



REAL VERSUS TOXIC REPENTANCE
Matthew 6:12; 1 Samuel 13; 2 Samuel 11 – 12; Psalm 51 (ESV)
January 26, 2025
Jon Field, Lead Pastor

MESSAGE NOTES

... and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. – Matthew 6:12 (ESV)

Saul responds to being confronted with his sin with:

- **Blame shifting**

*Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, ...
– 1 Samuel 13:11 (ESV)*

- **Excuses**

"... I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the Lord.' So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering." – 1 Samuel 13:12 (ESV)

- **Magical thinking**

*So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering.
– 1 Samuel 13:9 (ESV)*

David responds to being confronted with his sin by:

- **Asking for forgiveness – Forgive me**

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. – Psalm 51:1 (ESV)

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 51:4 (ESV)

- **Asking for restoration – Restore me**

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. – Psalm 51:2 – 3 (ESV)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. – Psalm 51:10 – 12 (ESV)

"A revival is nothing (less) than a new beginning of obedience to God." – Charles Finney



- **Asking to be used by God – Use me**

Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You. – Psalm 51:13 (ESV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Discussion Starter: What is one of your favorite parts of the story of King Saul and King David in the Bible?
- What do you think led Saul to take matters into his own hands with the Philistines, rather than waiting for the prophet Samuel and trusting in God? Why do you think it's often so difficult to wait for God's timing and answers?
- What is it about Saul's approach to repentance that prevents him from experiencing restoration in his relationship with God?
- Why are blame-shifting, excuses, and magical thinking all examples of toxic repentance? What is missing from each of these responses?
- Read Psalm 51:1 – 4. Why is David's prayer of repentance so full of life through Christ? What part stands out to you, and why?
- The prophet Nathan was a powerful example of God using someone to speak His love and truth into a difficult situation. How are we called to be prophets to one another, sharing both God's wisdom and love?
- David's prayer of repentance was a plea for God to forgive, restore, and use him again. How have you seen God use areas of past failure, or even areas of past growth, for His glory?
- Revivalist Charles Finney once said, "A revival is nothing less than a new beginning of obedience to God." What did he mean by that, and how have you seen that in your own relationship with Christ?
- Take time to pray for revival in the hearts of our church family during the 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting. Pray for revival in our community and nation.