

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

March 17, 2024

EASTER: What's the Big Deal?
Confession of the Heart
Psalm 51
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NOTES

Pastor Matt described confession as the act of agreeing with God that our harmful words and actions are sinful.

MY STORY

What are some common ways people try to atone for their own sins?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO HEAR?

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!*

*For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment. (Psalm 51:1-4)*

In one of his parables, Jesus described a repentant traitor who, like David, asked God for mercy: *"The tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified" (Luke 18:13-14)*

In what ways is asking God to be merciful to us just an admission that we don't have a leg to stand on when it comes to our sin, and that He would be fully justified in just wiping us out?

Pastor Matt showed us that the story behind Psalm 51 was David's sin with Bathsheba (adultery). Since David's attempted cover-up also included the murder of Bathsheba's husband, we can better see why the King's remorse was so deep.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.*

*For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.*

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
(vs. 10, 16-17)*

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard for the first time, stuck with you, challenged or confused you?

What is the one important thing you will take away from this weekend's message or our community group discussion? Is there any challenge, difficulty or praise that you would like to share with the group for prayer?



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What are some trendy alternatives to genuine repentance? Why do none of them result in experiencing God's forgiveness?

Why did David eventually experience God's radical grace, and soul-healing forgiveness after confessing his multiple, egregious, sins?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO?

Why are people's attempts to atone for their own sins so ineffective, and in the end, insulting to God?

Why is it important to not only acknowledge the damage of our harmful words and actions, but also to admit our darker motives that drove us to do those things?

Why does admitting our wrongdoing to the person we hurt increase the chances of a restored relationship with that individual?

Under what circumstance can heartfelt confessions make a relationship even stronger than it was before? How does authentic confession have a similar effect on our relationship with God?

Under what circumstances will confessing our sins to someone we've hurt do them more harm than good? Why, in these cases, is it better to make these types of confessions with someone we trust, who is detached from the situation, and has no "skin in the game"?

What does God want us to do? Flowing out of our reading and interpretation, what action does this passage or the Spirit's leading, call us to?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

What is so frustrating about people who have created significant losses in our lives, and yet refuse to own up to what they've done?

If someone has hurt you, go up to that person and say something like, "When you said or did [fill-in-the-blank], it made an impact on me. Can you tell me why you said [or did] that thing?"

This may result in this person's immediate repentance—or he or she may dig in, and even blame you for what happened.

Depending on that person's response, decide how vulnerable you should be with this person in the future —

[Either, to be ready to increase vulnerability if they're genuinely sorry and willing to do whatever it takes to regain your trust ... or, if they're remorseless, creating some emotional distance from him or her.]

This week, make a list of your harmful words, thoughts, and actions (this month) – and identify the dark motives that drove you to choose those things over honoring God and others.

Make your confession to God, acknowledging what he can plainly see is true—that you, and you alone, are responsible for making those damaging choices.

Decide if it will be helpful to own up to what happened to the person you hurt—and humbly offer some sort of plan to regain this person's trust.

What does God want ME to do? What is the personal application and action step God is calling you, personally, toward?