy. There's only one way that any of us are ever made free from the guilt of sin and it is only by the grace and the mercy of God. That's the only way we are ever free. We will never burn it off. We will never pay it out and yet it's such a natural human thing when I've sinned, to just grovel in that sin and say God I'm gonna make it up to You, God I'm gonna do better, God I'm gonna, I'm gonna, I'm gonna and I'm gonna burn it off. But very quickly it's important to understand that you cannot burn off your sin. What you must do is bring your sin to the Lord. The Bible tells us in Isaiah chapter 1, verse 18:

"Come not, let us reason together." Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be white as snow; And though they're red like crimson, They shall be as wool."

God, alone, can transform the stain of sin and make it right. Only God can do that and there's only one way that God does that. Again in the book of Isaiah chapter 53 and beginning in verse 4, here the Bible tells us:

⁴Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; And the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And by His stripes we are healed.

Ladies and gentlemen, who are we speaking about here? Jesus! And the Bible

goes on to say:

‘All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; But the Lord has laid on Him...

Who is Him? Jesus!

...the iniquity of us all.

And the only way that we are ever made right and clean is in the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

Several days ago I was watching a television special about a place in India where thousands of Hi...Hindus make a pilgrimage to get down in a river and to bath in this water because they believe that this water is like holy water and that it cleanses away their sins. But I'm telling you there's not a river in India, there's not a place anywhere in this world where there is any amount of water that can ever remove the sin and the stain of a defiled conscious toward a Holy God. But the song writer knew...knew it when he said:

What can wash away my sins? Nothing...

Can you say it?

...nothing but the blood of Jesus.

And it is in the blood of Jesus Christ that our sin is cleansed and there's nothing that you can do to stop God's love for you. There's nothing you can do. In fact as often as you may fail to be all that you think you should be in God's sight, even your failure to be what you think you oughta be in God's sight will not stop the wonder of His love for you. That's why the Bible says in Romans 5: [verse 8]

But God demonstrated His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

There's a 3rd thing that we need to understand tonight and that is that we must...

Embrace, embrace the sufficiency of Jesus Christ to cleanse and restore. Now, I've said that we have to confess, we have to look away, but then we have to embrace and what we must embrace is the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. Yes the truth is, is that His blood cleanses from every sin, but the other truth is that it is all sufficient in all sin and in all circumstances and therefore I embrace the sufficiency of Christ. The Bible tells us again over in the book of 1st John chapter 1, beginning in verse 8, it says that:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth isn't in us.

We can't go around saying that we have no sin. But:

⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And then the Bible goes on to say in chapter 2, verse 1:

¹My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. But if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ²And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the whole world.

That word propitiation, the word that's hard to say, literally means He is the total, absolute, satisfaction for sin and there is a sufficiency in the blood of Christ that can be found nowhere else and in nothing else. That means my sins past, that means my sins today, that means my sins tomorrow; they are all captured and therefore I can ultimately embrace the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. This is an amazing thought, when Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sin and for yours, when His blood was shed and then when it was applied to me and applied to you, the day that we bowed the knee and confessed Him as Savior and Lord, in that moment God hit the delete button on the screen of life and all my sins were gone just like that. He hit the delete button and no longer am I living under the record of sin. In fact it's so great that Psalm 103 says in verse 12:

¹²As far as the east is from the west, ~~So great...~~ So far has He hidden our sins and taken our sins from us. ¹³As the Father has pity on His children, so the Lord has pity on those who fear Him.

And there is sufficiency in the blood of Jesus Christ and spiritual renewal begins at the same place that spiritual birth begins and that is that there's only one way, there's only one name, there's only one source, there's only one hope and His name is Jesus. That's why the Bible says in Romans 8:

There is therefore now, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,...

You are no longer under the condemnation of sin and therefore getting clean means confessing your guilt, it means looking away from yourself in your sin to God's mercy and then it means embracing the sufficiency of Christ to cleanse every sin and every stain. But then it also means...

Aligning your steps with God's Word. To be clean means to get realigned in life. To be clean and to be repentant of my sin means that I go back to the place where I misstepped, where I tripped and there I begin to bring that part of my life into alignment with God's Word. I love the fact that he says in verse 10:

Create in me a clean heart, O God..

And then he says:

...renew a steadfast spirit in me.

A steadfast spirit. Lord I wanna get back on the straight and narrow. Lord I wanna get back in grove with You, I wanna walk with You, I wanna be faithful to You and that means beginning to give your life in alignment with the Word of God. We go back to the right place and the pathway of obedience to God. Now, that may mean that I have to go ask somebody for forgiveness, my husband, my wife, my children, my work associates, my friends. That may mean that I have to change my plans, that I've literally bolted and I need to come back and get in line with Him. That may mean that I need to pay something back that I've taken, but God uses this moment to take us back on the path to faith and faithfulness and to believe that obedience to Him is the one and only way that I can live my life and therefore I begin to follow Him and He restores my life. That word restore found there, ~~restores my soul or excuse me:~~

Restore...the joy...

It's the same word that we find in Psalm 23:

...restore my soul...

It means to make right. And so to be clean is to align your life with obedience to the Word of God. There's one final thing that's involved in being clean and that is to...

Nurture a heart of gratitude and humility toward God. To be clean isn't simply just, oh God I've sinned, make it right, thank You, it's in Jesus, that's fine. No! To be clean means that in my heart there is an attitude of gratitude again for the wonder of God's mercy and there is a humility that says God I don't deserve it, I never have, I never will, I could have never earned it but God You and You alone are the One to whom I owe my life, my ~~se~~...soul, my all, because I belong to You. I love the fact that the Psalm ends down here a..., in verse 16 talking about worship and he quickly says:

...You do not desire sacrifice, and you do not delight in burnt offering.

God you don't want me to go and try to put on a religious show or just fulfill a religious ritual. But clearly the Bible says:

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite spirit—Thou will not despise.

And getting clean means getting that attitude, that again says, God I want my life to be yielded to You and You alone. The Bible says: [1st Peter 5:5]

..."God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble."

And grace begins to be poured out in your life and in mine when my heart is filled with gratitude and when my spirit is humbled in the presence of a Holy God and when I draw near to Him with a broken and a contrite spirit, He draws near to me. You see the reason most of us don't get right is we don't wanna be right. We have allowed sin to have it's place and we're given God a place but God's Word makes it clear: [Proverbs 28:13]

He who covers a sin, will not prosper. But he who confesses and forsakes his sins will find mercy.

Charles Finney was a great preacher of yesteryear, God used him in revivals. Finney made this statement, I close with it tonight:

"Revival is nothing more than a new beginning of obedience to God."

It's nothing more then a new beginning of obedience to God and we can begin in this moment and in this hour tonight to experience revival. You can experience revival, I can experience revival as in this moment we come to the Lord to be made clean, to be renewed, to be restored, to move from failure to triumph, based on His mercy, based on His grace.