

Recognising Our Sins

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[0 : 0 0] Now preparation for a communion traditionally involves or at the very least ought to involve a remembrance as well of our own sin. We might think well do we need such a special remembrance?

I mean surely do we not know ourselves sinners? We know we're sinners all the time anyway. Do we need such a special event such a special remembrance? Well yes of course we know in principle that we are sinners but like David we would probably be the first to admit of our general unworthiness before God, our unworthiness of God's goodness and undeserved mercy to us but given the fearful cost of our deliverance in general yes we might be content but our need of forgiveness as to even our current situation and particular sins which we probably don't even think twice about and our indulgence in which we may be inclined to defend as being no worse than many other sins which other people commit even sins for which we think we are within our rights perhaps. Well it wasn't my fault because this happened and that happened and so on. Yes we are conscious that we are we might say hell deserving sinners but we remember the cost of our deliverance especially tomorrow and I would suggest to you it's highly needful that we recognize who said not only our sinfulness in general but also perhaps particular sins perhaps as we say that we probably don't even think about. We're likely to think yeah okay of course I know yeah I'm a hell deserving sinner but you know we'd soon get a shock if God were to take us at our word wouldn't we and say yep you're absolutely right and because of that you're going to hell for all eternity and we think well just a minute wait a second Lord there's going to be some kind of mitigating circumstances there's going to be explanations or something because although we know it we don't actually think that's going to happen just yet and there's going to be something that'll save us well there's only one thing that'll save us of course only one person that'll save us but we do tend rather than to turn straight away to that save you we do tend to get a little bit defensive about the idea of our own sinfulness and as you say sometimes perhaps think we might be within our rights there may be some for which if the Lord presses his claims of conscience too closely we may even be inclined to blame him what wasn't my fault Lord it's because you did this or because you allowed that and so on the fact of the matter is we are always inclined to be as we say a bit defensive about ourselves you know think of Peter and John 21 there where the Lord keeps saying to him you know do you love me I'll feed my sheep do you love me I'll feed my lambs and Peter you know he's okay he's accepting the fact that yes he needs to be rebuked but you know turns around and he sees joy then what all this man do you know what about him Lord we think about always the attempt to deflect onto somebody else and think well we can't be that bad you know what about this person what about them as well even if we think we are very humble and acknowledge that yes we deserve only judgment we would complain and protest if the Lord took us at our word our tendency is always as we say to complete compare ourselves with others the reckon that before we should be punished many others must surely be before us you know if if the police were to stop you for speeding on a particular area say you know coming down into into Stornoway they are past the castle grounds and maybe you're doing like 35 38 or something and it sets a 30 mile limit and the thing you would think probably okay I'm not claiming to be a mind reader but perhaps the thing I would think most is not I wasn't really doing 35 I wasn't really doing 38 so I shouldn't be I shouldn't be stopped for this I would probably be thinking okay fair enough yes I was but come on look at all the other people coming down here at 40 50 and so on where were you with your speed cameras then why didn't you catch them why are you picking on me that's what we tend to think when it comes to our own sinfulness it's not so much a case if I'm not guilty it's rather a case of lie maybe guilt about my goodness look at all these other people they are so much more guilty than me think about ourselves here we are today you know we're in church we're following we're

seeking the Lord we are here we're doing our best to enable people in his own day to see God's truth objectively Jesus depersonalized the issue and one way that he did that is he told them parables he would tell them a little story so that they could clearly see yes what the right and wrongs of the story is and man he would take that the personal issue out of it in order to let them see clearly you know we think for example on the woman who's the sinner and Luke I think it's chapter seven where she's weeping at his feet and everybody knows she's a sinner and the fantasy is thinking come on why is he letting her touch him at all and Jesus tells the parable he says you know that's something to ask you says there's two men that owed this creditor money one of them 50 pounds and the other one 500 and when they couldn't pay he forgave them both which one's gonna forgive them gonna love him most I said well I suppose the one that he forgave most to he said you're absolutely right so you know if you're that farce you in the day that he's like well I got it right okay and then he turns it back he says now you see this woman you see all that she's washing my feet with her tears you didn't wash my feet when I came in she's anointing them with Ireland you didn't come on my head when she came in she's sorry for his sin you don't seem to be too sorry for your sins or she's been forgiven much you may have been forgiven a wee bit who's gonna love the Lord more the one who's been forgiven much or the one who's been forgiven little she loves much because she's been forgiven much and you silent well how much do you love so Jesus de-personalized it first of all with a parable that's exactly what Nathan the Prophet is doing here with David he de-personalizes the issue he takes the David bit out of the situation and lets the King come to a clear disinterested and correct decision and conclusion so that David is convicted David the beloved that's what his name means you know in the Hebrew David means beloved he is convicted out of his own mouth the man after God's own art that beloved this convicted out of his own mouth and I think you know although we read the passage there and you know we read verses 12 into 13 for you did it secretly but I will do that I will do this thing before all Israel and before the Sun David said to Nathan I've sinned against the Lord I think we should probably imagine a very long heavy pause between verse 12 and verse 13 where Nathan gives him the spiel and then he explains about how David is guilty and what he has done and how although he's done his sin in secret God's retribution will be public and in front of everybody and before the Sun and then I think that long horrified pause I'm speculating but I would suggest that to you for David says I've sinned against the Lord I don't think it's quick and he's yeah Nathan you're absolutely right I've sinned against the Lord wasn't that terrible wasn't that awful of me no the horrific realization that not only did he not get away with it but just the seriousness of what it was he had actually done in the eyes of God the long heavy pause and then I have sinned against the Lord and Nathan said to David the [8 : 33] Lord have put away thy sin like most of those sins which do us most harm this one too was so stupid and unnecessary and I know it's easy when you're not the person at the center but say oh how stupid but think about the facts so stupid and unnecessary I mean I remember in my former congregation there was a an old gentleman who was a bachelor and he was full of opinions shall we say he was in church semi regularly he wasn't you know professing faith and anything but you know he had both feet planted firmly on the ground he'd done war service and so on in the navy and everything he wasn't exactly diplomatic but when the a few years ago maybe about 20 years ago don't know if any of you remember there was a bishop in the Roman Catholic church who he eloped with I think it was his housekeeper and this was all over the papers and so on Bishop Rory Wright and I happened to be visiting the gentleman in the village thereafter and he was saying how he didn't didn't have anything anything wrong about that bishop who'd run off run off for this housekeeper because he thought you know it's quite different from interfering with little children or abusive people who are under your care and so on this is a grown man who's run off with a grown woman because that's the way when in women are made I thought well what about his flowers you know what about the church and I know that was that was natural to him and he thought as far as he was concerned the requirement for celibacy and so on that was what caused the problem that was the issue as far as he was concerned this was a normal man with normal feelings who'd run off with a normal woman his own age and so he didn't think there was anything wrong with that maybe that was one reason why he never professed faith or whatever but he saw it as perfectly logical but in one sense you can see his point Bishop Rory Wright had nobody here David is as Nathan the prophet says you know

I gave it your hands all your master's power all your wives and so on let's just get the context here in this situation in Proverbs 6 verses 30 and 31 we read people do not despise a thief if he steals to

satisfy his appetite when he is hungry but if he's caught he'll pay sevenfold he will give all the goods of his house now here what Nathan says to David you are the man thus says the Lord the God of Israel I am 90 you came over Israel I delivered you out of the hand of soul I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel of Judah if this were too little I would add to you as much more all you had to do was ask basically and it should be remembered at this time that David at the time when he is tempted by Bathsheba you know not by any of her doing but he is tempted when he sees Bathsheba he had at least nine wives not currently in concubines now we read of six of them in chapter three versus two to five if you want to turn back the pages you can see they're listed there I know I'm the Jesuitist

Abigail the widow of Nabal Makkah the daughter of the king of Gesheu Haggath Abital Eglah that's six and all the different children that they had and of course before all of them he had married Michael the daughter of Saul so that's seven wives and then we read in chapter five verse 13 we read that David had taken more wives plural so there's at least two of them if they're plural and then it says plus an indeterminate number of concubines so he's got nine wives and an indeterminate number of concubines and then he sees Bathsheba and he wants that one too now we can truthfully say there's absolutely no need for that particular sin to take place when David saw Bathsheba bathing he saw her from his rooftop you know that means quite a distance at that distance he could not possibly have discerned much of her facial beauty he wasn't swept away by her loveliness it was just greed it was covetousness even more than any lust and then because one sin got in that covetousness that greed because that's what it was greed got in other sins followed first the covetousness and then the lust then the adultery they quoted earlier from Proverbs 6 verses 30 and 31 you remember the thief people do not despise a thief when he steals to satisfy his appetite when he's hungry but if he's caught then okay he'll pay sevenfold all the goods of his house but the very next verses after that verses 32 and 33 in Proverbs 6 go on to say he who commits adultery lacks sense he who does it destroys himself he will get wounds and dishonour and his disgrace will not be wiped away and then after the adultery in David's case of course there's the deceit and finally the murder James remember tells us chapter 1 verse 15 then desire when it is conceived gives birth to sin and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death we tend to think one little sin in isolation it doesn't really matter sin is never in isolation that's like saying oh one little cancer cell it doesn't really matter it's not going to do much harm they breed they multiply one sin becomes the stepping stone to another to another to another to another and it gets more and more serious with each one that passes David of course could have made plausible explanations for each of his actions I didn't know she was going to be on the rooftop I was just going out to get some fresh air I didn't realize she'd be there you know I did my but I tried to gain away I just wanted to talk to her that's all I just got bring her to the palace so we could talk you know one thing just led to another so he goes I tried to bring her husband home I tried to sort I tried to make it right didn't I you know what I did but he wouldn't do it he wouldn't play ball he wouldn't cooperate at all he you know I didn't murder him I sent him off to the front he's a soldier that's what he does I just happened to send him into the hottest part of the battle somebody had to go there somebody's got the fight in the hottest part of the battle might as well be one of my champions and you're either hit it is listed as well as David's champions you know later on in Samuel and Chronicles and so if David could make all sorts of plausible excuses and none of them might be entirely untrue he didn't know she was going to be on the rooftop maybe he didn't intend adultery when he brought her to the palace he did genuinely try to get your eye to come home and cover up David's sin he did send a soldier into battle what's the big deal about that but you know the Lord knows the truth behind it all for all the excuses that can be made God sees through it all chapter 11 verse 27 we read when the morning was over David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife and Bora's son but the thing that David had done displeased the Lord now we can make all manner of excuses for all manner of our sins but there will be that part of us that knows even if the moral compass thinks it's pointing north we know it isn't really and the Lord sees right through it all and he sees through us too oh perhaps yeah we're not guilty of murder or adultery or even outward visible lust but you know deceit a battery of other covetousness other sins known in truth to us but thankfully hidden from all the rest of the world but known to God how many of our sins don't become more serious because we just lack opportunity how many of us yes I think oh I've never killed anyone but what does Jesus say in the sound of the month he says if you're angry with your brother without a cause you've effectively murdered him in your heart you look at somebody walking down the street with lust in your heart you've effectively committed adultery with them

already and it's that's a pretty harsh line we might think but Jesus is looking not only on the outward not only on the opportunity but also looking at what would you do if you had the chance what would your heart desire to do because the fact of the matter is the heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above measure who can know it well God knows it and probably if we're honest we know it too we have to recognize that just as every person is different so there are different sins and different weaknesses for different souls you know when 9 11 happened and those two planes were flown into the skyscrapers it's not really much comfort to say oh yeah but you know these people they may be muslim fundamentalists but you know that means their temperance was excellent they weren't getting drunk you know they weren't drunkards so you know that's virtue to them there and so one virtue doesn't cancel out a whole lot of other sins we may not be guilty of a particular sin that our brother or sister in Christ may have a weakness for but we'll have plenty of others just because we may not be an addict of this thing or that thing doesn't mean that we don't have plenty else that is wrong with us and the devil is not going to waste his time trying to entice you into the weakness that your brother or sister may be guilty of he knows what buttons depress for you he knows what your individual weakness is and he will be pushing and pushing and pushing it I guarantee it now let's say for example you come back from some spiritual high maybe you've been away at some conference or something or maybe you are of union season somewhere it was really blessed and you and you come back don't you ever notice that those will be the times when let's say if you're married you and your spouse will have a row or one of your kids will rebel really fall out with you over something or there'll be some disaster that will happen within 48 hours of that great spiritual high you never notice that just how many things will start the attacks will begin almost immediately because the devil is never going to leave you in a state of blessing without trying to assail you in it and if he can bring you down then he will do it and you know in david's case it would have been logical for david say okay she may be beautiful but you're back at nine wives and umpteen concubines what do I want with this one

that would have been the logical thing sin is not logical and we make a mistake if we think that the enemy of souls ever needs to be logical to justify himself all it needs is that breaking down of our resistance all it needs is that desire you look at you know the attacks on on biblical authority by unbelieving so-called scientists sort of you know theories of evolution or whatever you know they don't stack up in fact that's and bother them facts don't bother them reality doesn't but consistency doesn't bother the enemies of Christianity and politics and in the world and so on they don't have to say oh wait a minute you know these christians aren't actually doing anything worse than than other people are doing you know they're perfectly good members of society they're loyal and so on and they're faithful and diligent that doesn't matter logic doesn't come into it this is a spiritual warfare where the enmity of the evil one is what drives him to seek to destroy anyone who looks like they're even coming close one of the things I like about there's that the book that c.s. Lewis wrote the screw tape letters is that there's there's one stage where the the sort of apprentice demon is being instructed by his his supposed uncle and he says you're your your subject the guy who's looking as if he might be thinking about following christ or becoming you know more spiritual let's say he's standing in an art gallery and he's looking at all these spiritual masterpieces of the crucifixion or resurrection or whatever it might be and and he's beginning to have spiritual thoughts and he's beginning to beginning to think you know maybe there is something in this maybe it's a serious reality and so on and and instead of it says the little junior demon wants to try and argue him out of that and saying oh no think about you know how christianity can't possibly be true he says don't no don't go down that road you don't have to argue him spiritually out of all these serious thoughts you don't have to meet fire with all you have to do is make him think oh yeah I must think about these oh let's get on for lunchtime that I've got a bus to catch you better go all you have to do is break the train of thought and you'll think oh I must come back to these things sometime but sometime you can leave him to worry about that all you have to do is break the train of thought where he's going all you have to do is puncture that's that train towards righteousness all you have to do is destroy that thread where he is being led the evil one doesn't have to be consistent he doesn't have to be logical he doesn't have to meet you exactly on the plane you think you're fighting on all he has to do is distract you get you away from the Lord he does not care how you go to hell he's very very broad minded about that he doesn't mind whether you're a complete atheist or whether you're just different and attend church occasionally or it's just sort of you know nominal christianity he doesn't mind whether you're dabbling in the occult he doesn't mind you know whether you're just completely thinking in terms of the world he doesn't mind you can go to hell by any means that you

choose the one thing he cannot allow is that you are born again and saved by christ you can follow any religion you like and he will leave you alone but if you come to christ he will start fighting you every step of the way you have a wonderful spiritual experience some weekend some conference he will attack you in your home life you're getting on well at work he will make your car break down he will have caused you to have an accident he will do something to destroy whatever is good if you're conscious of the Lord's blessing he will seek to destroy something else in your life if you're strong in one thing you'll find where you're weak and this is what happens with David here the likelihood is that he is simply off his guard he is off his guard because things seem to be going [23 : 54] well for him the devil is not concerned about how he brings you down he is only concerned that he does it and if you and I are honest we know that he has an embarrassingly easy time doing it we are conscious as soon as we start to think of it we are conscious of the reality of our sin we may not be murderers we may not be adulterers we may not be drunkards but there will be plenty of times when we've thought about these things there will be plenty of times when we oh i just wish that that person is so annoying me i really really wanted to do something bad to them and maybe we don't plan murder but the anger is in there maybe we don't act out adultery but the lust may be in there maybe we don't want this rob a bank and steal somebody else's money but the covetousness is there and all the things that lead from that we should be as aware as the Lord is of our sin not so that we become morbid not so that we become old doom and gloom but because when we are aware of the problem the devil is not so able to catch you out you are not unsuspecting when you recognize your sin you're able to have it dealt with i was going to say you're able to deal with your sin but we are not able to deal with our sin david i would suggest you is caught out there is no need whatsoever for him to be guilty of that particular sin but he was there is no need for us to go down the road half the time that we do of the particular sins we fall it's like if you were a child and you found it you know stealing your small change or whatever and you might say to it apart from giving it around and say why are you doing it you know if you need money just ask if you need something just just ask you know this is what nathan says i gave you everything the Lord says and if that hadn't been enough i would give you more if you need something friend ask the Lord for it if it's a legitimate need he will give it if it's going to be for your good and honor and blessing and if it's not something that he thinks you should have you withhold it just like a loving parent sometimes will say no it doesn't mean he doesn't love you but he will give you sufficient for what you need if you've got something you need just ask take it to the Lord our sins are so often hidden from the world but they are known to God and we should recognize that just as every person is different there are different sins and different weaknesses for different souls but one is all you need to merit hell that may sound harsh but it's the truth you know nobody's going to believe the captain of the titanic had he lived if he said come on the north Atlantic is thousands of miles across you any idea how many icebergs there were i only hit one of them come on there was all these ones i managed to steer clear of i only hit one of them that was the one that did it that was the one that sank the ship and cost all the lives one sin will be enough and one sin is never alone it always leads to others so recognize yes our particular sinfulness our need for salvation our need for forgiveness whatever else the world may look like when we are defensive or we want to be defensive we look out at the ones say lord what about him what about her what about the other one and we urge god to see them all all the sins of other people which we hope may somehow make us look better if we can think of how bad they are by comparison when we confess our sins to god when we're confessing our sin we're not looking at the world anymore we're only looking to him we're looking to the lord because we recognize as david said in sam 51 after this incident against thee be only a vice sin and done this evil nice sight we may have wronged other people but we've only sinned against god against thee the only have i sinned in this particular story it is as the the account goes on to narrate it is the innocent son of david the child who's done nothing the child who will die instead of the guilty sinner himself just as the innocent ultimate and true son of david would in the fullness of time die for the guilty who would trust and believe in him the consequences for david would tragically live on if you go on through the bible you've got the story of amnon and tamar and then absalom wreaking vengeance on amnon and then absalom's rebellion it's part of the sorrow of this world that we may have to suffer and endure in this world the consequences of many a sin long ago repented off and that may seem illogical but it's not because we still committed it god forgives us when we repent but the consequences will still live on just as they did with absalom's rebellion later on how many thousands of israelites died because of absalom's rebellion why did

absalom rebel because david having exiled him wouldn't receive him back and he had ambitions for himself why did that happen because he'd killed amnon why did amnon get killed because he had raped his half sister tamar why didn't david come down on that like a ton of bricks when it happened because david no longer had any moral authority in his family because of this incident with bathsheba the damage that rose up to convict and damage him came from within his own house out and all the evil that followed followed still after david had repented and been forgiven of the sin but the consequences lived on the sin itself is taken away the sin itself is put to death it is nailed to the cross once and for all with that once and for all sacrifice the lamb of god who take away the sin of the world it is right that in this day of preparation we should recognize what sinners we are and that there is no hiding from god even of our most secret sins but it is essential that we also remember as nathan said to david the lord also has put away your sin if we are trusting in christ Christ nobody else can put away your sin you can't put away your sin i can't put away your sin the church cannot put away your sin only the lord can put away your sin and he does not do it by turning a blind eye to it he does it by paying the price of it in full himself but we cannot be saved by one in whom we do not believe christ is the savior for all who will put their trust and faith in him but the seriousness of our sin is something we have to recognize and the need of the savior is something we have to own up to because the lord has made that savior available to us the lord has put away your sin nathan said to david and that is the offer that is there for each and every one of us christ would not have gone to the cross if it was something that could you be just you know paid for easily with a couple of pounds you know the lord the lord has you know all the resources of the world at his disposal just you know throw a few diamonds this way through a few coins that way that'll pay for it for his payment to be made god has all the world at his resources he has everything in his fingertips he can do whatever he likes this was one thing which none of that would suffice for only his son only the life of god himself in god the son the lord has put away your sin that is the cost that is the price we should never consider that our sins are somehow light or unimportant so let us come in humility and in solemnity and in remembrance of the cross and of christ's death thankful to god that it was his sacrifice and his death that was called for and not ours let us pray our loving and gracious god we are reminded again of the consequences of our sin of the cost of our sin and also lord of the reality of our sin we pray that we would be honest with ourselves and that we would be prepared to have the searchlight of thy spirit turned inward lord we do sometimes prefer the darkness because we can hide in the dark and inside in our innermost thoughts and beings we can hide all manner of secret sins but if the search light of thy truth is turned within upon the reality of our hearts we know that what we find there will not be pretty but we know lord that thou hast already seen it thou hast the spiritual equivalent of night vision thou can see into the darkest corners of every soul and so we pray lord that knowing as thou dost the reality of who we are we cannot understand why thou should love us so much but we are thankful that thou dost and so we pray we would seize the opportunity of that love now recognizing how much thou hast loved us we would have the courage to come to thee and confess and repent of all our sins even those we have kept secret for so long even those we are ashamed to admit to the world we could admit to thee because that is already known and so we ask for forgiveness and we ask it in the name of Jesus who has died on the cross that sinners like us might be saved and might be redeemed and might be forgiven the lord has put away your sin so lord let us claim that promise today and all the days of our lives in his name amen we'll close our worship this morning singing to the lord's praise and sing psalms number 61 sing psalms number 61 of which we'll sing the verses four to eight that is the last five stanzas oh let me dwell within your tent forever there to live oh for the shelter of your wings the refuge which they give for you have heard my vows oh god and you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name continually and so on to the end then will i ever bless your name with songs of joy and praise and will fulfill my holy vows with care throughout my days these verses verses four to eight the last five stanzas from sing psalms number 61 to god's praise that all your wings the refuge which they give for you have heard my vows oh god and you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name continually lea May people ever sit ice-kicking and glory for God's face.

[37 : 43] A poignant of unfaithfulness as His protecting grace.

Then can I ever bless your name with songs of joy and praise, and will open my holy arms with care throughout my days.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Heavenly Father and the communion of God the Holy Ghost rest upon you and remain with you each one this day and forevermore. Amen.