

A FRESH START STRONGER THAN YOUR REGRETS

VIDEO TWO

In Psalm 51, we hear the prayer of a king called David in the throes of regret.

Rightfully so.

The actions which lie behind his prayer are horrific. Seeing a woman named Bathsheba bathing in private, David abuses his power as king, forcing her to sleep with him. When he discovers she is pregnant, David then tries to cover his tracks. It leads to him murdering the woman's husband and taking her as his own wife.

This psalm gives us a window into David's deep regret as he realises the evil of what he has done. But it also shows us something surprising: the hope of a life beyond regret, even for someone like David.

The opening of the prayer is striking. David doesn't suppress his wrongdoing and regret. He acknowledges it in its ugliness:

'I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.'

The memory of his evil plays on repeat – David can't escape the fact he's sinned. And he sees that his abuse is ultimately an insult to the God in whose image those he abused were made.

Acknowledging wrongdoing – and acknowledging its offence to God – is the first step to finding life beyond regret.

Indeed, it seems that God intentionally made David feel the weight of his guilt. David speaks how God 'crushed his bones'. God pressed onto David the realisation of his wrong.

Why?

So that David might reach out to Him and be cleansed of his guilt.

And as he reaches out, the effects on David are dramatic. David's prayer shows that he's not suppressing his regrets, or clinging onto them either. Instead of experiencing life-sapping regret, David senses the hope of 'joy and gladness.' He sees the chance of a fresh start – living life looking forwards, not backwards.

How can David be so confident of this fresh start?

Partly, because he is confident in the character of God. David knows God to be merciful and compassionate. More deeply, David knows that – if God washes him – he will be clean. His guilt will be washed away, making him 'white as snow'.

We might find it scandalous. An evil man like David, given a fresh start by God?

We might even say it's unjust.

Yet God is not in the business of sweeping evil under the carpet. He isn't indifferent to the wrongs David has done – or to the wrongs we've done either.

No, one thousand years later, Jesus will come. The just judgement that David's wrong, and our wrong, deserves, was poured fully on him. Jesus was willingly made dirty with our guilt, so that we could be made clean, washed whiter than snow.

Psalm 51 says: if the God of the universe cleans you, you *will* be clean. No matter what you think of yourself, or what others think of you. Even if you can't undo the damage you've done, each of us is offered a fresh start. Freedom to live life looking forwards, not backwards.

You may feel the sting of regret. Rather than suppressing the feeling, or walking around trapped by it, could your regret be the very thing that God is using to cause you to reach out to him?

Knowing his cleansing, you can be free from the apathy and crippling fear that regret can bring. And certain that he wants to use you, together, to invite your campus to know the same freedom of this forgiveness.