

**Face the Issue:**

This week, Jeremy focused on salvation. He reminded us that we all are in need of safety but there is only one source of true safety; Jesus Christ. Christ is our only hope. If we want to be saved, it is as simple as believing in Him. It is that simple.

If it is that simple, why does it seem so hard? The fact is, belief and confession of Christ as Savior is the moment of salvation but that moment cannot happen unless we first come to grips with the fact that we NEED saving. This past Sunday, we sang the old hymn "At the Cross". We sang the line, "*sinner* such as I". When this song was originally written, the phrase was "*such a worm* as I". In today's culture, it might be written as "*a victim* such as I".

Why is it so hard for people to think of themselves as sinners?

Has the way people perceive their status in terms of sin changed over the years?

Into the Word:

We are given a tremendous example of recognition of a sinful state and true repentance in the story of King David and the prophet Nathan. The story is found in 2 Samuel 11-12 but here is the summary:

David committed adultery with Bathsheba. He then conspired to have her husband, Uriah, murdered. Later, the prophet Nathan confronted David about these sins. The child that resulted from David's affair with Bathsheba was ill at the time of its birth, so David fasted and prostrated himself before the Lord for seven days. When the child died, David resumed his life.

When Nathan went before the king with his tale of a poor shepherd whose only sheep had been stolen by the evil herd-owner next door, David got the message. He, with his many wives, had stolen Uriah's only wife, then had him killed. David broke three commandments. His confession was immediate. So was his absolution. As soon as David said, "I have sinned against the Lord," Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin" (2 Sam. 12:13).

But Samuel does not record what was happening in David's heart when he was on his face before God. David himself wrote that account in Psalm 51, the great account of confession and repentance.

Turn to Psalm 51.

Read this Psalm of in the following sections and discuss each section separately in your group. What are some key words, phrases, and ideas that you see.

1. Prayer for personal repentance (vv. 1–2)
2. Confession of the sin that inhibits God's blessing (vv. 3–6)
3. Prayer for restoration (vv. 7–12)

4. Thanksgiving and pledge to share God's blessing (vv. 13–17)
5. Prayer for national repentance (vv. 18–19)

Action Step

Look again at verse 18.

Do you think of yourself as a sinner? Do you want to?

In what ways is it spiritually healthy to accept yourself as a sinner?

Can the label "sinner" keep us from moving beyond sinning? In our twelve-step age, might the term "recovering sinner" be helpful in understanding the continuing nature of repentance?

Will you make ongoing repentance a spiritual goal this year? If so, how?

"Lord, thank you for Your word that reveals to us just how much we are in need of a Savior. Thank you for loving us so much that you gave us Your Son as that Savior. Forgive us for our sins. Help us to live lives of continual repentance. Lord, we also ask that You remind us that everyone is in this same need. Place a burden for the lost in our hearts. Help us to love the lost and give us wisdom to share the Gospel of Christ with them. Amen."