

- Recap last week (2 Sam 11ff, Psalm 51)
- How could this have been avoided?
- **Psalm 51:12** “<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.”
- **Sin will take your joy...or it should.**
- **When sin takes your joy**, put yourself on the altar, bleed out this lament/petition using these borrowed words.
- **Question: But did David lose his joy because he sinned, or did he sin because he lost his joy?**
- **David slipped before David sinned.** David forsook his first love for God before he committed adultery and murder. I believe that David’s heart was in a very unhealthy place toward God – cold. Not burning with white-hot passion. And cold hearts sin more readily. Temptations speak so much more persuasively when the conditions are right. Something had already gone wrong in David’s devotion – in his heart – where the roots of sin lie – before the outward fruit of adultery, murder, and the cover up became apparent.
- **It is possible to sin from anywhere in the Christian life**, no matter how mature, (after all, even Jesus was tempted). But we have low points and weak spots and temptation is most effective – at, as Luke’s gospel calls it – “an opportune time.” For Jesus, it came when he was vulnerable and weak from not eating food for forty days.

• **Proverbs 4:23** “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

- **Human hearts insatiably long for pleasure.** Irresistibly long for it. And this desire is good, not sinful. It was meant to be sated – satisfied – ultimately in God.
- **If we care about being faithful to God we’d better adjust to this truth:** All human hearts bear an insatiable hunger. If we aren’t seeking to satisfy that persistent universal human longing in God...we will seek to fill it with something else. *Our hearts abhor a vacuum*, just as nature does.
- **Well-ordered affections** – this is really the heart of the matter. Holiness is a big deal. It’s life. Not oppression. And holiness is not about a code or a rule-book, but holiness is about having our loves in the right priority. Holiness is about having “well-ordered affections.” It means you love things in the right order of importance.
- **Sin as rule-breaking? Holiness as rule-keeping?** No! That’s all fruit. Fruit is end-result. The roots are *desires*. Roots are the beginning causes. Sinful desires and godly desires that come from the heart!
- **Mark 7:1-23**
- **Holiness** is not primarily an issue of what we do or don’t do. That’s fruit. Holiness is about what we love and how we love. It’s a heart issue.
- How do you get that right heart? Gift/grace. How do you protect it? Grace-powered diligence.
- **The dashboard instruments** – Calibrate them and use them well.
- **Peter Drucker** – “What gets measured gets managed.” What he means is, we measure things and then use that information to evaluate and adjust. If we measure that we prayed and read a passage of Scripture, then clearly our goal is to do that, and our evaluation of how we’re doing will be focused on that. But I want to say that measurement is superficial given what we’ve just

said about holiness and sin. Somehow, we need to be paying attention to our hearts, to intimacy with God, to the order of affections, to God's countenance. So what are we measuring?

- **Matt Chandler** says he can't stay up late and watch baseball too closely because, though neither of those things are sinful in themselves, he has paid close attention to how they impact the vitality of his fidelity toward God.
- **Discipline and Passion** – One day God said to me...that He would rather have my passion than my discipline but it requires discipline on my part to maintain passion over time. And maintaining our passion over time is imperative if we're going to guard our hearts and live well.
- **Matthew 6:** Jesus gives several clear practices meant to orient our hearts Godward – to order our affections Godward and maintain spiritual intimacy. Here's just three quick ones – Prayer, Fasting, Generosity.
- **Holiness isn't** designed as "don't touch, don't taste!" It's designed as loving God more than and through the other loves. And that's what generosity and fasting both address. They help **monitor the affections** of our hearts **as well as influence** them. But these are just a few tools to maintain a single-eyed pursuit of God so that we live well and avoid major shipwrecks like we read about last week.
- **"Single-eyed pursuit of God,"** What does that mean? I mean *fidelity, intimacy, and a kind of spiritual romance*.
- **Sermon Takeaway:** Here's my whole point - Fill your spiriritual belly with Christ and you won't be nearly so susceptible to temptation. The expulsive power of a new affection. Instead of "Don't touch this!" We need to fall in love with Christ.
- **Pay Attention to Your Heart.** Again – what gets measured gets managed – guard your heart. Don't just measure superficial fruit. Aim for deeper love and measure heart issues, not just bible reading.
- **John Eldredge** - *Do Whatever Brings You Back to Your Heart and the Heart of God:* Against the flesh, the traitor within, a warrior uses discipline. We have a two-dimensional version of this now, which we call a "quiet time." But most men have a hard time sustaining any sort of devotional life because it has no vital connection to recovering and protecting their strength; it feels about as important as flossing. But if you saw your life as a great battle and you *knew* you needed time with God for your very survival, you would do it. Maybe not perfectly-nobody ever does and that's not the point anyway-but you would have a reason to seek him. We give a halfhearted attempt at the spiritual disciplines when the only reason we have is that we "ought" to. But we'll find a way to make it work when we are convinced we're history if we don't.

Time with God each day is not about academic study or getting through a certain amount of Scripture or any of that. It's about connecting with God. We've got to keep those lines of communication open, so use whatever helps. Sometimes I'll listen to music; other times I'll read Scripture or a passage from a book; often I will journal; maybe I'll go for a run; then there are days when all I need is silence and solitude and the rising sun. The point is simply to do *whatever brings me back to my heart and the heart of God*.

The discipline, by the way, is never the point. The whole point of a "devotional life" is *connecting with God*. This is our primary antidote to the counterfeits the world holds out to us.

- **David Powlison's Diagnostic Questions**

1. What do I worry about most?
2. What, if I failed or lost it, would cause me to feel that I did not even want to live?
3. What do I use to comfort myself when things go bad or get difficult?
4. What do I do to cope? What are my release valves? What do I do to feel better?
5. What preoccupies me? What do I daydream about?
6. What makes me feel the most self-worth? Of what am I the proudest? For what do I want to be known?
7. What do I lead with in conversations?
8. Early on what do I want to make sure that people know about me?
9. What prayer, unanswered, would make me seriously think about turning away from God?
10. What do I really want and expect out of life? What would really make me happy?
11. What is my hope for the future?

- **CONCLUSION: John Wesley** - "Do you not still wander to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none? – pursuing happiness, but never overtaking it? And who can blame you for pursuing it? It is the very purpose of your existence. The great Creator made nothing to be miserable, but every creature to be happy in its kind...*If you are now unhappy, it is because you are in an unnatural state*: and shall you not sigh for deliverance from it? ... I blame you only, or pity you rather, for taking a wrong way (*sin*) to a right goal (*happiness*); for seeking happiness where **it never was, and never can be**, found. You seek happiness in your fellow creatures instead of your Creator. But these can no more make you happy than they can make you immortal. *In this alone* you can find the happiness you seek; in the union of your spirit with the Father of spirits; in the knowledge and love of Him who is the fountain of happiness, sufficient for all the souls he has made."