

**DestineNation**  
**Failure Is Not Final**  
**Psalm 51**  
**Pastor Ryan Heller**  
**Part 3 of 5**

We announced last week that on August 11 we're going to be moving into our new building, only four miles from our current location at Liberty Middle School. We cannot wait for that special Sunday, coming up about two months from today, and we're looking forward to God doing some amazing things as we move into this property that He has provided.

Over 40,000 cars a day drive past this beautiful facility. We're going to have 35,000 square feet for our ministry. It's going to be tremendous. This is a dream come true. Last week we shared with everyone that we've already received from one of our supporting churches a \$50,000 contribution, for which we are extremely grateful.

It's going to be a terrific summer. I am so excited about the new building that, while I am away, I had to come and preach to you by video. In a few months we will be gathering every week in this exciting property that God has provided.

I want to talk to you today about the topic "Failure Is Not Final." Unfortunately, many times the failures in our lives tend to define us, but we're going to see today from the Word of God that even though we fail, even though we stumble—even though we struggle at times—failure does not have to be final. Maybe you've blown it in your own life. You can look back at decisions you have made, and places you've gone. People you've known, and things you wish you never had said. We can look back with a sense of remorse, but God has a great Word for us today, because our failure is not final.

Today we are looking at 2 Samuel 11, the story of David and Bathsheba. It's springtime. David is supposed to be at battle with his troops. Instead he has chosen to hang out at the palace, which is unlikely for David. He is always out on the field of battle with his men, but that day he is bored. He is idle.

Many times when we have idleness in our life we can fall into different types of sins. That's exactly what happened on this spring day. David was walking on the roof of the palace. He was

bored. He was not where he needed to be. He looked over and saw a beautiful woman, Bathsheba, bathing on the roof of her home. David took a look, then he took another look, then he took *another* look, and he began to desire her. He sent one of his servants over to inquire who she was, and he found out something startling—something shocking—that Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

Uriah the Hittite was a Delta Force guy. He was one of the most loyal men in David's army, one of David's mighty men. One of his closest comrades and friends. And yet David had begun to lust after the wife of this man who was extremely loyal. He summoned her to the palace, he seduced her, and they had a sexual relationship. A month or so later she told him by note that she was pregnant. David went into cover-up mode.

Sometimes it's hard for us to admit that we have sinned and fallen, and we try to cover our sin with more sins. That's exactly what David did. He asked Uriah to come back into town. He got him drunk and sent him home hoping he would have relations with his wife, but unfortunately Uriah was so loyal to David and to his men, he decided to sleep there on the steps of the palace; he didn't go home. Well, David felt like he was going to be caught. What was he to do now?

David gave Uriah a note to give to Joab, the field marshal. In that note Uriah carried his own death wish. David had given Joab the instruction to have Uriah killed on the field of battle. Little did Uriah know that David—his friend, his king, his confidant—had betrayed him, sold him out. Of course, Uriah died in battle. David took Bathsheba as his own wife to cover up his sin. But nine to twelve months later something amazing happened. Nathan the prophet came and confronted David over his sin, and David began to go through a period of repentance.

We've all been in places in our lives where we have failed, where we have disappointed ourselves, our friends, our family and others. David was known as a man after God's own heart. That's why this story is shocking, because the hand of God was so mightily upon David, who had been anointed by Samuel the prophet.

Last week we talked about how David took out the giant, the Philistine, Goliath. God's hand was on David in a powerful capacity, but that still did not ensure he would not sin. You can be a person of strong faith, you can be a person that has been a Christian for a long time, you can be a person that has done tremendous things for God, yet all of us still struggle. What we have to remember is that failure is not final.

I want to share with you a passage from Psalm 51, the song David wrote when he turned his life back to God. In it he gives us some powerful principles that help us understand how our failure cannot be final and how we can reconnect with God in times of frustration, disappointment and failure.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Voltaire, the French atheistic philosopher, was going to write a parody, a mockery, an essay that made fun of the 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm. In it he was going to say how silly he thought this whole concept was. One day Voltaire, this brilliant French man, sat down and began to read carefully the pages of Psalm 51. And he was so convicted, he was overpowered by God's grace and God's forgiveness. It left him confused and with a sense of remorse over his own sin. He threw down his pen and sat back in his chair, and he could not write.

Even the critics of Psalm 51 cannot denounce what God has to say to us. Go with me, if you will, to Psalm 51:1. The Bible says, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."

That verse gives insight into the first matter we have to understand if failure is not going to be final. We have to acknowledge the character of God.

## **1. ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S CHARACTER**

We have to know who God is. When we begin to know who God is, it will begin to help us receive His forgiveness. When it comes to feeling guilty and feeling remorse, a lot of people suppress it. Others blame other folks. Some fail to acknowledge it.

But David began to turn his heart to God, and he talked about God's great love. The love of God is the most stable, the most consistent existence in the universe. People change, circumstances change, things change, but the love of God is a steady, faithful, consistent presence in our lives. And David began to call upon the Lord, because he knew God still loved him in spite of what he had done.

You may be looking at your own list of sins and failures, and you may feel a sense of frustration with your own decision making, but remember this: God loves you.

There's nothing you can do that would make God love you more or would make God love you less, because God loves you. But the loudest voice in our lives many times is not the voice of God, it's the voice of the enemy, because the enemy is telling us that God doesn't love us. And if we listen to the voice of the enemy, we will feel distant from God, because the way you see God has everything to do with how you will see yourself. If you see God as loving and forgiving, you will run to Him, you will embrace Him. If you see God as distant and angry, you will fear Him and you will hate Him.

We have to acknowledge the character of God. And we have to ask this question: If God loves me—I mean, if God really loves me—then what difference does it make what I do? What difference does it make, the decisions I make? What difference does it make if I fail morally or if I kind of do my own thing sometimes? You know God loves us consistently, but here's the fact: God cannot bless us when we're not walking with Him.

God loved David, but He couldn't bless him. And that may be what's going on in your life. You may be wondering today, why is God not blessing my life? Could it be you have some sins that have not been confessed to God? Maybe you have been confused about the love of God, the acceptance of God. Listen, while God loves you, He can't bless you if your head doesn't belong to Him.

What you can begin to do today is to cry out to God in the words of Psalm 51. Say, "God, I have sinned, I have fallen, I have made mistakes, I am embarrassed, I'm ashamed, but I'm not going to cover it up. I want to come clean. I want to get right with you. Thank you for your mercy and your love." The love of God is so powerful.

Psalm 51:1 also speaks of the mercy of God. The Bible tells us it is God's mercy that leads us to repentance. Sometimes I believe it is the mercy of God that allows us to get caught, because when we get caught it gives us an opportunity to turn back to God. Had Nathan the prophet not called David out, David might have continued to have this type of affair with all kinds of women. He might never have reestablished his heart with God. He might never have been known as a man after God's own heart, as the New Testament calls him.

But thank goodness a friend, a prophet, came and called out David's sin. That was the mercy of God. Sometimes we get mad when we get caught. We don't like it when we get caught. But could it be that maybe you've been caught in some sin, and it is the mercy of God to help you get right back on the path that He has for your life. It begins by acknowledging our sin.

So we have to acknowledge God's character, because learning to make the changes in our lives is rooted in understanding that God is loving, God is compassionate, God is good. And once we see it, we need to admit our sins.

## **2. ADMIT YOUR SIN**

That's the second point. We need to admit our sins. We need to be transparent. And you notice throughout Psalm 51 the five times David uses the word *me* or *mine* or *I*. He speaks of himself. He is not blaming other people. We live in a time when what is really cool and in vogue is to blame others for our sins. "I wasn't raised that way." "If you only knew my husband." "If you knew what I have been through." Many times our lives are filled with excuses, but in reality we have to come to the point where we own our decisions.

Sometimes sin happens when we plan it out, when it's premeditated. Certainly that was true in David's life. Once he began to desire Bathsheba, he put together a little plan. But sometimes sin happens, and we kind of fall into it. That's what was happening as David was walking up on the roof of the palace. He had no intention of getting into an affair that led to murder, that led to lying, that led to deception; he just fell into it. Nonetheless we still have to take responsibility for our actions, whether they are premeditated or not.

1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God is able to forgive us our sins and to make us new. When we begin to admit our sins to God, then we begin to move forward in the cleansing process. We need to ask God to probe our heart. Psalm 139 says, "God search my heart." So today we need to make that our prayer. God search my heart. What is in my heart that is not pleasing to you? And then, once that is revealed to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, we want to begin to confess it.

David goes into isolation for nine to twelve months. He has sinned with Bathsheba, she's conceived and he's in this dark place. He's depressed, he's discouraged, he's far from God, he's despondent. All this negativity is in his life, but the moment he begins to admit his sin, the joy of his salvation begins to be returned to him.

Maybe some of the folks here today, maybe you, are in a dark place in your life because you've been avoiding coming clean with God. But here is what is so liberating, so powerful about admitting our sin: It reconciles our relationship to God. We are reconnected with Him.

Let's make that our aspiration today. Let's make that our goal, because ultimately all sin is against God. If you go to Psalm 51:4, the Scripture says it this way, "Against you, you only, have I sinned."

Many times when we sin we think about how it hurts us, we think about how it may hurt our family, maybe about how it hurts other people. But most importantly, when we sin it is against God. We hurt God. We break the heart of God when we sin. And I think it would give us a brand new perspective on admitting our sin to God, if we would get into our minds that we sin, not only against ourselves and others, but also against a holy God.

David starts to admit that, and that's where real healing begins to come into his life. In verse 5 he says, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." David is saying we are born in sin. David was born in sin, I was born in sin, you were born in sin. And if you don't believe you're born in sin, go work in the preschool ministry on a Sunday morning and you will see sin at its highest capacity. In fact, a couple of years ago one of my kids—I won't say the name—but one of my kids took out another kid in the nursery. Now, we did not teach that child to take kids out. It just came naturally.

That's the way it is with sin. Sin is a natural desire, an appetite to do our own thing, to go our own direction, to look out for our own self-interest. Nobody has to teach anybody else how to do it. We all do it quite well. David is coming clean before God, and he's saying, "Listen, while I was born in sin, that's still not an excuse. While I was born to do my own thing, God, I still am responsible for my actions." So we admit our sins.

David committed five sins: There are Ten Commandments; David violated half of them. Think about it. He murdered Uriah the Hittite, he lied to his family and friends, he coveted Bathsheba from the roof, he committed adultery, and then he stole somebody else's wife. We're talking about a major cover-up. And, as I've mentioned before, oftentimes when we don't admit our sins, what do we do? We start to cover up and cover up. And it leads to more sins, and more sins, and more problems. If we would have come clean with God, and if we would've come clean with others, then the result would have been much, much better.

The Bible goes on and tells us we need to accept God's cleansing.

### **3. ACCEPT GOD'S CLEANSING**

David uses the word “cleansing,” which means to de-sin. In fact, in verse 10, if you look at the Scripture, it says. “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

We need to receive the cleansing of God. When we come to God and confess our sins, by the authority of Jesus Christ we are a person. It's like we have not sinned. The Bible says, when we are re-born, as far as the east is from the west, so our sins are from us. We have been made clean, we have been made pure. He uses this idea in verses 10-12 about the hyssop.

The hyssop was a branch that was used in ceremonial worship that symbolized cleansing. David is saying, “I need to be cleansed.” And the beauty is, once we admit our sin, we need to receive God's forgiveness. A lot of people today will confess their sin, but they continue to live in bondage. They continue to live in frustration. Some people admit their sins over, and over, and over again when God has already forgiven them.

So we need to admit our sins, but let's accept God's cleansing. It doesn't matter what you've done in the past, present, or even the future, there is no sin that is beyond the capacity of God to forgive. God is loving. God is compassionate. We serve a great God, and this ought to help liberate us in our own mind, and in our own heart, and in our own attitudes, to accept the cleansing that comes from God. David starts to move forward in this psalm, and in verse 13 he brings up something we cannot miss today. He advises others. He advises his friends, as we should advise our friends, to receive God's forgiveness.

### **4. ADVISE YOUR FRIENDS**

There is something you have gone through or something you are going through today. Somebody else will go through it next year, or next month, or at some point in the future, and you are going to have an opportunity to encourage them to admit their sin, and to accept God's cleansing, as well. Go to verse 13 with me. “Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.” We have a responsibility to teach others about the grace, the compassionate love, of God.

When I think about our building, I think about a place where we can advise friends, because God has given us a beautiful facility to share the life-changing message of Jesus Christ with thousands of people. And without question there will be people coming to faith in Christ.

Also, when I think about this new building, I think about people that will be giving their hearts to the Lord. We are going to be teaching kids the Word of God in our “kids’ ministry.” Some of those kids are going to make decisions, to follow Jesus, that are going to keep them out of a lot of trouble and a lot of pain. They will encounter the living Word of God in our ministry. What a huge opportunity we have. We need to celebrate that, and we need to get excited about bringing our friends with us.

We need to get excited about our giving. Your giving to the Reach Project is changing lives. Last week we had a \$50,000 gift from another church. We’re beginning our journey over the next 60 days. We need to raise \$50,000 over and above our normal giving.

Our normal giving goes for the general operations of the church. We can’t quit meeting at Liberty Middle School, we can't quit doing student ministry. We can't quit doing what we’re doing. But anytime you acquire a facility that has been used before, there’s always a huge amount to do. And giving over and above will make an enormous difference for us to move into our building. We need to paint some walls, we need chairs, we need kids’ equipment, we need some flooring. We need a new sign out front, some landscaping, sound, lights, projectors. We have a ton of work to do. We need at least \$50,000 this summer from our church.

If you’ve already made a pledge to the Reach Project, all of your giving goes toward that. And if you haven't made a commitment to the Reach Project (maybe you're new to the church, maybe you don’t know much about it), we began the Reach Project in the fall of last year to acquire our own facility.

We are ready and would be excited to have you join the team. It’s not too late. Just because you weren’t here earlier doesn't mean you can’t participate. But in doing this, would you pray about giving several gifts, would you pray about giving a big gift, one larger gift, maybe several smaller gifts, to help us this summer? Because when we get into that building we want to maximize every opportunity possible.

We want to advise our friends. We want to tell others about the life-changing grace of Jesus Christ, because God has forgiven us. God has given us freedom. God has given us the ability to live a guilt-free life. And I can't think of anything more exciting than seeing people encountering the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. It’s going to be spectacular. In 60 days we will be moving. Thank you today for your generosity, and thank you for your prayers.

God bless you. We're going to having a fantastic summer. We're looking forward to seeing you again next week, and I can't wait!

**DestineNation**

**Failure Is Not Final**

**Psalm 51**

**Pastor Ryan Heller**

**Part 3 of 5**

### **1. ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S CHARACTER**

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Psalm 51:1 (NIV)

### **2. ADMIT YOUR SIN**

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test my thoughts. Point out anything you find in me that makes You sad, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. Psalm 139:23-24 (TLB)

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that You are proved right when you speak, and justified when You judge. Psalm 51:4 (NIV)

Surely I was sinful at birth. Psalm 51:5 (NIV)

Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness. Psalm 51:14 (NLT)

### **3. ACCEPT GOD'S CLEANSING**

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Psalm 51:7 (NIV)

Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Psalm 51:2-3 (NIV)

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Psalm 51:10,12 (NIV)

Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness. Psalm 51:14 (NLT)

#### **4. ADVISE YOUR FRIENDS**

Then I will teach your ways to rebels, and they will return to you. Psalm 51:13 (NLT)