

Seventh Sunday of Easter: Psalm 51:1–12

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The insanity of it all. The foolishness of it all. This could alter one's idea of God.

Job is reputed to be the oldest book in the Bible. It is known as the book of wisdom. Take a look at the strangeness of this culture, and how strange this would appear to American religion. "Well, I've heard that before." I know. We all have.

What stands out to you? How about the first verse about whom this is going to happen to. Just incase you thought this was going to happen to a bad man, although some things do happen to us because we are at odds with God. We like to identify with Job at times when God is working in our finances, families, etc. Beware of co-opting God's word.

Job 1:1 (KJV) There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

Beware least you say, "that's me," and these things ...I've trusted myself, lived in my mind which isn't pure at all, and my mouth isn't even clean because of my anger and my independence.

Job 1:8 (KJV) And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Job 1:12 (KJV) And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

"Well, I don't know if I like a God who tells Satan to give it his best shot."

Job 1:14-19 (KJV) And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: [15] And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. [16] While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is

fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. [17] While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. [18] While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: [19] And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Paper by Nestingen on Abraham.

The heart of man wants to resolve some of the stories add spins to make it a moral story, so that we can remove the tension and save our life. There are all these things in God's Word that we put assumed meanings. We presuppose the company line. This isn't the company line. It is God's Word. And it leaves us with a few questions, hopefully.

Job 2:4-6 (KJV) And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. [5] But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. [6] And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

Beware you don't co-opt and think things have befallen you the same was as Job.

You live in the world, and there is suffering in the world that we wish we could get away from. Wouldn't it be great? "I just want things to go well," said Mike Peterson, who spoke for me and perhaps all of us.

Then, there is God's law. There is a temptation to think in your heart, and use the scripture to say, "We're not under the law." The problem is, there are two of you, and they are simultaneous.

If you don't act on God's Word there are consequences. A lot of the slander that comes against God and his church, particularly here, is that "they're putting a law on me." Let me say this to you: You ought to go into the world and find out,

The Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, Nestingen said, are not necessarily Christian. There is a natural law in all the world and the Ten Commandments codified all the laws in the world.

You may think you can commit adultery with your neighbor's wife; after all, she's better looking. This is civil. The natural law was in the world even before it was codified, on the mountain, when God wrote the Ten Commandments, the ten words, on the tablets. Go anywhere in the world and go and find out if you don't care for your children. There are some places, like Muslim countries, if a woman is caught in adultery, she is stoned. If you steal something, your hand will be cut off. People still steal and get their hands cut off.

Someone was saying they were out at Costco and some Muslim ladies there, with burkas, but they had designer jeans and high heels. Bless them, Lord. What does that say to you? They are living under the law. There is no law in the Koran that says you can't wear designer jeans or spiked heels. Law.

The Decalogue is not exclusively Christian. There are these laws all over the place. I can give you a list of 1000 if you pay me \$10 for each one. How many could you come up with?

The lie is: The Church is heavy. Well, go out and steal in the world. You'll get some good stuff until you get caught. Children that dishonor their parents, still reap their whole life. You see children that honor their parents, they are blessed. This is assuming their parents are real parents. I've heard stories of some parents, and it would be hard to defend some fathers I've heard of to their children.

Did Job sin? That is something I can't answer for you. We could be honest and look at it. The righteous suffer; they suffer the hatred of the unrighteous. They suffer hatred, persecution, slander - all of it. We don't war though, with flesh and blood. Behind it all are principalities and powers - spirits. If you've seen someone given over to the spirit of lust; "I can look at whatever I want to at my computer." What is that? Hatred. "There is no law above me. God is not going to tell me to keep my mind clean and clear. I'll do what I want. I'm an American, independent."

In the world people are interested in justice. But in the church, we are interested in mercy and justice. It doesn't deny the law. Luther had to battle the Antinomians (Antinomian Disputation) sorrow cannot be anything else than the touch or feeling of the law in your conscience. Until you are forgiven, cleansed, absolved, you will feel that. They don't call it condemnation in the world. They get alcohol or drugs to cover it with temporary relief, but it only gets worse.

David was first killed through the law by David. Paul

Therefore the spirit of the law first convicts

Adam became separated. He hid himself. God loved Adam. God didn't close the door on Adam; Adam closed the door on God.

If relationships of faith, hope and love do not involve the language of the heart, they are not working. But in our own cultural context, the melting pot, this argument is used exclusively to disqualify particularly challenging ultimate claims to unchanging and eternal truths. It is not joined by an equal effort genuinely to qualify, that is, to contextualize at the second level, where we can speak to the heart of what is genuinely demanded as well as given.

Get rid of the letters, LAW and see if there is no law. The codified law just makes it simple. "All I did was kill that guy. What's the big deal?" Jesus calls that hatred - murder.

That is Luther's effort, an enterprise that needs to be continued in the twenty-first century. Luther argued, over and against the move commonly made in our culture, that simply dismissing the law is a "play put on in an empty theater."¹⁹ Writing the law off verbally will only work if the theater is really empty. Real people, living in real situations, face real demands, whether they are codified or even more dangerously, unspecified (they still live in it).

The Ten Commandments, people have no concepts of. The only law they know is their lust. They cannot interpret reality. The only interpretive force in their life is their lust. A Big-Gulp, or a Cadillac, or a thrill. I'm bored. I cannot wait until the Puyallup Fair comes and then we'll have some real fun.

Real people, living in real situations, face real demands, whether they are codified or even more dangerously, unspecified (they still live in it).

Eliminating the word "should" from preaching does not eliminate the inevitable requirements of living in a world of sin and death. All that such verbal elimination accomplishes is driving the requirement temporarily underground, only to have it resurface to claim its pound of flesh, an experience readily observable in family conflicts, sexual misadventures and so forth.

If you eliminate a certain word people don't like, they still live in a world of sin and death.

All that such verbal elimination accomplishes is driving the requirement temporarily underground,

Go to work! "I know I've got five children, but you're putting a law on me." Husbands that are into sin punish their wives, and vice versa. There is only grumbling and complaining - no gratitude.

only to have it resurface to claim its pound of flesh, an experience readily observable in family conflicts, sexual misadventures and so forth. It will come back, demanding its pound of flesh.

Uncomfortable words, not as tolerant, or politically incorrect, you can avoid, but it will come back to bite you. Pinch yourself. You're a real world, unless you're a child and you live in a land of make-believe, and it's all about you anyway.

Thus in this cultural context, amidst such verbal gamesmanship, one task of the confessing church is carefully tending the commanding word. We know that the law will not justify, that in spite of its ultimate claims it can neither give life nor save, that at best it is the rude schoolmaster who needs above all to be taught a set of manners. Just so, seeing through its claims to ultimacy, we need to tend its pen-ultimate values.

I don't know a man or woman in this church who hasn't paid double for their sins. "You got away with it, and that is your punishment." You carry it, push it down, and hide. If you're offended, or hating someone, or envious, or jealous, the very thing is the punishment.

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But finally, our calling is the gospel. The law is going to get through one way or another, if not by the ears, then through some other orifice. The gospel of Christ Jesus is an alien word, antithetical to every human assumption. We do not possess it; it possesses us,

In heavenly places, where we are seated in Christ Jesus, there is no law, for God has fulfilled them all.

You are baptized into Jesus Christ, buried into Baptism. Something then happens. In Romans 7 you discover laws you're not keeping, and hopefully you become wretched. You're not loving your wife, your children, and your neighbor well enough, and hopefully it will make you wretched enough to flee to Jesus. Romans 8 - there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and who are called ...walk not after the flesh

but after the spirit. If you walk after the flesh, there is condemnation. God will not be mocked, even if your mockery is underground, and you don't outwardly curse him. Living a double life is an attempt to mock God.

Tuition? You're putting a law on me. Go ahead. Do what you want. Go get married. Kathryn did. She married Aaron. When I heard that when people would go to the Mariner's Store people would think Aaron was great. It's normal for girls to like boys, and boys to like girls even in this church. If a man looks on a woman to lust after her, do not be mistaken - it is sin. You can put yourself anywhere you'd like, but don't think we're ever going to teach the world's idea of dating. "Well, you're putting a law on us. If we want to lust, we'll lust." Yes, but we're not going to condone it. "Well, I had a bad childhood." When you think of your bad childhood, let me tell you that there are some people in this world...you've been spared so much. There are people in this world who have never known a father or a mother. "You don't need god's laws to tell you that you can't fornicate. You're an independent American. That's just old fashioned law anyway."

Fathers are like Luther in the sense that they are restless, linguistically restless. Mothers are that way too; looking for ways to tell their children something. Religion - the law to make me look good. The best marriages end up happening after 50 years of conflict.

God gave you the Decalogue when you came out of Egypt, but it was always in the world. Move to Iraq if you want some freedom, or Afghanistan. Move to Iran. You're not allowed to have a Bible there. People are threatened by the Bible.

Spouses get angry when people treat them indifferently. There is separation. If your heart is always empty and you're not filling it with the Word, it gets hard. "You're telling me I have to be filled with the Word." No, I don't tell you to do anything anymore. Do what you want.

Psalm 51 - why would God put a nasty story like this in the Bible, about a father, a great king?

Psalm 51:1-2 (KJV) To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. [2] Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

Here's something:

Psalm 51:3 (KJV) For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

The law just came to show you your sin so that you could see what exactly it is that has been killing you and people you claim to love.

Psalm 51:4 (KJV) Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Psalm 51:4-10 (KJV) Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. [5] Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. [6] Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. [7] Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. [8] Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. [9] Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. [10] Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

"I can't take it anymore." So, David comes to God in his affliction as he is reaping for his sin.

Here is his greatest fear: Psalm 51:11 (KJV) Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Without acknowledging our sin, this doesn't happen. We continue to grieve the HG. We send Him away. "I want my knowledge, Jesus. Get out of here. I want to keep my sin, my offence (there is a whole list.)"

If you have a problem, a contention with someone you love, a continual contention, or if you have anything in your life, I want to tell you the solution to that problem is God's presence. Where He is there is peace, joy. The things you thought you could never surmount...

When James Nestingen goes to church he likes to meet real Alcoholics, not "recovering alcoholics." Capon - church should be more like it used to be - where people would get up and confess, and say they are not more powerful than alcohol, or whatever addition it is, particularly glory.

Psalm 51:12 (KJV) Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Truth in the inward parts.

There are consequences. By the way, you may not believe this, but even in the world, if you drive 90, hurt someone, there are consequences. James Nestingen, his son was rebellious, got arrested and put in jail. He told his son there were going to be consequences, but that can never affect what is between you and me. I think that is what David discovered here. David believes that God can cause him to hear joy. If God is not greater than my sin, I may have the wrong god.

Sin has consequences. Blame - people try to justify themselves and that is the heart of Adam.

Jim Durkin - He had a problem, and finally he took it to the head man. He found out who was managing his life, and it wasn't God, even though eh could quote scripture better than any of us, and knew a lot about things, including money. Somebody that bad God would choose? Look at Paul. We become like Gideon; we want to see the miracles our fathers talked about. "I'm not going to do this, fight the Midianites, until I have more assurance."

Isaiah 63:9 (KJV) In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

He did that for us, but...

Isaiah 63:10 (KJV) But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

That is not the last word, but that will get you there. He turned against them. God must first be against us before He is for us. He must find that thing that killed your mother, and kill it. "Why? Why God?"

Isaiah 59:1-2 (KJV) Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: [2] But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

This is what David is more fearful of than any other thing. Don't take your HS from me. Don't send me away from your presence, because without your presence, we can't exist. Where is his presence? Where two or more are gathered in his name. He inhabits the praises, gratitude, of his people.

Your sins have separated you from your God. He has hid his face from you. When he does this, that means he has hid his favor and his blessings from you. We want God's face to smile

upon us.

God gives you a roadmap to heaven, in the Bible.

Psalm 104:29 (KJV) Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

We should ask ourselves sometime, "Lord, why have you hid your face from me?" Whose fault is it?

You could check out the world if you don't like the Ten Commandments, Ten Words, and the shorthand for how to live in this world. The Decalogue is not exclusively Christian. I like that for people who are continually bummed out about laws.

There is enough trouble without the Lord's face being hidden.

Why have you hidden your face...

Ezekiel 14:5 (KJV) That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

True Israel could not stand before their enemies. If you have an idol, even if it is you, your anger, your hatred, you will not stand before your enemies. There is not a man on earth Satan's equal. You'll make your whole life one of watching for evil. Go to McDonald's, and get a job. Even there they have laws. You might have to put special clothing on. They're infringing on your freedom, aren't they? Maybe you could get into a drug cartel, or get into crime. Criminals have more law on them than anyone.

There might be reasons why we're troubled, why God's face, his countenance, his blessing; his favor is being withheld in lives, in families, or in this land. We may not want to see the real reason. If we saw it we might turn, in our hearts, and say, "It is me, Lord."

Job was curious, to be sure. He wanted to know why, and God heard him. Before men Job was righteous. Before God, our righteousness is filthy. God cannot even talk to us face to face. He covers us with his Word, Jesus Christ. All these religions that spring up with direct revelations, like going out in the woods and get in touch with nature, although God is known in the things of nature, or they get mystical, or go live in a desert, or get on a prosperity hype, or a religious hype doing great things for God... How about changing a diaper today?

The way of the transgressor is hard. Also, you could be job. There are areas of your life you are a new creation. In Christ, you are more perfect than job. That will be persecuted to because Satan hates you and is out to kill you. He really is. It is a shame you won't believe that. It happens to be true even if you don't believe it. Maybe you could be turned to God. Any evil thing I will not do, it is because of God's mercy. If you do this, surly death, separation, living a lonely hidden life, isn't any fun. Fun - caring for one another, according to Nestingen. A lot of people in this church aren't having much fun. Who do they care about? Some stories pass beyond iniquity to hilarity, how base, gross and stupid people can become outside of hearing God's Word.

You won't stand if you have an idol. When the un-confessed, un-repentant of sins of your heart

Repentance isn't your work, it's God's Word. He brings us to the "I'm sorry," and he uses the law.

You men, if you look on a woman to lust after her, you are betraying your wife and your children. If you hear this week in and week out and you still hold onto it, go ahead. I sit up here each Sunday waiting to hear confessions.

Looking and thinking has consequences. The wages of sin is death.

Rushdooney: Men who are into pornography, or into an illicit relationship with a woman; they don't care about the woman.

Voice in the morning

Psalm 81

In His presence - which is in his Church, where two or more are gathered.

The righteous, the just shall live by faith, and faith comes by hearing.

Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice. The truth is - there are two of you. The Truth is the Word of God, Jesus Christ. If you love the truth, you hear his voice, even when he speaks through earthen vessels. "You seek proof of Christ speaking in me," Paul said. He could be speaking through you, when His Word is in your mouth, and when your home is filled with His love.

The proof of believing in God is that you care for someone besides yourself. I think that is a miracle. People who come to meetings and bring nothing, and sit there and think about how they've blown it, and you know there has been no washing in that home, and they are all at odds with one another, and what are you going to do between now and then, etc... What if some miracle happened and we receive the HG, and the fruit of the HG, love peace and joy, as gifts, not earned.

Adams 3 - Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. They knew they were naked and they made aprons. They knew a lot. We blame God from being hidden from us.

Acts 3:19 (KJV) Repent ye therefore, and be converted (DAILY), that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Repent; you're living a very solitary, lonely, miserable life. "Do I have to? Is there some trick to it? Am I going to look bad in front of everyone?" Pentecostal - someone coming up to the altar with a snotty nose, crying,

After that, there's nothing left to hide. Everyone knows that sinner now.

Acts 3:19 (KJV) Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Repentance is a gift. Peter repented.

2 Peter 3:2 (KJV) That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

Have you been hearing the prophets today? Be mindful of what they have said. Peter, in the NT, saying be mindful of the prophets in the OT.

2 Peter 3:3 (KJV) Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

What are you sorrowful for? The miserable life you've led.

You don't live in a world where people say, "You're cute. Here's money." "Oh, you're Jim Durkin. Sell me something." No, you live in a real world.

Psalms 16:8-11 (KJV) I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. [9] Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall

rest in hope. [10] For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. [11] Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

These stupid pleasures the world has to offer, the cheap thrills...

Anyone is allowed to change their mind and say, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." is a better deal.

Psalm 32:1-5 (KJV) A Psalm of David, Maschil.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. [2] Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. [3] When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. [4] For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. [5] I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

There is the gospel

Psalm 80:19 (KJV) Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

Don't you love that word, again? The devil will tell you that was one time too many. The Lord is saying to him, his voice, in Israel, in the brethren, in the prophet, Psalm 80:19 (KJV) Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

God's face shines on you in the gospel of Jesus, which not only saves you, but leads you to repentance, confession, sorrow for the life you've led, and to confession. God hears, and it causes his face to shine.

A man who has repented, his mind and heart are open to interpret this scripture here as speaking to him.

Rev. 22:1 (KJV) And he shewed me a pure river of water of life (God's Word to you), clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

His word to you is, "I'm not imputing your sins to you, but I want you to acknowledge them," not because you're doing me any favor. He already knew that when you are separated from his presence, life is not good.

Rev. 22:1-2 (KJV) And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. [2] In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Adam and Eve were cut off from Jesus. Jesus is the tree of life, and his name is the Word of God. Have you been cut off from the Word, mad at the wrong thing again, blaming the wrong thing again? Adam immediately blamed his wife, and God, all in the same breath, that "you gave me." That is historical. It will show what men will do to hide his perfidy, even religious things.

Rev. 22:2 (KJV) In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

His Word is sent to you today to heal the desert, to cause the desert that you once were to blossom, and to bring forth fruit.

This is an eschatological word in the sense that we've already entered into it, but the fullness grows. The tree of life bears fruit, in the former rain, and later comes the latter rain, but still there is the fruit of peace, even for your troubled conscience, your restless soul, your troubled mind. There, they shall see his face, his countenance, his mercy, and that he is no longer imputing sins. He's saying to you, "My beloved, today, in your hearing, all of your sins, I forgive, for the cause and for my Son's sake." Even through a wretch like me, I'm commanded to tell you this. If I don't you need to rebuke me, and absolve me for not absolving you.

Rev. 22:4 (KJV) And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Who are they? Sinners, really wicked people that he became friends with.

SOURCE

Sermon Notes - Don O'Connor - 8/9/09

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)