
Illuminating Scripture

Lecture Four Handout

1. David Flees Jerusalem

2Sam. 15:13 And a messenger came to David, saying, “The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom.” ¹⁴ Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, “Arise, and let us flee; or else there will be no escape for us from Absalom; go in haste, lest he overtake us quickly, and bring down evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.” ¹⁵ And the king’s servants said to the king, “Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king decides.” ¹⁶ So the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten concubines to keep the house. ¹⁷ And the king went forth, and all the people after him; and they halted at the last house. ¹⁸ And all his servants passed by him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the six hundred Gittites who had followed him from Gath, passed on before the king.

15:19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why do you also go with us? Go back, and stay with the king; for you are a foreigner, and also an exile from your home. ²⁰ You came only yesterday, and shall I today make you wander about with us, seeing I go I know not where? Go back, and take your brethren with you; and may the LORD show steadfast love and faithfulness to you.” ²¹ But Ittai answered the king, “As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, there also will your servant be.” ²² And David said to Ittai, “Go then, pass on.” So Ittai the Gittite passed on, with all his men and all the little ones who were with him. ²³ And all the country wept aloud as all the people passed by, and the king crossed the brook Kidron, and all the people passed on toward the wilderness.

15:24 And Abiathar came up, and lo, Zadok came also, with all the Levites, bearing the ark of the covenant of God; and they set down the ark of God, until the people had all passed out of the city. ²⁵ Then the king said to Zadok, “Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me back and let me see both it and his habitation; ²⁶ but if he says, ‘I have no pleasure in you,’ behold, here

I am, let him do to me what seems good to him.”²⁷ The king also said to Zadok the priest, “Look, go back to the city in peace, you and Abiathar, with your two sons, Ahima-az your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.”²⁸ See, I will wait at the fords of the wilderness, until word comes from you to inform me.”²⁹ So Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem; and they remained there.

2. Numbers 10:35-36

And whenever the ark set out, Moses said,

“Arise, O LORD, and let thy enemies be scattered;
And let them that hate thee flee before thee.”

And when it rested, he said,

“Return, O LORD, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel.”

3. Rik van Nieuwenhove

[T]he person who makes satisfaction to God freely submits himself to penance so as to renounce sin in his will. Therefore, whether afflictions are actually “punishments” or “satisfactions” depends on the attitude of the person who is subject to them. If we accept afflictions about which we ourselves cannot do anything, they lose their penal character and acquire instead a “satisfactory” or purifying character . . . This illustrates that [punishments] are not inflicted by God for their own sake, “as if God delighted in them,” but for something else, namely redirecting the creatures toward their genuine goal.

4. Augustine, *Commentary on Psalm 51*, pp. 424-425.

There is a holy spirit in everyone who confesses, for it is already due to a gift of the Holy Spirit that you are disgusted by what you have done. . . That makes two fighting against your illness—you and the doctor. Confession of sin and the will to punish sin cannot be present in any of us by our own doing; and so when we are angry with ourselves and find ourselves displeasing, it can happen only by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

5. Catechism of the Catholic Church

VII. The Acts of the Penitent

1450 “Penance requires... the sinner to endure all things willingly, be contrite of heart, confess with the lips, and practice complete humility and fruitful satisfaction.”⁴⁹

Contrition

1451 Among the penitent's acts contrition occupies first place. Contrition is "sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin committed, together with the resolution not to sin again."⁵⁰ (431)

1452 When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called "perfect" (contrition of charity). Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible.⁵¹ (1822)

1453 The contrition called "imperfect" (or "attrition") is also a gift of God, a prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is born of the consideration of sin's ugliness or the fear of eternal damnation and the other penalties threatening the sinner (contrition of fear). Such a stirring of conscience can initiate an interior process which, under the prompting of grace, will be brought to completion by sacramental absolution. By itself however, imperfect contrition cannot obtain the forgiveness of grave sins, but it disposes one to obtain forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance.⁵²

1454 The reception of this sacrament ought to be prepared for by an *examination of conscience* made in the light of the Word of God. The passages best suited to this can be found in the Ten Commandments, the moral catechesis of the Gospels and the apostolic Letters, such as the Sermon on the Mount and the apostolic teachings.⁵³

The confession of sins

1455 The confession (or disclosure) of sins, even from a simply human point of view, frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others. Through such an admission man looks squarely at the sins he is guilty of, takes responsibility for them, and thereby opens himself again to God and to the communion of the Church in order to make a new future possible. (1424, 1734)

1456 Confession to a priest is an essential part of the sacrament of Penance: "All mortal sins of which penitents after a diligent self-examination are conscious must be recounted by them in confession, even if they are most secret and have been committed against the last two precepts of the Decalogue; for these sins sometimes wound the soul more grievously and are more dangerous than those which are committed openly."⁵⁴ (1855, 1505)

When Christ's faithful strive to confess all the sins that they can remember, they undoubtedly place all of them before the divine mercy for pardon. But those who fail to do so and knowingly withhold some, place nothing before the divine goodness for remission through the mediation of the priest, "for if the sick person is too ashamed to show his wound to the doctor, the medicine cannot heal what it does not know."⁵⁵

1457 According to the Church's command, "after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year."⁵⁶ Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first

received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession.⁵⁷ Children must go to the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time.⁵⁸ (2042, 1385)

1458 Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church.⁵⁹ Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit. By receiving more frequently through this sacrament the gift of the Father's mercy, we are spurred to be merciful as he is merciful.⁶⁰ (1783, 2468)

Whoever confesses his sins... is already working with God. God indicts your sins; if you also indict them, you are joined with God. Man and sinner are, so to speak, two realities: when you hear "man" — this is what God has made; when you hear "sinner" — this is what man himself has made. Destroy what you have made, so that God may save what he has made.... When you begin to abhor what you have made, it is then that your good works are beginning, since you are accusing yourself of your evil works. The beginning of good works is the confession of evil works. You do the truth and come to the light.⁶¹

Satisfaction

1459 Many sins wrong our neighbor. One must do what is possible in order to repair the harm (e.g., return stolen goods, restore the reputation of someone slandered, pay compensation for injuries). Simple justice requires as much. But sin also injures and weakens the sinner himself, as well as his relationships with God and neighbor. Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused.⁶² Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must "make satisfaction for" or "expiate" his sins. This satisfaction is also called "penance." (2412, 2487, 1473)

1460 *The penance* the confessor imposes must take into account the penitent's personal situation and must seek his spiritual good. It must correspond as far as possible with the gravity and nature of the sins committed. It can consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy, service of neighbor, voluntary self-denial, sacrifices, and above all the patient acceptance of the cross we must bear. Such penances help configure us to Christ, who alone expiated our sins once for all. They allow us to become co-heirs with the risen Christ, "provided we suffer with him."⁶³ (2447, 618, 2011)

The satisfaction that we make for our sins, however, is not so much ours as though it were not done through Jesus Christ. We who can do nothing ourselves, as if just by ourselves, can do all things with the cooperation of "him who strengthens" us. Thus man has nothing of which to boast, but all our boasting is in Christ... in whom we make satisfaction by bringing forth "fruits that befit repentance." These fruits have their efficacy from him, by him they are offered to the Father, and through him they are accepted by the Father.⁶⁴

