

# Can God Truly Love and Forgive Me

## I Doubt It: Week 2

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All right, good morning, everybody was so excited to get up to preach. And then I realized, Oh, we got a song. Old habits die hard. And yet again, I have to give credit to Doug, why am I up here when you already preached a great sermon? All right, let's pray. Father, we thank you for another day of life, Lord, another beautiful Sabbath that you have blessed us with, as we know, dive into the word be with us as we talk about your great love. In Jesus name. everybody said, Amen.

All right. So we are starting week two of our series called "I Doubt It" for those of you who are joining us for the first time today. Several months back, we were, you know, trying to figure out well, what are we going to talk about this, this year in 2022, talking about all the preaching and everything in so came up with several questions, started out with questions, and then it kind of turned into this idea of doubt. Hence, the term "I Doubt It" questions that maybe we as Christians, or people have for the church, or especially for those of us who've been in the church long enough. There's some things that we we ask, for instance, when is God returning? Amen. So over the next, well, now, five weeks, we'll be tackling these issues. And I hope and pray that if you've not had a chance to join a small group yet, for sure, let us know. And we'll get you connected. So this week, we are talking about God's love, and grace, amen.

Cannot talk about this enough. And Ernest Hemingway. He wrote, I can't remember if it was a book or what but it was called a piece called the capital of the world. And the story revolves around a father and his son named Paco. Maybe some of you probably heard this illustration, but it's a good illustration. And the story is set in Spain. Paco was in a very, very common name in Spain at the time, kind of like John. And he had this great desire to be a matador. So his father, being more sensible, is thinking, not a great career path, especially of a matador, right, and Paco. What he really wanted to do was he wanted to escape his father's control. So what does Paco do? He runs to the Capitol. He runs through Madrid. And yet his father realizes that his son has left him, he's abandoned him. He actually said, I'm going to leave and he left. So his father follows him to Madrid. And in the local newspaper, he say, I want to run an ad. And it says, Dear Paco, meet me in the Madrid newspaper office tomorrow at noon, what time? Noon. And then it says, All is forgiven. I love you. All is forgiven. I love you. Hemingway continues on the next day at noon, in front of the newspaper office, there were over 800 Pacos, all seeking forgiveness. Our world is full of many Pacos seeking and desiring forgiveness, love, reconciliation. And thanks be to God. We have a father who loves us, and gives us grace. Amen.

Today, I want to go to a story, that it's a rather challenging story. Now we're going to be focusing on Psalm 51. But in order to understand Psalm 51, we have to understand what is the context? Okay, so I'm just going to read the first part. I'm not even going to read verse one, but at the top of some 51 It says, from the Director of Music A Psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Hmm. Many of you have probably heard this story. In fact, they made a movie about it right? Way back in the day. In Second Samuel 11 and 12 I'm just gonna, I'm gonna highlight this story. In the spring at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israel army that destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Reebok and David

remained in Jerusalem. So think about this. He's a king. He sends his men out to do his bidding. He's staying back at home. He's cruising he's taking it easy. As he's at home. Later in the evening, he gets up from his bedding walks around the roof of this palace from the roof. He saw what? He saw Bathsheba, but was Bathsheba doing? She was taking a bath. Why you do that on top of a roof? I don't know. And how does Samuel describe her? She was what? She was beautiful. He was a man. He saw a beautiful woman. He was the king. And so David inquires who that is? The man said she's Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam. And note this the wife, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. So what does David do? Does David go back to his room? No, he sends a messenger and tells the messenger to bring back Bathsheba. So she came to him and he slept with her. She was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness. And then she went back home and the woman conceived and sent word to David saying, I'm pregnant. Awkward.

Now where's Uriah, all of this. Uriah was a soldier in whose army? David's army. And so while Uriah is putting his life on the line for David. He doesn't know that there's shenanigans going on back home. He's being faithful to David, a faithful, faithful warrior. So all of a sudden David has this predicament. There was a woman who was pregnant, not his wife. So David sends a word Joab and says, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent him to David. And when Uriah came to him. David asked him how the war was going on and trying to make small talk, trying to figure out how is he going to deal with Uriah. Then David, said Uriah, go down to your house and wash your feet. So David left the palace and a gift from the King was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance of the palace with all of his masters servants and did not go down to his house. So what's David trying to do is trying to send Uriah back home hoping something will happen and all will be okay. Right? There's just one little problem. Uriah doesn't go home. In fact, it says, David was told your Uriah did not go home. And he asked, Why haven't you come? Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why don't you go home? And Uriah? He is He is a strong, committed leader to his troops. And he says, Hey, man, I can't go home all of my guys, they're not able to go home. So why should I have the privilege? Why should I be special? See the parallels between him and David and talking about leadership and leading people? Very different opposite ends of the spectrum. Uriah serves, David takes. So David said stay here one more day and tomorrow I will send you back and Uriah may remain in Jerusalem that day and the next night David's invitation. What does he try to do? He tries to get him drunk. He tries to he tries to make sure that he goes home. And still, Uriah was faithful to his troops. So planning doesn't work. Plan B doesn't work. And in the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab and it says, He sent it with Uriah. I just wow, I just realized that he sent The letter with Uriah. And what did the letter include? It basically said put you right in front of the fighting where it is fiercest and then withdraw from him. So he will be struck down and die.

So the third plan is to put Uriah in the thick of the fighting, just hoping and praying Uriah will die. Hmm. How do you feel about David right now? Your perspective is starting to change a little bit, isn't it? Because what do we know David as? He's a king. He's a hero. He's a man after who? God's own heart. And yet what's he trying to do? He's trying to cover up his shenanigans. And he's basically trying to get Uriah killed. Not a very pretty picture, isn't it? So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest offenders were when the men of the city came out and fought against Joab. Some of the men and David's army fell. Moreover, Uriah hits the Hittite, he dies. So Joab sends word to David. David feels like he's in the clear. He's okay. Joab gave an account. And yet, verse 26, when you write her that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. And after that time of mourning was over. David had her brought to his house and she became his wife, she born the son, but

the thing that David had done, how did the Lord feel about this? God was not happy. And so what happens next, God says Nathan, who's Nathan? He's a prophet. And he shares this story of he shares the story of there were two neighbors. A rich man, he had many sheep. He had many cattle, okay, he had many sheep. He had many cattle. But he had a he had a neighbor who was a poor man, he had only one little ewe, lamb, a baby lamb. And he raised it actually, the lamb lived in the home, it was like a little puppy. Follow the poor man that the owner, everywhere it went, it was like a part of the family. But one day, the rich man realizes he has company over. But he doesn't want to, he doesn't want to use one of his cows or sheep for the main meal. And he sees that there's this little lamb next door. And so he gets the little lamb, and he serves it to his guests. Obviously, the poor man is broken. He's heartbroken. His little family member was taken from him wasn't even asked, just taken. How would you feel about that if your neighbor did that to your little limb? Not good. Right? I remember reading this story a couple of years ago, and I had such a reaction to that. It's like, Dude, why are you taking this little lamb? When you have plenty of sheep and cattle as scripture says, Now what is David's response as he hears this story? How dare this man do this? He must be punished. You know, he's, he's speaking aloud. Not getting the irony of what has just happened in his life. And, and he calls for Where is this man? He must. What does it say? He basically they think calls him out. David, you are that rich man. And all of a sudden David feels the full weight of everything that he had done. He thought he got away with everything and realizes No, I had got caught. And so over time, David realizes he knows what he's done.

And he writes a song. He writes a psalm, Psalm 51. Let's go to Psalm 51.

And his, this is his response. Psalm 51 While there, you hear a few pages turning. Okay. All right, Psalm 51 Verse one for the Director of Music, a Psalm of David when the Prophet of Nathan came to him after David committed adultery with Bathsheba, verse one it says, Have mercy on me God, according to what kind of love unfailing love according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions, wash away all of my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is always before me, against you. You only have I sinned and done what is right, what is done, eat Sorry, what is evil in your sight? So you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge surely I was sinful at what? Birth sinful from the time my mother conceived me yet you desired faithfulness, even in the womb. You taught me wisdom in that secret place, cleanse me with his and I will be clean, wash away, wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness, but the bones you have crushed, rejoice, hide your face from my sins and blot out my what iniquity Create in me what Lord, pure heart, O God and renew steadfast what spirit within me, Do not cast me from your presence or take your what? Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the what? The joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me. And then I will teach transgressors Your ways so that sinners will turn back to you. Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, oh God, you who are God, my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness, opened my lips, Lord and my lip, my mouth will declare Your praise you do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, oh god is what a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart you God will not discipline may approximate please You to Prosper Zion and build up the walls of Jerusalem, then you will delight in the sacrifice of the righteous and burnt offerings offered whole and then bowls will be born on your altar. Psalm 51 is a letter. It's one of the most famous psalms that we can read him when it talks about forgiveness. So understanding the backstory of everything that David had done. Now whether it was consensual or not, David used his authority, his ability to get what he wanted with Bathsheba, can we agree on that? Right. But not only that, he then tries to cover up his mistake not once, not twice, but three times, ultimately leading to the

death of Uriah now he himself he may not have punched his sword or shot him with a narrow but he sentenced Uriah to death. And what's sad is Uriah was one of the most faithful warriors David had. And he took advantage of that. And we see here now that in this psalm, is David truly repentant in Psalm 51? Because I think he is because he ultimately owns his actions he first saw starts off with half mercy oh me on me. Oh God, according to your unfailing love and I love that word. unfailing. How else would you describe unfailing boundless there's no line. Truly, we cannot understand great, God's great love for us. But God loves us immeasurably more than we could ever understand. And it says, according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions and wash away all of my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. God's love. God's love, knows no boundaries. God's love is on failing.

You know, one, one of the things that we sometimes challenge, or we're challenged by though is let's say critics. This may not be true for everybody, but who do you think is your harshest critic yourselves, that space that resides in between your ears, your hearts and your minds. We can do a number on ourselves, amen. I'm certainly not immune to that. I'm my harshest critic, especially when I go back and watch my sermons, because I want to learn, I need to stop repeating that word. I take all of these lessons, and yet, it's like, I still sometimes keep making them. And we sometimes can work ourselves in our minds to think that no, God doesn't love us. I'm a horrible person. We criticize ourselves, we feel like we're not valuable enough, we're not worthy enough. That's, I think, one of the great barriers that keeps us away from understanding and knowing and ultimately writing to God, because we don't feel we are good enough. In fact, I had this conversation last night with somebody where they were struggling because they felt like they, they weren't right with God. They were either angry or upset. And yet, that's when you need to go to God. Amen.

There's this illustration that there was an unwell person who didn't want to go to the gym, because everybody was great. But yet, the unwell person needed to go to the gym, in order to work out to be able to grow and get well. And it's much like the, you illustrate this at the church. Sometimes we think that we have to be perfect before we can come to church. And yet, the reason and the existence of the church is for those who are unwell, to be able to come here and receive healing. And so God's love is unfailing. It is, it is there is no boundaries. CS Lewis once said, denial is a shock absorber for the soul that protects us until we are equipped to cope with reality. And so sometimes we are in denial of the truth. But when we when we make mistakes, we have to own them true healing, repentance and change will not happen until you acknowledge your mistakes.

There's a story that I recently listened to of a soldier, I think his name was Angel. Growing up his parents may he had I don't remember, I think maybe four, four brothers and sisters. And growing up his parents were very young, when they started their family. I think his mother was actually like 17. And his father was, I don't know, maybe four or five years older. And when you're 17 and 21. Do you know a lot about life? You don't. Those of you who are older, but you don't really know much. Add in a couple of kids that picture. What happens? Stress accumulates. And they don't give you a manual on how to raise kids. Amen. You can see other examples, but it's it's a learning process. And Mistakes were made growing up. And Angel. You know, he came to a point I think he's, he's probably in his 30s. Now, where he was, he was trying to talk to his mom, his mother had joined the church and, and she was according to her, she was saved. And that's all she needed. But yet the damage that she put on her kids the abuse, and some of it physical, some of it emotional, had taken a toll. And she was good. She was good with God, but she wasn't good with her kids. And her kids could see, you know, her life. She was great. But all of the resentment and anger that was on her kids hearts toward her wasn't fixed. And it wasn't until she

realized, oh, no, I did make mistakes. And it wasn't until she thought forgiveness. And forgiveness on the kids part didn't necessarily come easy, right? Because even when we make mistakes, there's sometimes consequences to our prior actions. Just because we may be loved and we may be forgiven by God. There's still sometimes work to be done with our family, our friends, people that we may have been wrong. Or you know, we may have done something in the past that could have consequences for us. So even though we love God and we know we are forgiven, we have to be mindful of if we've done something in the past. We need to seek forgiveness. Amen. That's hard to do. It's hard to do. Especially when you feel like you are in the right, I know I was right. But we have to sit we have to follow David's example of humility.

When I when I look at David's psalm.... where is it? But essentially he's seeking, let me hear joying, gladness, Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me. God's love is so great, and that God's love should produce joy in our hearts. Joy is joy is different from happiness. Because happiness can be external we can we can be happy about something that's happening to us. But joy is that quiet confidence that we can have, knowing that we are loved that we are forgiven, and that we can go forth with God and accomplish what God desires for us. Amen. So God's love should bring joy to us. Because salvation comes from God. May you have joy.

And what does David desire to offer God in verse 17? It says, My sacrifice, oh, God is a what kind of spirit? A broken spirit. How many of you feel that you're all put together? Everything's great. Okay, nobody raised their hands, which is acknowledgement of we know that we are not perfect, right? But it is only by God's love and grace, that all things are possible. And in our brokenness, may we offer to God a broken and contrite, honest heart. Maybe go to God for who you are. Not for trying to magically or trying to say, well, this is who I am, but not really because God knows who we really are. Let's not try to lie to ourselves. God loves us for where we are, no matter what. But may you like David, may you go to God when you make a mistake, To say, God, I am truly sorry forgive me.

When we talk about God's love there, there are a number of verses that we can go to. One of the one of the beautiful promises that I sound in is Micah 7:19, you will again have compassion on us you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl our iniquities into the depths of the sea. How deep is the sea, and its lowest point. I think it's at the Mariana Trench. It's like 29, almost 30,000 feet. It's pretty deep, amen. And God, essentially, it's as if he will hurl all our iniquities our mistakes our sins into the depths of seas. Another passage says, I will remember them, I will not remember them anymore. And finally, when it comes to forgiveness, may God May we also seek forgiveness, but we also in Colossians 3:13, may we bear with each other forgive one another is if anyone has a grievance against someone, forgive as the Lord forgave you. Because we need God's great forgiveness, and God desires to give us forgiveness. But if we truly want to be a people of God, not only should we ask and receive forgiveness, but we should also seek forgiveness and grant forgiveness amongst our fellow brothers and sisters. Amen. That was not as easy. But when we have those difficult conversations, when we seek forgiveness, and we grant forgiveness, especially when we grant forgiveness, the things that we've been maybe harboring against somebody, that weight is lifted. How many of you have sought forgiveness, or grant forgiveness? And all of a sudden, it felt like this 1000 pound gorilla was off your back, amen. And that's when true healing can take place when we can really let go.

So my friends, where in your life am I in denial of or need to grow? And what changes do I need to make? Here's the challenging part. But you pray and seek forgiveness with God, but also one person in

your life. And I would also say maybe there's one person in your life who maybe is no longer alive but you still harbor this anger towards them. Maybe it's time to let it go. Maybe you're not able to be able to call them or talk to them. But mentally, or maybe write a letter to them and say, I forgive you. And from their healing can take place. Never doubt my friends, the love that Jesus has for us. Because God's love is bigger and greater than anything that we could ever imagine. God loved us because he actually came and lived amongst God's people. That in itself is a great act of love and devotion. So may you be well go with faith, live doubtlessly. And may God bless you, Father in heaven. Thank you for your great love for us. Be with us and all that we do. Forgive us of our sins, Lord, and thank you, Lord, for your great love in Jesus name. Amen.

Grace and peace, everybody.