

9529

SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 2000

DAVID, A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

THE KING OF ALL ISRAEL

Speaker: Bro. John Knowles

Study #3: Blessed is the Man unto whom Yahweh Imputeth not Iniquity, and in whose Spirit there is no Guile

Readings: 2 Samuel 11 and 12, Psalms 51 and 32

My dear brethren and sisters.

We come now to focus on the third phase of the life of David in our studies together at this school. And we recall that the classes that I'm particularly leading, take us from the time when David chose Jerusalem as his capital, he took the ark up to Zion, and God willing, by the end of the week we'll come to the end of David's life and the installation of Solomon as king. During that period of time, there were some very, very significant events that took place. As I intimated in my opening remarks in my first class, our first two studies were essentially visionary. They had very much to do with David bringing the ark to Jerusalem; the significance of Jerusalem; why he wanted to bring it there; and the spirit in which he brought it there. And so our last study really concluded with a climax, but of course, life soon settles back to reality! and as I intimated in my opening remarks the following three studies, (that will be today, tomorrow and the following day, God willing,) will be essentially character studies. Some of those events which happened in David's life during this period, which had a very, very marked effect upon him and can have a very marked effect upon us.

You know, God provides opportunities for the development of our characters. Sometimes he brings circumstances upon us, sometimes we foolishly may bring them upon ourselves, but whatever the case, the Father is still prepared to allow us to use those circumstances, to benefit from and that characters might be thereby developed. And so, whilst we've been looking at 2 Samuel chapters 6 and 7, following then the great covenant which God made with David, David then sets out to conquer some of the surrounding countries and cities. And in 2 Samuel chapters 8, 9 and 10, we have descriptions of some of those activities. We're not going to be dealing with those in this course of study, but we pick our theme for today from the opening verse of 2 Samuel

chapter 11. Now here was the turning point, David the great king, David the great warrior, David the great hero who was out in the front of the armies as they conquered the enemies of Israel. And of course, all of us know this story so very well, we want to spend most of our time trying to extract the lessons from it, rather than necessarily going through the specific details.

But look at verse 1 of chapter 11! 'And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel: and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem'. Now that says it all, doesn't it? it says it all! It was the time of the year when kings go out to battle, and this king said, 'well, I'll send Joab, and I'll stop behind in Jerusalem', and of course, the next verse says, 'And it came to pass in an eveningtime, that David arose from off his bed' (so he's not only back in Jerusalem, he's in bed!) 'and he walked upon the roof of the king's house; and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon'. And we know the sequel to that story! So, disaster was almost inevitable, wasn't it? Instead of out there, fighting for the truth, he was having a little bit of time off. How much time off can we afford, b&s, in the things of the truth? I guess we all feel very 'good' (and I use that word in inverted commas and with, I suppose, almost a certain cynicism, and that doesn't sound nice, does it?) to say 'well, we're spending our holiday at bible school'. And that's good! and that's fine, and we must endeavour to do as much of that as we can, and I think too, b&s, that it's fair to say, that when we think about recreation in our life, can't we also think that in some way or other, it can also help us in the truth? Now, I'm not going to start talking about the rights and wrongs of recreation and sports and that sort of thing, we've got to make up our own minds, but whatever we do in life, there should be a reason for doing it, not just, 'let's get away from it all'. If we are getting away from some circumstances, might it be, that when we come back from whatever it is we're going to do, we're better off for it.

Well, David was having a rest. For whatever reason, he probably justified it, but things didn't go well, did they? And so we know what happened, and we come now to the sequel: there was, of course, the adultery with Bath-sheba; there was, of course then, the complication of getting rid of Uriah (So David effectively organized the murder of Uriah); and then, there was the coverup. So, we've got deceit, and we've got violence; those two words mean anything to you? Remember the trespass offering under the Law was for that which you had taken away with deceit and violence, interesting isn't it? And, by the way, you might remember that in Isaiah chapter 53 when it speaks about the Lord, 'He had never done anything violent, neither was any deceit in His mouth'; and yet He had to offer a trespass offering. And so, here was one that had done all of those things, and so in 2 Samuel chapter 12, Nathan comes to him, and he puts before him the parable of one who had committed a trespass.

It was obvious that it was done with deceit, and of course, it involved violence. And we will read these first few verses of 2 Samuel chapter 12 although we well know them,

because this is now the time when David is brought to his senses. 'And Yahweh', in chapter 12 and verse 1, 'sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him. There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children. It did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man: and he said to Nathan, As Yahweh liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And not only that, but he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and because he had no pity'. Now he's invoking here the law of the trespass.

Now, under the Law of Moses there were 5 altar offerings; a burnt, meal, peace, sin and trespass in that order. The trespass offering was an offering which one could make when they came to realize that they had trespassed against someone. Trespass meant that they had deprived somebody of something. It might be goods, it might even be time; it's not when someone comes and says you've trespassed, but when they came to realize it themselves and they wanted to come before Yahweh and confess the fact that they had trespassed. And the trespass offering under the Law was a merciful provision that God made for someone who came along and acknowledged that they'd committed a trespass. In such cases the trespass offering said, you offer a ram in all cases, and you pay back that which you have taken, either in kind or in money, PLUS 20%, PLUS 1/5th! So, you give it back and then you add on a 1/5th as well. That was a merciful provision for one who came along and confessed and acknowledged the trespass. But, if you're charged with the trespass, then you couldn't say, 'oh, okay, I'll go and offer a trespass offering! None of the offerings would have been seen as fines, where if you paid it, then it was okay. If you were charged with the trespass, you had to pay back 4 times the amount. So you see what David says, 'not only will this man die, but he's going to pay back 4 times the amount'; and we all know the sequel to the story, because Nathan says in verse 7, 'thou art the man'! And David, true to His word, he didn't die; Yahweh's mercy was extended to him and he didn't die, but whilst Yahweh (and this is important for us all to realize, in all the circumstances of life) whilst Yahweh may forgive us our sin, He doesn't always take away the consequences of it! He will forgive us our sins and our trespasses, but He doesn't always take away the consequences, and so it was in David's case that 4 of his sons died. He did pay it back 4 fold: there was, of course, the child that was born, there was Absalom, and Adonijah, and there was Amnon . So, in case you've lost track of the story, the story is this, that David did pay it back four-fold, because 4 of his sons died. So, yes, the sin was going to be forgiven, but the consequences were not to be taken away.

Now, b&s, the rest of our study today is to examine how David reacted in circumstances like this. Some of those following verses in 2 Samuel 12, of course, we'll come back to in our study, God willing, tomorrow, because tomorrow we're going to look at another

one of those sets of characters, and it's going to involve Absalom who, of course, was one of the sons that was to die, but we won't read those verses until tomorrow. We want to now spend the rest of our time effectively, in two psalms. Psalm 51 which our bro. Roy has read for us, is what we might call David's personal confession. Nathan has come to him, David now acknowledges his sin; it's too late to say I'll offer a trespass offering, and as he says in that psalm, 'if there was something I could offer, I would have offered it'. But nevertheless, there is a way by which the sins can be handled. Now, believe it or not, we've got no overhead transparencies this afternoon, but if we did put up one from a previous study, and we put up that one which had the Abrahamic covenant and Mosaic covenant, and you remember how we made the point that David, in bringing up the ark to Zion, was saying, 'I want to identify with the everlasting covenant, the blood of which brought even the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead; as distinct from the Mosaic covenant which really never offered eternal life'. So it was that there was no offering under the Law that provided for forgiveness of premeditated sins like adultery and murder. I mean, even the sin offering was only for sins of rashness, hastiness or ignorance. So there was nothing under the Law that you could offer for forgiveness of premeditated sins and certainly not of the magnitude of this.

But what about the Abrahamic covenant? What about that covenant that's the everlasting covenant? Well, yes, David could obtain forgiveness, on the basis of pleading to God, not on the principle of Law, but upon the principle of grace, and of course, this is where we pick it up from yesterday's study, that great word, the word 'mercy'. So what we'd like to do now, we want to turn over to Psalm 51, which is one of the two psalms we're going to look at; the other one is going to be Psalm 32. Psalm 51 is, I believe, David's personal confession; we know without any doubt that this psalm was written in the context of his sin with Bath-sheba, because the title at the top of the psalm tells us so. And he's going to plead with God, on the basis of that very significant word, that word 'cheched', that word 'mercy' which we were introduced to in the last study in this series. So, Psalm 51 and the first 4 verses record for us the prayer that David makes for forgiveness, for cleansing, and it's done upon the basis of the confession of the magnitude of his sins. We're going to follow these verses through fairly carefully. Some verses we'll look at in more detail than others, but b&s, almost immediately we're going to see that we're going to be thinking about ourselves as much as we're thinking about David; because, be it a large sin, or a small sin, what's the difference? is there such things? Well, I think that sins are only large or small to the extent that they may affect somebody else; because, anything that comes short of the full manifestation of the glory of God is sin. So really, magnitude has relationship to how it affects others! maybe even, how it affects ourselves! but sin is sin is sin. So here in David's case, we're given what almost might be the ultimate in sin, adultery, murder, deceit, coverup and all of those sorts of things. And we're told in the title that 'it is a psalm of David when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone into Bath-sheba'.

So he starts that psalm by saying, 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness'. Now, if we're going to do a word study when we go home, and we

decide we'd like to pick up this word 'cheched', well, let's be careful because, if we were to guess, we might have said, there it is right at the beginning, it's that word 'mercy'. Actually, it's not the word 'mercy', it's the word 'loving-kindness', but it is there, isn't it? Have mercy upon me, O God, what he's really saying is, be gracious unto me, be favourable unto me, the word 'mercy' there has the idea of the free bestowal of favour, more so than just mere forgiveness, but he says, but according to thy 'cheched'. And we won't go through what we said yesterday, but you remember that was the word which we said was very difficult to put into one English word. It had that idea of strength, it had the idea of steadfastness, it had the idea of love, all of those things which we need; and mercy is something which implies the need on the part of the one receiving it, and the ability to satisfy that need on the part of the one that's giving it, and there is only one person who can extend that sort of mercy when we've committed this sort of sin, and that's God Himself. So then, on the basis of thy mercy; not on the basis of the Law. If there was an offering which I could have offered, I would have done so, he says, but there's nothing! so he throws himself on Yahweh's mercy and he knows that Yahweh is prepared to give it. But the important thing is that there are terms and conditions.

Not legal terms and conditions, but moral terms and conditions! And David's going to introduce us to this very quickly. So he says, 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy 'cheched', according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, (he says), blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin'. And you might guess then, that our closing hymn is going to be hymn #1, which of course, is the very paraphrase of those so powerful and important words. Now, having said that, then David says in verse 3, 'For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me'. He says, 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest'. He actually divides his sins (and I'll use the word 'sins' in a general sense here) into 3 categories; notice the terms he uses. He speaks about his transgressions in verse 3, he speaks about his iniquity, he speaks about his sin; and, we've got these 3 particular words here, transgressions, iniquity and sin; and, it has been suggested, and I think there's some virtue in this, and in fact, I hope its true because it fits the pattern very, very well, that the authorities say that this word 'transgression', the Hebrew word 'pasha' (6588), it means 'rebellion or revolt against God' - it's actually a state of mind. Of course it's a state of mind, the word 'iniquity', the Hebrew word 'avon' (5771), means 'the perversion of what is right' and Strong's says in defining it, that it designates a moral evil. So, you can see where we're going! The first one's mental, the second one's moral, and the word 'sin', the Hebrew word 'chata' (2398) which means 'to miss the mark or wander from the right way', is when we actually do the wrong thing. So there it is, our old mental, moral, physical; and, of course, everything in life fits that pattern, doesn't it? If we're going to do something wrong, we first of all think about it, we then desire it, and we do it. If we're going to do something right, we first of all get the right things into our mind, it develops the right emotions and we can use the word 'moral' in that emotional sense, and we do it. Of course, the classic of the bad example was Achan, 'I saw a goodly Babylonish garment, I coveted it and I took it' - mental, moral

and physical. As I said, the definitions given appear to follow that pattern, I don't want to strain it and I don't want to be dogmatic, but certainly, one way or another, the lesson is there! David got up on the housetop, he looked, he coveted, and he took. It was mental, moral, physical, there's no doubt about that! He shouldn't have been up there even looking, should he? He should have been out fighting the battles.

So you see, b&s, how restrictive should we be with ourselves? Now we know that restrictions don't make us righteous, you know Colossians tells us that there are people who say, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not'. You know, sometimes that's a good idea, but not touching and not tasting and not handling, doesn't of itself make us righteous, we've got to put something positive in its place. But there are virtues and there is value in not doing something. David should not have been up there on the housetop, he should have been out fighting the battles; so the moment he's up there and just started gazing around,(and I said I hadn't any transparencies so I won't go and get it out of my bag) but if you can picture that one which showed the city of David, that picture of the small city of David was actually drawn in relation to the time when David's palace was there. And actually, if you can picture David's palace, it was up there looking down on the city. He could look down on it and they have found the ruins of David's palace and excavated part of it even today; so he was up there looking (mental if you like through the eyes) and then he saw, he lusted and he took.

So he acknowledges where he's gone wrong! Now this is the one thing, b&s, that we want to continue through this particular talk: forgiveness of sins is dependent upon first of all, acknowledging the sin, and the way we acknowledge that sin, is to say 'I acknowledge that I am wrong', and the state of mind should then say, and by inference what I'm saying is there is only One who is right, and that is God! And, of course, we're getting back to that very important and very repeatable phrase, 'that confession of sin done in the right spirit, is tantamount to declaring the righteousness of God'. Now that might sound very high sounding sort of bible language, let's bring it down to simple terms: if you and I have a difference of opinion, and I'm saying, 'alright, I'm wrong', what I could have said was, 'you're right'. So, in confessing sin, we are saying GOD IS RIGHT, and when we do that, we've got the emphasis in the right corner and God will forgive us. Dare we say it, it's the story again of 'is it my salvation I want? or God's glory? So, am I just wanting my sins to be forgiven so I can be in the kingdom? or am I confessing my sin to declare that God is right? And with that spirit, God says, 'I can guarantee you'll be in the kingdom. You're the sort of person I can use in the kingdom; you're fit now to be a priest in the kingdom. You've come to understand what the principles of the truth are all about'. But as long as I simply come to God and say, 'please forgive me, help me, strengthen me' and all of these other things, be very, very careful because the emphasis could be to the extent that it's on 'me', and God is left out of it!

And there it is, it's in verse 4, 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned'. In fact, let's go back to verse 3 because in the AV, verses 3 and 4 are a little difficult to read because

there's something there that's really in parenthesis. What he's really saying is this, verse 3, 'For I acknowledge my transgressions,(that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest and be clear when Thou judgest)'. Notice, that I jumped over the bit in the middle, that's the thrust of what he's saying! I'm acknowledging my transgressions because it's really against you, O God, that I've sinned, and the reason I'm acknowledging it (and the bible word we're going to come across is 'confess') is that Thou, O God, mightest be justified. And of course, this is where we have problems, isn't it? with our English, and doubtless, you've heard this before and I think I've even spoken once or twice at Silver Star before, in the context of Romans, that the word 'justify' means to 'account right', 'to account righteous'. David said, I'm acknowledging my sin, and what I'm saying is, that Thou, O God, alone art righteous. Therefore, b&s, this is the spirit that David manifested, that guaranteed that not only would he be forgiven, but showed that he was a man after God's own heart; he was concerned because he had marred God's glory. Are you and I concerned about that when we've done something wrong? Perhaps we try to do what David did, hide it under the carpet, sweep it under the carpet, try to forget about it, but if we have got a conscience (and Psalm 32 will bring this very much to the fore), then it starts to eat us out, it starts to get to us, and we have to do something about it. But you see, here is David acknowledging his sin, and now that he's acknowledging it, he's saying, 'look, I know I've committed adultery with Bath-sheba, I've effectively murdered Uriah, I've brought disgrace upon the family, but all of that is but nothing, in comparison with the fact, that I've marred God's glory. Here am I, the king of Israel, and I represent Yahweh, I'm sitting upon Yahweh's throne, I've marred God's glory, I've sinned against Thee, O God, and I'm declaring that I'm wrong and you're right', if we might put it in such simple terms as this.

Now, we can't lose sight of that, because you see, that's the very point that Paul takes up in Romans. And you might notice in the margin there that it tells us that those very words were cited in Romans chapter 3. We can go back and safely look at those words in Romans 3, (I mean that in the context that there's always a danger when we get into Romans that we mightn't get out of it again) but we can go to Romans 3, and we're going to Romans 4 later on (and that's going to be a bit harder to get out of), but in Romans chapter 3, we have a series in the first 8 verses of 4 questions and answers.

And the first question in chapter 3 verse 1 says, 'Well, Paul, on the basis of what you say, what advantage then has the Jew got? and what profit is there in circumcision? And the answer comes back, MUCH EVERY WAY. Chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of God. So, if we might use colloquial language, you Jews have got an advantage, you've got a head start!

Question 2, 'Well, Paul, what if some did not believe? or had faith? shall their lack of faith make the faith of God without effect? And the answer comes back, BY NO MEANS. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; and he says, do you want proof of that? He says, well, my proof comes from Psalm 51, 'as it is written, that Thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged'.

So, we know it is a divine principle and we're going back to Psalm 51 (we can leave Romans for the moment). So back there in Psalm 51, David is pronouncing a principle which is an eternal principle; it's equally as important for us today to recognize this as it was for David. So what we're saying then is, 'how do we handle sin?' 'How can we come out of sin being better for it? (sounds strange!) but being better people for it, but more importantly than that, 'how can it in some way declare the righteousness of God?' Well, we'll answer that in a moment, and it will be Paul that will answer it for us. But at this stage, here is the important and significant point in the whole of this psalm. So David is not just saying, Lord please forgive me, he's saying, yes, I want to be cleansed, I want to be forgiven on the basis of thy mercy because I'm acknowledging that I'm wrong and Thou alone art the One that is right!

We come then to the section in verses 5 to 8, and we'll just move through those very quickly, but we might say that verses 5 to 8 of Psalm 51, is where David contrasts the sinfulness of his nature with the sincerity which God desires. And using, of course, quite poetic and quite figurative language, he speaks about the fact that 'I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me' and language like that. There's a very good quote that bro. Thomas uses in (dare I say it?) The Mystery of the Covenant, page 48, of the particular addition that I read this in, and I thought this was a lovely comment it sounds very Elpis Israelish too. He says, 'When the intellect and sentiments are under the control of the propensities, or the feelings (in other words, when we're allowing our feelings to drive our thinking, which of course, is the wrong way around, isn't it?); when that happens he says, (and it happened in David's case), 'the heart is earthly, sensual and devilish or impure', words of course, from the epistle of James. 'To purify such a heart, the intellect must be enlightened by the testimony of God, which is of such a nature that it not only enlightens but it develops a moral disposition in harmony with the divine mind, and compels the propensities to keep within the limits of His Law'. B&S, the propensities of themselves are not necessarily evil; there's nothing wrong with being hungry, but when hunger turns into gluttony and Epicureanism and all you can think about is eating and food, then of course, it's gone beyond the bounds of just satisfying the basic needs of the propensities. And so he says, 'The mind must control the propensities (the feelings, the senses, call it what you like), not the other way around'. And, of course, he says very similar words in Elpis Israel at the bottom of page 88 and the top of page 89, very, very good quotable words. And that's the answer, isn't it really? That the mind must govern the feelings, and so here David is acknowledging it; he's saying, 'look, I've allowed the feeling (those inbuilt propensities there) to drive me, and for a time, my mind was really not in tune with God, but I thank Thee, Father, that in thy mercy, Thou hast brought me to a situation where I am able to now recognize this (I mean, he knew it but he was trying to forget it) and to bring it out in the open, and to confess it. And so he pleads that Yahweh might 'purge me with hyssop, cleanse me' and so forth.

Coming down to verses 9 to 12, he pleads there again, that he might be pardoned.

Verse 12 is an interesting verse and our bro. Roy in reading that verse made just a little change there which is actually a helpful change in verse 12: 'Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit'. Over the years we've sort of heard people talk about the difference between God's free spirit and God's Holy Spirit because you see you've got Holy Spirit back in verse 11, as though 'free spirit' means a general manifestation of spirit, and Holy Spirit means a specific one. Well, Holy Spirit does mean a specific one, but the translation of verse 12 is better when it's rendered something like, 'Uphold me with a spirit of free or willing obedience', or another translation I have here, 'Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and grant me a willing spirit'. It has the idea of 'uphold me freely with thy spirit', in other words, he knows that God will freely offer to him this forgiveness. Freely, not in the sense that it doesn't cost something, but that God is prepared to do it, there's no holding back, and it's a total forgiveness that he will be given, not a partial one or something like that! Forgiveness is forgiveness, you don't get it in a 10% or a 20% or a 50%.

And so, when we come to verse 13, we come to the verse which is going to be the bridge now to take us to the second of the two psalms we want to talk about. Verse 13, (we could probably call this section verses 13 to 17 'our thanksgiving and resolve'), and we read in verse 13, 'Then'. Now, of course, what he's saying is, I believe that God will forgive me, He will forgive me because I've pleaded on the basis of His mercy, and I've acknowledged it on the right principle, that is, I have declared the righteousness of God. Now I don't mean that David thought it through in a mechanical sounding way like that; this was the real David, and that's what we've got to do, b&s, sure, in a talk you sometimes spell things out in a technical, theoretical way, but it's got to become so much part of us, that our spontaneous reaction in time of trial, is to immediately think of God. You know, James starts his epistle, doesn't he? 'Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations, (divers trials), knowing that these trials develop patience and endurance'. So when we fall into a time of trial, is our first reaction, 'Oh, this is good!' Well, that would sound a little bit funny, wouldn't it? but can we deep down say, 'I don't like this, but I believe the Father's hand in there to help me through it, and in the Father's wisdom and good pleasure I'm going to be a better person for it'. That's why a little later on, James says, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men in singleness' -He's a single-minded God! And what's the wisdom that we're asking for? well, I think in the context of James, it's not just wisdom in a general sense, but it's a wisdom to see through that trial. Well, what's in it for me? and, I suppose, some of us would say that initially we can't always see it, maybe we have to come out the other end before we can see it. Maybe we have to wait for the kingdom, but let's pray to God for that wisdom to see the value of trial.

Now here was a trial that David was going through! Yes, it was of his own making, that doesn't make it any different, it's still a trial, and God in His mercy is still prepared to forgive, even if we've done it ourselves. He's prepared to forgive on the basis that His righteousness is upheld. Now, of course, there's all sorts of sins, and there's all sorts of circumstances. You might say, this person over here has done this, and this person

over here has done the same thing, and yet it might have been different circumstances and there might be a different way of handling it and all sorts of things (we're not going to get into those issues today). The fact is that we are looking at sin as sin, anything that comes short of the glory of God is sin. How do we handle it? We say, 'I marred God's glory and in my prayer to Him, I ask that He will forgive me on the basis that I acknowledge that He is right, because (and to use the imagery of David here) 'I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me; but behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom'. So, deep down inside I want to do the right thing. We won't turn there, but remember Romans 7, 'so then with the mind, I myself serve the LORD God, but with the flesh the law of sin. O wretched man that I am'. So Paul says my body, my propensities say, look after yourself, and my mind says serve God. See what bro. Thomas is talking about, 'don't let the propensities drive the mind', and so David's mind is now right, and it's right with God.

So, what he says is, 'I'm going to provide the opportunity for other people to benefit from my experiences'. So, verse 13 says, 'Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee'. So David now makes a vow to God on the basis that he knows that his sin will be forgiven, he says, I want to do something that's going to help other people to learn from my mistake. Now, whilst we can say without any shadow of a doubt that Psalm 51 was David's personal confession, it appears almost certain, although it doesn't say so, that Psalm 32 is the psalm that he then wrote in fulfillment of that vow which he made, 'I will teach others how they might learn'. Now, I know Psalm 32, in the order of the psalms, appears before Psalm 51, but that doesn't in any way mean that it was written before it at all. Why do we say that Psalm 32 is the one that David wrote in fulfillment of that promise? Well, two reasons. He says, 'I will teach people thy way' and when we go to Psalm 32, we notice there that it is a psalm of David - a Maschil. That title there is part of the actual psalm, and the word 'maschil' means to 'give instruction', and there are 13 'maschil' psalms, this is the first of them. This is the first of 13 psalms that were written to give instruction. God willing, tomorrow, the substance, the bulk of our study is going to be another of these 'maschil' psalms, it's going to be Psalm 55, and we'll talk about that when we get there. So, that's the first reason. The second reason is the very opening verses of Psalm 32 are picked up by Paul in Romans chapter 4, and we've already seen that Psalm 51 was quoted in Romans 3, it seems so appropriate then, that the quoting of Psalm 32 in Romans 4 shows the connection between the two of them. So, in simple terms we're saying this (now I say simple terms because I know the first session after lunch is very hard to remember very much after your finished, and that sort of thing), in simple terms what we're saying is this, our study today is simply Psalm 51 and Psalm 32. Psalm 51, David's personal confession of sin and a declaration of the righteousness of God on the basis of that confession. Psalm 32 is how others can learn from that!

So what does he say? He says in verse 1, 'O how happy' (that's what the word 'blessed' means) 'O how happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. O

how happy is the man unto whom Yahweh imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile'. And then he reflects upon the time prior to Nathan coming to him. 'When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer' (he said, I want you to think about that; in looking back on that now, I realize I was suffering, and I'm saying it was Yahweh's hand). Well, you could say he brought it upon himself, yes he did, but the Father allows circumstances to prevail, if it's going to give us the opportunity to turn something to good. And so verse 5 now, becomes such an important verse, because verse 5 says, here is the way of restoration!

'I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, (and here comes the word that we want to keep using) I will confess my transgressions unto Yahweh; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin'. So I think by this stage, and I know many of us have known this for many years, and you're just hearing repetition, but for those who haven't thought it before, confession of sin is putting the emphasis on God not on man, because what I'm saying is, I am wrong (and there's only two people in this, it's God and me) therefore, that means the other person is right! Now, you say, 'is it alright to say that? shouldn't I therefore, have to say, Thou art right, O God?' Oh, yes, yes that is fine, but notice though going back to verses 1 and 2, that David says, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, blessed is the man unto whom Yahweh imputes not iniquity'. Now that's all put in the negative: it says, when I have confessed my sin, God will no longer impute my sin to me! Well, what will God do? Well, go to Romans 4, because Romans 4 picks up those words, but turns it around now into the positive, and it's a bit like saying, when I confess my sin in the right spirit, I'm effectively saying that God is right. Well, so it is in Psalm 32, when the Psalmist can say, God will not account my sin unto me. Well, then what will God account unto me?

And Romans 4 is where we go! The first 8 verses of Romans 4 present two characters. And there's no doubt that they're set before us, in one way as a contrast, and the other way as two men who are identical. The contrast would be this, that the first 5 verses of Romans chapter 4 speak about Abraham at that great high point in his life when everything seemed to be impossible and then God said to him, 'not only are you going to have a son, but you're going to have a seed that's going to be more than the sand on the seashore, more than the stars of the heaven', and Abraham believed! Have you ever met anybody as faithful as that? So, in a sense, and putting it in rather fleshly terms, here is a man at the pinnacle of faith and, so, what did God do? He counted, says verse 3, his faith unto him for righteousness. And the word 'counted'(3049=3045 'yada') in verse 3, is the same as the word 'reckon' in verse 4, and the same as the word 'counted' in verse 5, and when we get to it, 'imputed' in verse 6, and 'impute' in verse 8. God counted righteousness to Abraham because he believed. So if we were to draw this as a graph, we'd say, here's Abraham up here (and please excuse the rather crude way in which I'm putting this), but here's the height of faith. Where would you put David in the context of the sin with Bath-sheba and Uriah and all that? Well, we'd say he's

right down the other end! Well, I can see in a sense how easy it would be for God to impute righteousness to Abraham, what do you do with a man like David? How are you going to account righteousness to him? And God says, 'I can do it in exactly the same way; and whilst those two men might seem to be at opposite ends of the spectrum, when we bring them together, the righteousness which I'm prepared to account to an Abraham, is exactly the same as what I'll account to a David'.

So, picking up those words which in Psalm 32 were put in, in the negative, that God did not impute sin, look what Romans chapter 4 says, verse 6, 'Even as David also describes the blessedness (happiness) of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness'. Now Psalm 32 never said that God imputed righteousness, all it said was, He didn't impute sin. So, it's a bit like our confession, if we confess sin in the right spirit, we're saying God is right! If God forgives us and says, 'I won't impute sin to you', what is He doing? He's imputing righteousness unto us! You mean, the same as He did to Abraham? is it true to say that verse 5, 'Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness' is the same as verse 6, 'that David's confession of sin enabled God to impute righteousness to him', is it the same? IT'S EXACTLY THE SAME! Human nature says but we're coming from two different ends of the spectrum. Of course we are, but we're talking about flesh. When we're talking about the mind, the mind that has now come in tune with the Father, the Father says, I can account righteousness if you approach the situation, whatever it might be, by saying I'm right!

Now take Abraham! I'm too old, my wife's too old, there is no way we can have children, she was barren anyway, what can I do? And God says, you're going to have a child, you're going to have a son, and you're going to have sons and grandsons, and great grandsons and a multitude of people. And Abraham said, I believe that God is right; how could you do that? He did! and he really meant it, and God said, if you say that I'm right, Abraham, I'm prepared to account right to you. I'm putting it that way because you know the word 'righteousness' is only 'right'. Yes it is, it's just the extension of the word 'right', it's 'making or stating that something is right'. Abraham, I'm prepared to impute righteousness to you; but what about David? It's exactly the same! In the confession of his sin, he declared God right, and God was prepared to account righteousness to him. Verses 6 to 8, reading verse 6 again, 'Even as David also (just like Abraham) describeth the blessedness of the man to whom He imputes righteousness without works (that's meaning 'works of Law' of course, in this case. There are things like 'works of faith' which James speaks about, but that's different) when he said, verse 7, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Oh how happy! Blessed is the man to whom the LORD will not impute sin'. And so, if we are going to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ with an answer of a good conscience (and I put it that way because that's all we can offer; it's no good saying, Lord, Lord, didn't I prophesy in your Name, didn't I do many wonderful works quoting scripture? And the Lord could well say, I never knew you. But when we come before the Lord Jesus Christ with the answer of a good conscience,(to pick up words like Peter, and to set in contrast to what we saw back in the garden of Eden, where Adam said I was afraid because I was naked and I

hid myself) and we've come to learn that perfect love casts out fear, we've come to learn that we're not ashamed of our nakedness because we are covered in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, in that garment we put on at baptism, and we don't run away to hide ourselves when we come openly and confidently before God in prayer. That's what baptism is all about; not the washing away of the filth of the flesh, says Peter, but the answer of a good conscience towards God. So that shame, fear and concealment (those are the Elpis Israel words) of 'I was afraid because I was naked and hid myself', of Adam, the defiled or evil conscience must be replaced by a good conscience which says I love God, He's provided a covering, and I come before Him openly and I confess my sins, then what else can we do when we stand before the Lord at the judgment seat? We're not going to be there and in the kingdom because of how good we were! it's because of our attitude towards God; we tried to do the right thing, and when we did, God was pleased with us. But when we did the wrong thing, how did we handle it? And the answer is, 'God can impute (account or reckon, all of those words are there in Romans 4) a righteousness unto us, no matter what the circumstance, providing His righteousness is upheld. And might I add as a quick aside, and it's got to be quick, if ever you hear somebody talking about the Atonement, and you don't hear 'the righteousness of God' being mentioned, then say, where does 'the righteousness of God' fit into this? We can talk a lot about flesh, we can have clean flesh and defiled flesh, and we can have alienation and all of these sort of things, but where does God fit into it? That little booklet, The Blood of Christ, by bro. Robert Roberts, is so powerful in bringing that out. And so our sins will be forgiven as David's can be forgiven on that basis.

I know someone's thinking, but how do you handle it in ecclesial life? Well, we can't talk about that now, that's another problem. We may not be able to resolve some of these issues between ourselves this side of the kingdom, but we're going to do the best we can to glorify God and try to save our brethren. There may be some situations that are too difficult for us, but they're not too difficult for God! We may have to leave some of them to the kingdom, to find out how God would resolve it, but we know that David will be there, but we'd have a few problems fellowshiping him today, wouldn't we, if he came along in this circumstance? Let's leave that point at that, and stay on the high point and not say, 'well, what if, what if, what if! The principle is that if God is honoured, then we can be accounted righteous.

Now, I want to conclude by going across to a passage in the epistle of John, and it's 1 John chapter 1 and the last three verses because, b&s, it's us we're talking about now, and we've got three options. We've got three options in regard to the way that we handle sin. Two of them are wrong, and the other one is the only way to go, and it's the right way to go. 1 John chapter 1 and verse 8, this is a wrong one, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us'. I'll read verse 10 because verse 8 initially sounds similar but it's different; verse 10 says, 'If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and His Word is not in us'. So you see, the one in verse 8 says we have no sin and that person is self-deceived, the one in verse

10 says, I haven't actually sinned in which case I'm not only self-deceived, I'm making God a liar, because 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God', says Romans 3. So, the first class of person would well fit the category of those who talk about the inherent goodness in human nature. And of course, the so-called clean flesh theory in regard to the Atonement works upon that as one of its principles. All you've got to do is to find the goodness inside of the person, bring it out and everything will be fine. That's not what the bible tells us, that's not what Psalm 51 says, that's not how David saw himself. So, if we believe that all you've got to do is to work hard on it and get some goodness out of the inside of you, then you're self-deceived; and by the way, a statement which we sometimes make or hear, which can sound very good, and very humble like, 'I don't know what God saw in me to call me', as much as to say, there must have been some little good thing inside of me! Well, I can't answer the question as to why any of us have been able to accept that call, but it's a bit dangerous when you start thinking along those lines, because there's that little seed there that starts to say, 'perhaps there was some little element of good in there that God was able to pick up'. The only good inside anyone of us is what comes from outside and through God's Word. So we've got to realize what we are, and we've got to agree with Paul, 'Oh, wretched man that I am, who's going to deliver me from this body of death?' those elements of corruption in our nature, tending towards transgression, called 'sin working death in us', (and that's a quote from bro. Thomas's definition in Eureka of what the diabolos is). When we come to recognize that that's the natural driving force, we say right, the only way to conquer it is put the Word in the mind. So, don't let us start looking for some little bits of good in ourselves and draw them out, any good must come from outside, and hopefully then, there would be then some good inside but it's come from God. So don't talk about inherent goodness in human nature.

Verse 10 talks about a class of person who becomes very conscious of sin. This is possibly the other extreme; they become so conscious of sin that all they can see is sin, and you know, that sort of person can be starting with a very, very good motive, and I think these people do exist in the truth, and possibly everyone of us from time to time is this sort of person. The area which might affect you might be different from me, and I suspect that I could fall for this in certain circumstances. It's the sort of thing which is a bit like Colossians 2, 'touch not, taste not, handle not': you know, I haven't touched one of those things for 10 years now; I haven't handled one of these things for I don't know how long; and so forth; I must be getting better! In other words, I'm righteous because of what I don't do. Now, it's very important, as we said right at the beginning of this talk, to place restrictions on ourselves at times, but placing restrictions doesn't of itself make us righteous! Now, where we sometimes strike trouble in the truth is that, I don't only look at myself, but then I start to look at others. And usually it's the sort of person that does look at themselves and say, 'I'm hopeless, I can't see myself in the kingdom, and I don't think I can see half these others either, in fact, you know, this person and that person there', and you start to see sin, sin, sin everywhere. You could be right, but when you start viewing it in that light, it can be very destructive, very destructive indeed. Okay, bro. A. over here has got a problem, how can we best handle that problem to the

glory of God and to the salvation of that person? You know, sometimes when we keep identifying sin, it can at times be a bit of a self-satisfaction that as we push the other person down, it sort of pushes ourselves up. Anyway, that's expanding John beyond what we need to go! There is a sort of person that says 'I've conquered it'. I've conquered sin by will power! well, all I've done is elevated the flesh, because I've tried to conquer flesh with flesh.

So verse 8 says, don't talk about inherent goodness, and verse 10 says, don't try to conquer flesh by will power. So the answer, verse 9, and guess what word we've got? 'If we confess our sins', now if we had just taken that one verse today and just started there, it might have been rather simple and rather light: 'if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just'. But can we see what's meant by 'confession'? Confession is tantamount to declaring the righteousness of God, so, the confession has to be in that context. That's why David in Psalm 51 and verse 3 or 4, 'that Thou mightest be justified; that Thou, O God, might be declared to be right'. Abraham says, I believe God, God is right, and David says, 'I believe that God can forgive my sin, because I've sinned against Him and it's an issue between me and Him, and I'm wrong, therefore, He must be right! So verse 9 says, 'if we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just' (or right, because it's a problem with the English word) 'to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness'. And therefore, we can echo then, that wonderful prayer that David said, where he pleads to God on the basis of, 'Forgive me on the basis of thy mercy and of thy lovingkindness'. And might we, b&s, in that same spirit, come before our God, openly in prayer, acknowledging our sin and confessing them, and acknowledging and declaring in our lives, both in word and, hopefully, in deed, His righteousness at all times!