

Guest Preacher - Mr Stuart King (North Harris)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 November 2025

Preacher: Mr. Stuart King

- [0:00] Well, just for a few moments, we will look at really just the first verse of the psalm that we read. Psalm 51. The first verse of the psalm says, Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.
- So I want us really just to look at this one passage with three points that I would hope that we can maybe hang our hat on this evening, just as we navigate through this one verse.
- And the first point that we'll explore is David's cry. So we'll look to hear what David's cry is. Then we'll look at David's confidence, where it's found, what that's in.
- And then just as we close, we'll spend a short bit of time just looking then at David's cleansing. But I want to start off with a story that I had read in my preparations for this.
- Now, I'll say a name, and I'm sure instantly you'll know who this person is, and you'll have an understanding of what this person has done. So if I said the name Sir Alfred Nobel, I'm sure most of you would probably go to the Nobel Prize, the founder of that prize, which has had some recent publicity.
- [1:21] As it comes on every year, our friend across the water was keen to win the Peace Prize, which he didn't. But Alfred Nobel was the one who founded the Nobel Peace Prize.
- But I wonder if any of you know that he was also the inventor of dynamite. Some of you maybe know that. Some of you maybe don't know that. But he actually invented dynamite before he did anything to do with the Nobel Peace Prize.
- But I'm just going to read this extract of a story where they spoke about Alfred Nobel. And he believed when he invented dynamite that that would be the invention that would make war so horrible that it would never happen again.
- Because it would become so awful, so terrible, that no one in their right mind would be willing to inflict that kind of terror on somebody else. But surprisingly, he was wrong.
- Instead of ending wars, dynamite made them more devastating and wide-ranging than they had ever been before. And Alfred himself was horrified. But he also had no idea what to do.
- [2:26] He also, at the same time, it has to be said, made an absolute fortune from the sale of dynamite. And then something happened. Something interesting happened to Alfred. One morning, it was around the turn of the century, he awoke to read his own obituary.
- And it read this, Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, who died yesterday, devised a way for more people to be killed in any war than ever before.
- He died a very rich man. And that was it. That was all he read in this newspaper. What he had read was, in fact, his brother's obituary. It should have been his brother's obituary.
- But the newspaper had made a mistake. His older brother had passed away, but they got the names mixed up, and he read his own obituary. And you can imagine that that obituary had a profound effect on Alfred.
- And he realised, at this moment, he didn't want to be known primarily as the person who developed the most effective killing machine of his generation, and amassed a fortune doing so.

[3 : 35] So what did he do? Well, he founded the Nobel Peace Prize, an award for scientists and writers who foster peace. Alfred Nobel himself said, Every man ought to have the chance to correct his epitaph in midstream and write a new one.

Alfred Nobel was given a chance to make a change, to change the legacy that he had here on earth. And he was willing to change. He was willing to change that legacy and see something good come from his life.

And the reason I bring that in here is, I think a lot of what I want to focus on here is change. I want us to think about change. What does it mean in the context of this psalm?

And change itself can be so disruptive. I don't have to say to all of you, no doubt you've felt change, whether that's in school, whatever it may be, going from one class to the next. But the reality is change is often necessary.

We have to have change in many aspects of our life. I work in the health board, and in one of the meeting rooms in the health board offices, there's a well-known poster, and it's somebody shouting out to a group of people, saying, Who wants change?

[4 : 48] Every single person puts their hand up. And in the picture below says, Who wants to change? And nobody puts their hand up. So we all expect that change is inevitable, but changing and being somebody that's subject to change can often be very difficult.

And it can be something in your family. It might be a change even in your own health or your financial situation. Not all of us like change. And as I mentioned in my role, I work for NHS Western Isles, and as part of that, I deal with what's called organisational change.

So it may be that there's a service or a department that's going to be changing, might change the way they deliver their service, and we have to go through a period of change. And staff are rightly often reluctant to change.

There's usually a lot of question marks around what that change might be. Is it going to be better? Are we going to end up worse off? It's not something that we're naturally comfortable with. We don't like change.

And it's the same even away from a work environment and away from a family setting. It's the same in churches. Change where a minister may be called elsewhere. It could be a change where pews are moved, change to seats, and not everyone is comfortable with the change.

[5 : 58] Vacancies themselves bring a lot of uncertainty, but there's hopefully some blessing to be found in it. My own testimony actually was very pivotal that I was through a vacant period within the congregation in Downvale.

So there can be a blessing within it, although it's sometimes difficult for us to see. And so it is with the sinner. While change is difficult for us in a work setting and often in a church setting, it's the same in our own lives.

And the example that we have here from David is one where we see that need to come with a genuine longing to change. And it's a question for us maybe to ask, can we truly claim that we are confessing our sin if we're not committing to change?

Thomas Boston, one of my own favourite writers, says, It is a sorrow for sin as sin, not only for the guilt of it, but the loathsomeness of it. Not only for the ill it does to ourselves, but the dishonour and wrong it does to a holy, gracious God.

And true repentance only really comes out of being authentic with ourselves, facing that reality of the sin in our lives. Just think about your own desires.

[7 : 10] Do you have a genuine desire for repentance and change in your own life and in the life of those around you that you witness to? Or are you on the opposite side where your view is that you can repent of your sins, but not truly commit to changing your ways?

And if that is you, then we need to pray earnestly about this in our own lives and take the lessons from David here in Psalm 51. Psalm 32, you don't need to turn near in your Bibles.

Verses 1 and 2 of Psalm 32. It says, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto while the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

It says, Blessed are the forgiven. And this Psalm, Psalm 51, serves as a poignant reminder of the need for repentance in our lives. And as we explore these verses, let us open our hearts and our minds to the transformative power of God's grace through his word.

But before we delve into the Psalm, we need to understand a little bit of the backdrop to this heartfelt prayer from David. This was David, the man after God's own heart.

[8 : 26] He committed a grievous sin. In a moment of weakness, David succumbed to temptation, leading to adultery and to murder. Now what we read of here, and what we're aware of here in this passage, the context that underlies it, is a historic account.

This is not just a story. There is a historic element to this. There needs to be no assumptions made here. We're told at the beginning, before even verse 1, we're told there what this Psalm is.

And it's to the choir master, a Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba. We're told of the context here.

We're told that David wrote it. And he wrote it on the occasion when Nathan challenged him concerning the sin in his own life. Morgan, one of the commentators, said, this great song, pulsating with the agony, sin-stricken soul, helps us to understand the stupendous wonder of the everlasting God, the everlasting merciful God.

And for that context, so we speak there of Nathan, where did that happen? And if you read, you don't need to go there just now, but maybe this evening it would be helpful to read 2 Samuel chapter 12.

[9 : 45] And there you will read the story where Nathan pointed out to King David that his own actions were not in keeping with his own judgment of others. And it's the same in our own day.

We often can condemn others, but we're warned in Matthew chapter 7. If you want to go there, feel free. Matthew chapter 7. We'll read the first five verses, or if you aren't able to go to that passage, I'll just read it just now.

I'll read it in its entirety. So Matthew chapter 7, verses 1 to 5 says, Judge not that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged.

And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, let me take that speck out of your eye when there is that, where is the log in your own eye?

You hypocrite. First, take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. We so often condemn others and maybe even in our own homes, in our workplaces, but we're told here a significant challenge, and we see that David wrote this and he penned this in a very similar circumstance where he was challenged on his own behavior.

[11 : 07] Yet in spite of the fact that David knew what he was doing was wrong, he continued to try and conceal the sin in his life. He gave in to temptation and he let his eyes wander with Bathsheba.

Not only that, but he was so hopelessly overwhelmed by the need to cover up what he had done that it led him to commit murder of one of his faithful soldiers.

One writer says, before you yield to temptation, look back and recall God's goodness to you. Look ahead and remember the wages of sin.

Look around and think of all the people who may be affected by what you do. Then look up and ask God for the strength to say no. This is one of the lowest points in David's life.

Again, as I said earlier, this is the man after God's own heart. The Bible itself tells us this. He used disguise, he used dishonesty to cover up his adultery.

[12:10] And God then began to deal with David. David thought he had done what he had done in private. He thought no one will be affected by this. I'll just go and do what I want to do and it will be hidden.

But God knows and he sees all things in our lives. We can conceal absolutely nothing from him. He knows and sees everything.

So how do we know? Reading at this one verse, how do we know that David was genuine in his repentance? Well, that's what I want us just to consider that first point. David's cry. Like a glimmer of hope amidst the darkness, David's repentance shines through.

He comes to the Lord with a broken and contrite heart, acknowledging his sin and seeking forgiveness and restoration. This demonstrates to us that no matter how grave our sins may be, there is always room for repentance in God's loving arms.

David begins the psalm with those first words, have mercy on me. We see a cry from his very soul as it pleads for mercy, not just for justice, but for mercy.

[13:26] David acknowledges his sin. He doesn't make excuses. He doesn't see a list of reasons why he was tempted. He acknowledges his sin and he asks for mercy.

He doesn't try to justify it. He doesn't try to blame others. And true repentance begins with acknowledging our wrongdoing before God. We must humbly admit our sins, bringing them into the light of God's truth.

David pleads for God's mercy, understanding that God's love and compassion are greater than the depths of his sin and his wear deep. Likewise, we should come before the Lord, not in despair because of what we've done or even charting back decades in our own lives.

We don't look back in despair, but we look in hope, knowing that his love and his mercy are beyond measure. David realises that sin is not merely a mistake or a slip-up.

It's an offence against God himself. Sin itself damages the relationship with God and with others around us. When we repent, we recognise the seriousness of our actions and their consequences and we seek restoration.

[14:41] this cry from David, have mercy on me, comes from a realisation that he has so terribly sinned that he is nothing but deserving of God's wrath, knowing he cannot reverse or fix what he has done.

There is nothing that any of us can do to buy back favour with God. And we may ask the question, why? Why is that? Why are we unable to buy back favour with God?

The world will tell you, just live a good life, just be good to your neighbours, be kind, be gentle to everyone and you'll be good at the end. But that's not what we're told, that's not what scripture tells us.

And the reason is that the sin is something that we cannot repair. It's not within our gift, it's not within my gift and it's not within your gift to be able to pay God back no matter who you are.

We live in a world that trivialises and even glamourises sin, if we're honest, and its consequences. We must understand, however, the significance of acknowledging, lamenting and ultimately seeking forgiveness for all the sins in our lives.

[15:51] As I said earlier, sin separates us from God and it hinders our spiritual growth. We want to grieve the sin in our lives. And it's maybe a question to ask, do you grieve the sin in your own lives?

I suppose before we can grasp that concept of grieving the sin, we must first comprehend the nature of sin itself and that sin is indeed a rebellion against God's perfect will.

It's an act that violates his holy standards. It disrupts our relationship with him, it damages our fellowship with others and it tarnishes our own souls.

Now sin manifests itself in various forms, whether it's in our actions, in our thoughts or our attitudes, but its consequences are far-reaching. Romans 3.23 reminds us of this.

It says, For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. No one, no one in this room, no one online, no one is exempt from this reality.

[16:57] But grieving sin is a vital response to our fallen nature. As followers of Christ, we should have a godly sorrow for our transgressions.

A genuine sorrow over our sin leads us to seeking forgiveness and transformation, while worldly sorrow merely leads to guilt and despair.

Through grieving your sin, we acknowledge our need for God's mercy and God's grace. I was preaching in Shabbos last Lord's Day evening and I used this quote and I apologize for using the quote because I think it's the fifth sermon I think I've used it and now's going to be the sixth, but it's got such power behind the very short words that Thomas Watson uses here when he thinks of, if you really think about sin in your own lives, I want us to consider whether or not this applies to you, but Thomas Watson says, until sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet.

Until sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet. And it's a question for us to ask. The sin in our own lives, maybe in our minds, the things we think of, the places we go where we ought not to go in our minds, do they taste bitter or have they become just part of your routine throughout the week?

But until that sin becomes bitter, the sweetness of Christ will not come through. The first step, really, towards grieving sin is recognising the presence of it in our lives.

[18:31] We must honestly assess ourselves and confront those areas where we have fallen short of God's standard. This process requires humility, it requires introspection, where we allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the sins in our lives, those unmortified sins in our lives.

And the only hope that David had here in this psalm was to repent. And it's the same for us here this evening in Barvis. Wherever you've been over this last week, whatever you've done over the recent decades in your own life, we must come to the Lord and ask for mercy.

We must remember, however, that David was a servant of God. Yet he doesn't petition here by saying, have mercy upon me, your servant. No, he just says, have mercy upon me, O God, the one to whom I am accountable, the one who will rightly judge me for my sins.

Where there is that true, genuine repentance, the sinner will realise that they are at the mercy of God and God alone. David pleads for God to cleanse him, recognising that only God can purify our hearts and make us clean.

And it's through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that our sins are washed away. God's grace is a powerful force that can turn even the most broken heart into something beautiful.

[20:01] David desires a renewed heart and a steadfast spirit. And that repentance involves not just asking for forgiveness, forgiveness, but also seeking that transformation in our hearts and in our lives.

And there's a few young ones, I'm not going to ask you to speak back to me, but you can maybe just give me a nod. Have you ever had popcorn before? Yeah. That was nearly a shake of the head.

That was a shock. Think about popcorn. If I gave you a bag of popcorn or a bag of kernels that haven't quite turned into popcorn, which one would you choose? Probably the bag of popcorn.

I would think so. I would hope so anyway. There would be questions to be asked, but the reason I use the popcorn kernel as an example is nobody would just sit and eat a bag of kernels because we would know, well, dental, we'd have to bring in some new dentists, but none of us would have teeth.

But there's no taste. There's nothing nice about just eating the popcorn kernel, but it's only once it goes through that change, once heat has been applied to it, that we then start to get an aroma.

[21:04] We start to even smell popcorn. We then taste the sweetness or whatever flavour you want to put in. It's only after that change that it becomes something that we're attracted to. And it should be the same in our own lives.

We should be desiring that we are changed and transformed for God's glory. We must allow God to change us from the inside out, purifying our hearts and renewing our spirits.

In his grace, God not only forgives us, but also restores us to a place of joy and intimacy with him. David longs for the joy of God's salvation to be restored in his life.

And when we truly repent, we experience the overwhelming joy of being reconciled with God. That weight of guilt and shame is lifted.

You just think of pilgrim's progress. That burden has been lifted. We can then walk in freedom. We can walk with joy that comes from knowing we are forgiven and loved by our heavenly Father.

[22:08] But we're seeing here that David's asking for mercy. Have mercy on me. So what is mercy? Well, it's something, it's when something, it's when someone does something for you purely out of compassion.

They seek to act for your good, not because you've earned it, not because you've deserved it, but purely out of kindness. David was clearly in a state of distress here.

Yet he knew it would be a lot worse if he was to die in the situation he was in. He would have absolutely had had eternity in view. David knew at this moment he would not have been fit and proper, a fit and proper candidate for heaven.

So he pleads for God to act mercifully and to show favour to him. And is this a position that you can identify with? That's a question I ask myself. Will you come to the Lord knowing that you have nothing, nothing in your locker to merit his mercy and all you can do is simply ask like David does here, have mercy on me.

Have you ever truly felt that repentance where you're under distress and there is nothing to relieve you of that other than coming to him who knows you inside and out.

[23:23] If not, then I would urge you friends today to do so. And I speak to myself first and foremost when I say that. we have to have that genuine repentance.

So we've seen there David's cry. What was he doing and why was he crying out? Now let's just move on to our second point which is David's confidence. That true genuine repentance and that cry for mercy it's not just simply that cry for mercy.

It's important to understand where that cry is directed. Just think of a child that's outside playing or hurts themselves. I've got a ten year old and a three year old and the three year old will often stumble around and if we go outside and we fall in the middle of Tarbot somewhere she's not going to get up and just go to the first adult she sees.

She's not going to go to the first house that she sees. She's going to go and run to someone she knows that loves her. So she'll come to her parents or she'll maybe come to her sister depending if they're getting on that day.

They don't just go to anyone. They go to the person that they know will look after them and David's cry here is to God. It's to God knowing that he is directing it to a loving and a merciful God.

[24:36] He says have mercy on me O God according to your steadfast love according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgression.

His plea here is to a God that is steadfast in his love and abundant in mercy. Therefore when he cries he also has a hope and we have a hope if we cry out this evening.

I don't know if anyone here has ever worked in a call centre or a place a customer service where you've had to collect debt from individuals. I used to work for Scottish Power when I first came out of school and part of that was to collect people's payments for overdue bills.

It was a joy. But one of the things that we were taught in our training was if somebody owes and if they're not able to pay you you need to get some sort of payment up front. So if somebody owed £2,000 on a bill even just £50 or £100 we wanted to be able to see something from them and the reason that they did that is there was a desire from the organisation to see a seriousness and a commitment to show that they were truly ready to pay that debt off in the agreed time.

And sometimes it's like that for the sinner. We maybe reduce the sin in our lives or we minimise it or we possibly even weigh it up against our church attendance. Maybe you've been to every service over the last couple of years or you've not missed a prayer meeting in decades.

[26:07] We can often try to think that was just a small thing I did in my life. It didn't affect anyone didn't bother anyone and you'll weigh it up against the life that you're living. But it's the wrong way for us to approach sin.

God doesn't expect any contribution. Why? Well because you cannot contribute. Our hearts and our minds are so defiled they are so, so sinful.

He must be the one that does the work to cleanse and to wash you. All we can do, all David can do is come to God crying that he will deal with us mercifully.

And that's what we see from David and that's what we should be doing in our own lives. Verse 16 of the Psalm says, For you will not delight in sacrifice or I would give it.

You will not be pleased with a burnt offering. David himself is telling us clearly that God will not delight in sacrifice. He will not delight in the things that we maybe think we can do.

[27:07] His hope does not lie in being able to offer sacrifice or burnt offerings but solely by the steadfast love and abundant mercy that brings hope to the sinner.

When the sinner truly repents of their sins they grieve that sin and are acutely aware of the gravity of the sin. It's not something you just brush off as having no great concern in your life.

And again on the flip side we often see the unrepentant sinner tries to minimise and negate the seriousness of their sins. Maybe they say it can't have been that bad. Other people have sinned far more than I have.

Or maybe it was something in their mind and nobody was affected by it. Maybe I went on to that website I shouldn't have gone on to but it didn't affect anyone. Nobody was troubled by that. Surely God understands the pressure that I'm in.

Surely God understands that it was maybe other people that led me down that path. Friends, if you have a small view of sin you will not see the immensity of God.

[28:09] Matt Smithhurst an American writer wrote we have never committed a small sin because we have never offended a small God. We have never committed a small sin because we have never offended a small God.

By blaming others you're ignoring your own responsibility and you lose sight of the magnitude of sin. We each ought to be conscious of our sinful wretched hearts this very evening by sharing in David's confidence that our hope is in God who is full of abundant mercy and steadfast love.

That is why David cries in such a way to God. Today though in 2025 we however have one advantage that David did not have at the time of penning this psalm and we have the events of Jesus' birth his death and his resurrection for us to reflect upon.

David was looking forward to the ultimate sacrifice that was to come and we see the answer to David's longing in this psalm at the cross. If anyone has ever doubted that the God of heaven is loving and merciful then we just need to look at the sending of his only son who died on the cross.

Perhaps this evening you're overwhelmed by the sin in your life. Maybe even more concerningly you're not. You're blaming others or you're reducing the weight of the sin in your life.

[29:40] You're brushing it off like there are no consequences to come. Then I urge you to look to God and ask him to have mercy on you. So we've seen David's cry.

We've seen the cry at the beginning of the psalm. We've then seen his confidence not in himself but in God and in God alone. I want us to now just look very shortly at David's cleansing in this verse.

True repentance is not just about crying to God the God that is steadfast in love and abundant in mercy but it's also a cry for cleansing. Just look at the end of verse 1 there. According to your steadfast love according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

David was aware that for these sins to be neglected by him was to see him destined for a lost eternity. He knew these sins needed to be erased from his record on the day of judgment hence those words blot out my transgression.

And this is the core issue with all of mankind. We are all born sinners full of selfishness lies and hatred. We're full of all kinds of little sins from so young.

[30:55] I mentioned my three year old. It doesn't take long for them to lie if you've got grandchildren or if you've got children yourself. You ask them if they ate the biscuits and their mouth is covered in chocolate and they say no.

So we see from a very very young age those little sins are there from so young. We grow up however we don't stay young children and our sins get more and more complicated.

They get darker. We try to disguise and conceal them just like we see there from David and you would read that again in 2 Samuel chapter 12. But one of the great American theologians Jonathan Edwards I think he was 19 when he wrote this.

He wrote a series of resolutions and it's one for us a very challenging one for us to maybe take away. Jonathan Edwards resolved never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.

Very challenging one for us to take away and it's a question is that you is that me do we live our lives in a way where we've got our eyes on eternity. So I want us in closing to think if we accept our sins need to be dealt with then the most important dilemma facing us today is not immigration it's not ferry issues it's not the cost of living even the cost of houses on our islands but it's our sinful hearts and the need for forgiveness for ourselves and for those around us.

[32 : 28] All other issues in our life should be reduced to the smallest of problems that they truly are if we have a right view of the sin in our lives. Will God open the record book of your life and say that the sin has been dealt with?

Does he say to you well done good and faithful servant we should pray for the ministers on our islands and in our denomination and for your own future minister of the Lord's choosing we should pray for them as they faithfully and diligently share God's word with the lost souls in our nation.

We see across the denomination that the issues of not just not our own denomination but we see across many different denominations that the issue of sin and hell are not rightly dealt with.

You may go to some congregations in some areas and I've been to some myself where the word sin the word hell you'll almost never hear it and you get this soft diluted version of the gospel.

Many will shirk away from those words like hell and sin but it's a blessing to know that the ministries here on our islands and in our denomination will not lead people down a rose-tinted path to a lost eternity.

[33 : 50] So what do you need to do here in Barvis this evening? If you hear his voice, what do we need to do? Well, all he asks of us is that we repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness.

To say, as the psalmist said, have mercy on me, blot out my transgressions. Have you done that yet? Have you come to God and said, have mercy on me?

This is the true nature of repentance. David understands that God desires a genuine repentance, a contrite heart, more than mere religious rituals.

True worship flows from a heart that has been humbled before God, seeking his forgiveness and surrendering to his will. And as we conclude, let us remember that repentance is not a one-time event, but it's a lifelong journey.

Just as King David turned to God in repentance, we too must continually examine our hearts, confess our sins, and seek God's forgiveness for those of us who have not done so.

[34 : 57] Just remember those words from Thomas Watts, until sin is bitter, Christ will not be sweet. Through repentance, we open ourselves to that transformative power of God's grace, experiencing the joy of salvation and the restoration of our relationship with him.

May we, like David, be people who humbly acknowledge our sins, seek God's mercy, and allow his grace to cleanse and renew us.

Let us be bearers of his forgiveness and mercy, leading others to that life transforming power of repentance. But as we close, what about those among us, maybe in the building here or online, what about those who are not yet Christians?

Look at verse 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. David emphasizes that he wants God to work in the innermost parts of his being.

He doesn't say, Lord, help me to create a clean heart in myself. He doesn't say, Lord, tell me all I need to do to change my own heart. No, he simply says, create in me a clean heart, O God.

[36 : 15] The change that has to take place in our hearts is not something any human being has the power to create. I don't have the power to create it, and you don't have the power to create it in yourself.

That's why, like the well-known hymn, we just have to say, nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling. Simply look up to him and thank him for being a merciful and loving God to you.

Something that is so evident in the sending of his only son to die for you. The entire message here of Psalm 51 is that true cleansing and renewal comes from God, not from you.

If you feel the burden of your past mistakes, or the impossibility of fixing your life on your own, we can take David's example here, to cry out for mercy.

God is waiting to receive you and to create a clean heart in you, not because you're strong enough, but because he is merciful enough. Just think again of that kind of popcorn kernel.

[37 : 22] You must trade the heart to one that is like flesh, one that is sweet and gives off a wonderful aroma of Christ himself.

And I would urge you today to ask him to have mercy on you today, and that the records in heaven will have your sins blotted out. Amen, and may the Lord bless these very short reflections on his word.

We'll close with a word of prayer before we sing. Our gracious and ever-blessed Father, again, Lord, we thank you that we have the words of the psalmist here to be able to reflect upon, Lord, and we ask that especially for those of us who have not yet done so, that we would indeed cry out for mercy, not according to anything we bring to the table, not according to anything we can do, not according to anything we have done, but according solely to your steadfast love and your abundant mercy, Lord.

So we ask that you would speak to us this evening, that we would indeed go away and chew upon this word, read upon it, reflect inwardly and prayerfully ask that the sin in our lives that we have maybe even forgotten about, that just happened subconsciously, that you would reveal them to us, that we would grieve the sin in our lives, and that we would indeed be able to say that it's a true thing that happens in our life, where the sin in our lives is bitter, and that points us to Christ that is perfectly sweet, Lord.

So we pray that you would speak to us this evening, Lord, be with the congregation here again, we ask that you would be with the office bearers and all that come to the congregation here, Lord, we pray that you would continue to bless them, go before them in all that they do, Lord, forgive us for all of our sins, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

[39 : 09] We will conclude by singing again from the Scottish Psalter, this time from Psalm 25, Psalm 25 and we'll sing the first seven verses of the psalm, I think a particular emphasis on verse 7, So to thee I lift my soul, O Lord, I trust in thee, my God, let me not be ashamed, nor foes triumph, or me, let none that wait on thee be put to shame at all, but those that without cause transgress, let shame upon them fall.

To the end of verse 7, and that verse I think is really important, my sins and faults of youth do thou, O Lord, forget, after thy mercy, think on me, and for thy goodness great.

So we'll sing this Psalm 25, the first version, from verses 1 down to the end of verse 7, to God's praise. To thee I lift my sword, O Lord, I trust in thee, my God, let me not be ashamed, nor force die out for me, let not that wait on thee be put to shame at all, but those that with a close trust rest let shame upon they'll fall.

Show me thy ways, O Lord, thy path, so teach thou me, and do thou lead me in thy truth, therein my teacher be, for thou art called that does to be salvation's end, and I have for thee over day expect to attend.

Thy tender mercies, Lord, I pray thee to remember a loving kindnesses for thee, I'll be noble forever, my sins and faults of youth, do thou will Lord forget after thy mercy think on me and for thy goodness great.

[43 : 36] We'll conclude with the words at the end of the book of Jude. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever.

Amen.