

“No harm, no foul”

What does “no harm, no foul” mean?

- We shouldn't punish things that bring little harm

When does it apply?

What might be problematic with it?

Related ideas:

- Only things that seem bad actually are bad
- Only things that seem really bad actually are really bad

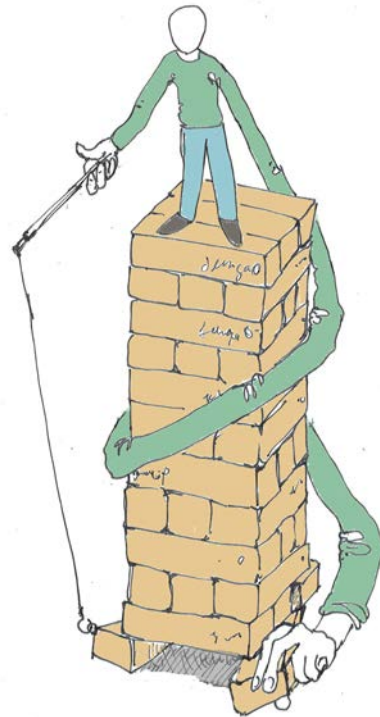
“The devil was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for **there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**” *John 8:44*

Prayer : Open the eyes of our hearts today

1

Seeking God's Mercy Psalm 51

bib.ly/Ps51.NIV
tiny.cc/cmchandouts



2

- God doesn't express disapproval of every wrong
 - Of course it has to be that way!
 - “Tis grace that taught my heart to fear” is serious!
- Sin always harms more than just the sinner
- Biblical vision of marriage
 - 1 man + 1 woman, until death, in perfect faithfulness to each other, honoring and loving the other above oneself
 - Divorce only in narrow circumstances (adultery)
 - Singleness is beautiful too, and sometimes better
 - There is no marriage in heaven
- Context of Old Testament: accepted polygamy, divorce, and imposed marriage, including as political tools

3

King David

2nd King of Israel

- Brought prosperity and unity
- Highly respected during his life and after his death
- Many children from at least 8 wives(!)

4

David's sin related to Uriah and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11-12

- David coveted what was not his, wanting the treasured wife of a poor man as if David's vast riches were not enough
- David abused his power as king to have sexual intercourse with Bathsheba, a married woman whose husband (protector) was at war for David, and in violation of his own multiple marriages
- When he found out she was pregnant, he abused his power to try to deceive and cover his wrongdoing by undermining the honor of Uriah (Bathsheba's husband)
- When he could not, he abused his power to murder Uriah (and killing others along with him), again covering it with lies
- Then he abused his power to bring Bathsheba to be his additional wife, as if everything were okay
- And this went on for at least a year!!

5

The story of David and Bathsheba

- Then Nathan the prophet confronted David

God says: "I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. ... **Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes?**

You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own." *2 Samuel 12:7-10*

6

The story of David and Bathsheba

Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.”

[Psalm 51]

Nathan replied, “The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the son born to you will die.”

2 Samuel 12:13-14

7

Psalm 51

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

*When the prophet Nathan came to him
after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.*

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

transgressions, iniquity, sin = going against God's good ways

8

For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is always before me.
 Against you, you only, have I sinned
 and done what is evil in your sight;
 so you are right in your verdict
 and justified when you judge.
 Surely I was sinful at 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.

9

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
 wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
 Let me hear joy and gladness;
 let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
 Hide your face from my sins
 and blot out all my iniquity.
 Create in me a pure heart, O God,
 and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
 Do not cast me from your presence
 or take your Holy Spirit from me.
 Restore to me the joy of your salvation
 and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

hyssop = plant used for ceremonial sprinkling that cleanses

10

Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
 so that sinners will turn back to you.
 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
 you who are God my Savior,
 and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
 Open my lips, Lord,
 and 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, O God, is a broken spirit;
 a broken and contrite heart
 you, God, will not despise.

transgressors = people who go against God's good ways
contrite = crushed by awareness of one's wrong
despise = treat as worthless

11

May it please you to prosper Zion,
 to build up the walls of Jerusalem.
 Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
 in burnt offerings offered whole;
 then bulls will be offered on your altar.

to prosper = to bless, bring prosperity
Zion = place where God's people gather

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Psalm 51**Psalm 51:1-2**

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

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Psalm 51bib.ly/Ps51.NIV**1-2: David cries out for God's mercy**

- It took a year and a very bold prophet!
- No self justification
- No argument that he deserves mercy
- 3 words for going against God's ways
 - Miss the mark. Bent/twisted. Cross the line.
- 3 words seeking forgiveness

3-6: • "Blot out"=obliterate from memory

7-12: • David knows mercy is completely undeserved

13-17: • Seeking God's mercy based on

18-19: what God said about Himself to Moses

14

Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”...

“The Lord, the Lord, the **compassionate** (like a mother for her child) and **gracious** (giving undeserved forgiveness) God, slow to anger, abounding in **love** (enduring promised goodness) and faithfulness, maintaining **love** (enduring promised goodness) to thousands, and forgiving **wickedness** (bent, twisted), **rebellion** (crossing the line & breaking relationship) and **sin** (missing the mark). Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

Exodus 33:18; 34:6-7

David’s cry for mercy is rooted in God’s description of Himself

15

For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is always before me.
 Against you, you only, have I sinned
 and done what is evil in your sight;
 so you are right in your verdict
 and justified when you judge.
 Surely I was sinful at 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.

Psalm 51:3-6

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Psalm 51bib.ly/Ps51.NIV

1-2: David cries out for God's mercy

3-6: David accepts personal responsibility for his sin

- Did David fully grasp his offenses? Certainly not!
 - Yet he was not taking it lightly
- Perhaps "Against you, you supremely, have I sinned"
 - To ruin the prized art of an artist is to attack the artist
 - The offense against God **increases the weight of harming other people**, rather than reducing it
- David accepts whatever punishment God chooses

7-12: • A moral person from conception

13-17: • We sin because we are sinners

18-19: • In contrast to truth and wisdom that is God's delight

17

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest,

we were by nature deserving of wrath.

Ephesians 2:1-3

Sin is deeply intertwined into our character and being

18

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Psalm 51:7--12

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let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins
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Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your presence
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hyssop = plant used for ceremonial sprinkling that cleanses

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Psalm 51

bib.ly/Ps51.NIV

1-2: David cries out for God's mercy

3-6: David accepts personal responsibility for his sin

7-12: David seeks cleansing, restoration, and renewal

- Asks for God's cleansing: only God can do it
- Asks for God's blessing: joy & gladness
- Asks for God's transforming work: create
 - Same word as Genesis 1
 - Bringing order and light into chaos and darkness
- "Do not cast..." = "Do not fling me away!"

13-17: • Seeking the work and presence of God's Spirit

18-19:

20

Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
 so that sinners will turn back to you.
 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
 you who are God my Savior,
 and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
 Open my lips, Lord,
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 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
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13-17: David commits to worship and serve in humility

- King had responsibility for moral leadership
 - David violated it & asks that it be restored
 - David's failure & restoration itself can teach others
- Forgiveness of David's extreme actions gives hope for people whose actions are not as extreme
 - Still had significant consequences: death of son, ongoing conflict in his family

18-19:

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The Purpose of God's Grace in Paul's Life

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, **Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.**

1 Timothy 1:15-16

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- Righteousness without grace condemns
- Righteousness with grace brings joy
- Essential quality: purged of self-righteousness
 - Contrite = broken (like bones)

18-19:

24

May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.

Psalm 51:18-19

Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

to prosper = to bless, bring prosperity
Zion = place where God's people gather

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13-17: David commits to worship and serve in humility

18-19: David seeks God's restored blessing on God's people

- Sin of the king brought harm to the nation
- David prayed for God's restoration of the people
 - Especially the joy of worship

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Psalm 51

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The Big Idea

**God recreates what people have broken by sin
by His mercy through the work of Christ
through broken, contrite hearts
for His glory, our joy, and blessing to others**

**Once for all
AND
Over and over again**

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**Sin = “the deliberate act of steering off
the road that God wants us to travel”**

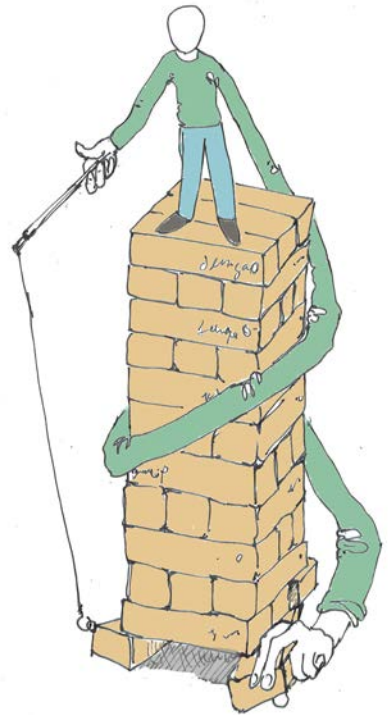
Sin injures...

- our thinking
- our emotions and relationships
- our bodies

Sin always increases chaos

Sin always harms life

Sin hides itself through lies and deception



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Sin is an attack against...

- **Ourselves**
- **Others**
 - It is contagious
 - It harms more than the sinner
- **The community (local and global)**
- **God**



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A Biblical understanding of people

- Every human being is made in the image of God
 - With inherent worth and goodness
- Every human being is tainted by sin in every part of us
 - No action or attitude or expression of ours is as good as it should be or as good as God is
 - And sometimes, they are shockingly bad!

31

The Big Idea

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by His mercy through the work of Christ
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AND
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32

Application

- **Be broken over sin**
 - It brings chaos and destroys life
 - Even when it seems “fine”
 - Sin deceives us, so we are blind to most of our sin
 - Perhaps like high blood pressure: “the silent killer”
 - It is right to be angry at sin
 - It is right to grieve over sin
 - It is right to plead with people not to sin
 - The **only** real solution is to go to Jesus Christ
 - Forgiveness through Jesus’ death in our place
 - Restoration through the resurrection of Jesus from death
 - Transformation by the Spirit of God in us

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Application

- **Be broken over sin**
- **Seek God’s work of recreation**
 - “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!**”
2 Corinthians 5:16-17
 - “I tell you that in the same way there will be **more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents** than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.” *Luke 15:7*

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Application

- **Be broken over sin**
- **Seek recreation of God**
- **Expect a journey of brokenness & mercy**
 - “I have much more to say to you, more than you can bear.”
John 16:12
 - We learn more and more about the glory of God
 - We see more and more clearly our own sin
 - Sin blinds us to our own sin, so growth in holiness leads us to see more of our sin
 - We walk deeper and deeper into the Gospel!

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Application

- **Be broken over sin**
- **Seek recreation of God**
- **Expect a journey of brokenness & mercy**
- **Participate in the recreating work of God**
 - “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**” *Colossians 3:13*
 - “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”
Matthew 6:14-15
 - Over and over and over...

36

The Big Idea

**God recreates what people have broken by sin
by His mercy through the work of Christ
through broken, contrite hearts
for His glory, our joy, and blessing to others**

**Have you experienced this recreating work of God?
Where is God helping you see more clearly your sin?
“Let the bones you have crushed rejoice!”**