

A Willing Spirit

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Date: 18 March 2012

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[0 : 0 0] This evening we're going to have a look at the Psalm in a kind of general sense but also I want to think particularly about the words that we find at the end of verse 12 where David's spirit or David's prayer rather is this he says Lord grant me a willing spirit to sustain me grant me a willing spirit to sustain me I don't know if you're a fan of the the jigsaw puzzle but I am willing to tackle any jigsaw puzzle no matter how complicated or big as long as it's not got more than 16 pieces so beyond 16 pieces I lose interest and patience we had a jigsaw somewhere recently and I think it must have been on holiday somewhere and it was a horse it was a thousand piece jigsaw of a horse and it really was the most boring activity that one could ever imagine putting this horse everything was brown or green horse in a field and it was pretty much impossible but of course jigsaws are just about trying to work out where where things fit in and that's one of our issues in life personally quite frequently is trying to work out how do I fit in how do I fit in socially how do

I fit in at work how do I fit in my family how do I fit in at church so if you're new to church you might be sitting here looking around and asking yourself how do I fit in with the people here so a lot of time in life we actually you know we feel sometimes awkward or uncertain of our own identity who we are and of how we then relate to people around us and I think that in the Old Testament we read about God's people the nation of Israel and very often they struggled with exactly those kind of issues so Israel very often you find her as a nation having a bit of an identity crisis who are we in this world so Scotland is trying to work out exactly the same thing to know what's our identity as a nation how do we relate to the nations around us and in the

UK or in the European Union so Israel was a very different kind of nation it was a theocratic nation God was its king it lived by religious law and this made them very distinctive from other nations round about and often they didn't quite know how do we relate to these nations so that's one of the things you know identity who are we and when we when we're trying to work out how we fit in the second thing that comes along then is perhaps often a pressure to adapt and to change to fit in with those around us so socially often we make ourselves kind of a bit more flexible I suppose just to try and get on with the people around us and that happens to Israel in the Old Testament she becomes more flexible than God wants her to be in order to kind of fit in with the other nations around her who have a very different view of many issues in life of who God is of how life should be lived of human sexuality lots of different opinions and Israel begins to change the way she does things to fit in and that can't that doesn't just happen to Israel's it happens to us as individuals so if you're a Christian you know that very often you you want just to fit in with the people around you and that that's going to then at times cause you to be more flexible about how you behave and talk than you really want to be or ought to be and that's I think part of what's going on in the life of this man here David who was king and ruler of Israel that over a period of time he has adapted how he lives and what he does and and in a sense compromised that so that his behavior his ethics his values don't reflect God's values so clearly anymore but come to reflect the the values of the other peoples around him and the more he takes on the values and the identity of the other peoples around him the more unwilling he becomes to really love, honor, praise and delight in God and if you're a Christian you'll understand what that experience is like because as Christians there are times when we find ourselves taking on the values of the world around us the behavior of the world around us and we become more and more unwilling to really pray to seek God passionately and to ask what is God looking for in our lives so that becomes a reluctance in our relationship with God then that's where David is he's reluctant in his relationship with God and unwilling to really engage with God as God so he's going through the outward rituals of his religion but inwardly he's not really seeking God he's not really pursuing God he's not really wanting to meet with God no God see God experience God and there's that unwillingness to engage with God and then at the same time a willingness to do things that before would have been unthinkable so when Christians struggle

with their identity as Christians when Christians struggle to know you know how flexible should I be in my behavior and how far do I mold in with the values of the people around me and when we become too influenced by those values and when we become reluctant to really engage with God we find ourselves willing to do things that at best we would never contemplate so we begin to enter thoughts tend to to entertain thoughts to entertain ideas to entertain doubts to entertain desires or relationships that are really ungodly and unholy and then we become willing to cross boundaries that we thought we would never cross we begin to be willing to break taboos to open up parts of our life to things that have no place in the life of a Christian so what do I mean well David is a good example isn't he here's David in this situation that we read about in 2nd

Samuel and he's willing to do things that I think that an earlier stage in his life would have been utterly unthinkable for him and he's willing to enter into a world that for the believer is completely alien so here's David what's he willing to do well he's willing to stand and look at Bathsheba be they naked and then he's willing to risk everything he is and everything he has to have an affair with her and then we read about how he became willing to deceive her husband and he tries to persuade the husband come back from the battlefield go and sleep with your wife so that the pregnancy he would think the pregnancy was from their own relationship and then of course he's willing to have David killed or Uriah killed now if you've read much of the the Psalms and other parts of the Old Testament then you know that David was a man who in his earlier life breathed passion for God he spoke powerfully and with great depth about spiritual life he his words ring with authenticity when he speaks about who God is and how God works in the lives of people and David in his own society was a man that was loved looked up to trusted and respected he was a leader a man that God had used in mighty ways so here's somebody with profound spiritual insight somebody that God has really worked in powerfully somebody that

[9 : 42] God is used in great ways and all of a sudden he finds himself in this situation where he's willing not only to think the unthinkable but to do the unthinkable to take somebody else's wife and then to have the man killed to cover up his own sin and of course that shows us what we're capable of as human beings that even those of us who are Christians have to deal with the issues of greed temptation lust envy coveting other people's money jobs success popularity husbands wives and so on and as David looks at what he's done with Bathsheba and her husband Uriah what does he say well he what he realizes is that it's a kind of mirror into his soul this isn't a kind of one-off blowout but rather

David understands that what's happened with Bathsheba is a reflection of who he really is and so he's got this confession before God that sin really is just part of his makeup I was sinful at birth he says in verse 5 sinful from the time of conception onwards the deeply rooted problem of sin is one that we're born with and that we grapple with all our life David understands that and now he has to work out where he goes from there because he's got blood in his hands doesn't he's got another man's life on his hands and on his conscience he's got a massive stain on his soul the two things that David has done were offered no forgiveness under the law of Moses which was the law that operated in

Israel so adultery and murder both brought the death penalty in that society so David understood that technically he deserves the electric chair of Israel and he understands that there's nothing that he can do to make this right and his life has become a guilt ridden mess and in that mess and in that guilt what he sees is this that the only thing he can do is beg God for mercy and the amazing thing of God hears what David is saying so God is listening and God does show him mercy God brings the forgiveness he prays for

God makes him clean God gives him a fresh start and a new beginning so David has understood the destructive power of what he's done and of his sin and in verse 10 he prays to God creating me a pure heart of God now that word create is the same word that's used in the Old Testament for creation for the making of this world out of nothing and so David is saying you need to do something new in my life God you need to do something that no one else can do you need to create something for me that isn't there what can God create for David that no one else can create well he says create for me a pure heart how can this guilty stained sinned heart be pure well he prays God give me a pure heart creating me a pure heart renew create a steadfast spirit within me so only God can restore what sin has destroyed and I think if we were in David shoes and surely there are times in our lives where we find ourselves in David shoes maybe not with exactly the same things we're guilty of but for some of us yes exactly the same things but with our own guilt shame regret destructiveness and I think we would pray for the same things as David give me a pure heart give me a steadfast spirit don't throw me away or cast me away from your presence we would ask

I'm sure Lord give me back the joy that I've lost in my life give me back the Holy Spirit but I'm really interested that one of the things that David asks me for or asked for is this grant me a willing spirit to sustain me so if you were asking God to sort out your life and to sort out the mess that you've made of your life and the things that you've done because of sin you know you would ask for forgiveness you'd ask for joy but would you say Lord give me a willing spirit to sustain me so what is David asking for there well a lot of what David has asked for is about dealing with the past you know wipe out the past give me a new start a new heart a new beginning but in this line what David's praying for is the future and he's saying how can I face the future in the light of what's gone wrong and the things I've done and he's saying how am I going to face the future and not just do the same terrible things again and so he's praying to God and saying what I need from you is a willing spirit to sustain me because

[15 : 59] David understood that one of the original problems and this is where we kind of started off is the reluctance that comes upon us to really live for God and to really give everything in our lives for God and a loving and passionate and thankful way and we become reluctant servants reluctant Christians and when we become reluctant then that's when so much of the doubt the sin the compromise begins to kind of eat its way into our lives and so David is saying Lord I don't want to be reluctant in the future I want to be a willing passionate Christian who will give everything for God so how can I make it in the future that's what David's asking how am I going to make it I'm not going to make it he says unless you give me that willingness that desire that passion to live the right way and so I want all of us just to really seek from God a willingness to live for God in the future now I don't mean like the future 2050 or 2030 or 2020 I mean the future like tonight this evening tomorrow through the week ahead through the months ahead how am I how am I living my life am I living my life in a way that is really passionate and committed to God am I willing joyful and how I serve God because one of the really irritating things about church is that so often Christians are kind of reluctant and slightly miserable and downbeat about living the Christian life and you know that's dull that's kind of saturate your your energy and what we want are

Christians who delight to live for God and who delight to serve God in this world and who delight in giving their lives for God's glory I'm gonna just say two or three things I'll try and say them pretty quickly about how David needed to be willing in the future and one of the things that he needs to be willing about surely is that he needs to be willing as he works for God in this world he has a really responsible job he's a he's a king so it doesn't come with a great dear deal more responsibility than that and as many people in the workplace do he carried a lot of responsibility Israel had many enemies who wanted to kill and destroy the people of Israel Israel needed a strong stable economy it needed the administration of justice those things were David's working responsibility so that's a huge pressure and of course he's really blown that and in front of his colleagues and those around him he's kind of self-destructed and so he needs to get back out there into the work that God's given him to do in a way that will really he'll willingly lovingly serve God well now I understand you know we have lots of different work contexts but for lots of Christians work is a tough place and so I want to say just two or three things about willingly serving God in the workplace first of all I want you to know your work is your ministry from God a part of your ministry from God so you serve God in the church you serve God in the community you serve God in the workplace so many

Christians separate work from the rest of their Christian life you know my Christian life is when I go to church or when I read the Bible work is what I have to do to earn a living well no work is where you go as part of your serving God so work is part of your Christian life God values your work and thinks it's very important and God wants you to use your work as a way of glorifying him and so when you go to work you are there to serve God and glorify him and you are there to serve your colleagues customers clients whoever it is so that means living with integrity and compassion in the workplace so David as a king had a huge working responsibility and he needed to really be willing to live that out in a way that was glorifying to God and in the workplace you have to say how am I glorifying God in this situation and how am I blessing the people I interact with in the work situation second thing

I want to point out is just that what David did here had a absolutely horrendous as you can imagine horrendous impact on his family devastating and his family life was never the same again and yet it was just part of a of a of a an attitude in David's life that went way back an attitude to women to sex to marriage to power that was really unhealthy he already had before he commits adultery with Bathsheba he already has multiple wives lots of different children and a tremendous amount of bitterness has come out of that into his family life so he's good and good number of children from a good number of different women and now he's betrayed all of them and the consequences are horrendous and so he needs to be willing to go back into his family and to serve them in love and that's a hard thing to do trying to build a grace filled Christ centred home is not easy trying to nourish and cultivate the spiritual lives of our families is tough we need to be willing to really persevere at that some of us don't have family biological family around us or people were married to we live on our own but of course family biologically is one representation of the family of God you know it speaks to us of the greater family which is God's family and so it's very important to think how does my life not only impact on the people I share my home with I'm married to my children how did my life impact on the believing family how do the decisions I make impact on the believing family and how do the bad decisions I make impact on the believing family because let me tell you this your sin is my problem because I am your brother in Jesus and we are one in Christ and that makes my sin your problem so there's a book you can change Tim Chester wrote it he says this personal sin is a corporate problem and then he goes on to say personal holiness is a corporate responsibility so in the family of God what are we supposed to be doing we're supposed to be helping each other to grow more like

Jesus and live holy lives and so if some of us within the family of God decide to make an idol out of pornography or sex or money or alcohol or drugs or anything else then that has a really bad destructive impact into the family of God and it wins us all and so what I need from you is you to help me to be a holy person to be a godly man to pray for me support me listen to me advise me and you also need to be willing to have other Christians in your life in your family who will encourage you and support you and rebuke you how did David get all this sorted out it's when Nathan the prophet came to me and told him a story that helped him to see the gravity and the evil of what he'd done and one man came to another one and said listen look at what you've done and so you need people in your life with whom you have that kind of relationship and that goes against the grain for us of course because we live in a very individualistic culture and society and we don't want people telling us or speaking to us about deeply personal things we want to make our own choices and deal with them in our own way that's not how God expects it to work in the family of God so you need to be willing at that level to engage with God's family and lastly just really briefly he keeps saying be willing to be used by

[25 : 48] God because one of the things that's very interesting about David is he was a prophet and he spoke for God so he'd always like you know throughout his life he'd been speaking prophetically sometimes incredibly you look at some of the Psalms and how David spoke about God and the prophetic way in which he spoke about Jesus Christ and the sufferings of Jesus and it's absolutely astonishing how God spoke through this man in his own generation and God still speaks through what this man wrote today and so he's got this calling in his life to speak for God and he's been used powerfully by God in the past to do that but can he be used in the future or is he now useless to God and what he says is he goes on to say listen if you will give me that willing spirit to sustain me then he says in verse 13 I will teach transgressors your way I will turn sinners back to you verse 15 open my lips and my mouth will declare your praises so he's committed to going back into this vocalization the speaking out for God telling what God's done being used by God now that's not a calling that's unique to David all of God's people need to be willing to speak in God's name all of God's people need to be willing to tell others what God has done for them and yet very few of us are willing at that level to really speak clearly and say what God has done for us so how can we be a willing people for God people who really are committed passionate energetic for God in this world I think we would all like to be like that if we're Christians but where does the willingness come from where does the energy come from where does the passion come from how can it be sustained over time it's easy to walk out a church and try and live a good life for a few hours or for a few days but then of course we fall flat in our faces again so how can you be sustained over the long term in living a life that is really pleasing to God how can you have that willingness in your life not just for a few hours but over years and the willingness comes from seeing what God is like because when you see what God is like then you see that God is worth loving with everything you've got at the start of this Sam

David says have mercy on me God according to your unfailing love according to your great compassion see what he's doing there he is nailing God's character he's saying what are you like why how is it I can ask you for forgiveness he says I ask you for mercy according to your unfailing love that's your character unfailing love what you what are you like well according to your great compassion blot out my transgression so what David does in this prayer is he appeals to the to what he knows of God according to your loving kindness and the multitude of your mercies have mercy on me oh God and let that love be directed towards me personally so he knows a truth about God that God is a merciful and loving God and then he asked that that truth be directed to him personally let your love come to me and so as Christians we go to the cross and there we see very clearly set out God is love because there God in his son Jesus Christ is willing to suffer at great cost for us and that speaks to us of the greatness of God's love that he will suffer in this way for people and we want to say to God let that love be directed to me and as we see God's love directed towards us personally then we have awakened within us more and more love for God and the more your love for God is awakened the more you will be willing to live to die to do everything for Jesus Christ the willingness comes from the experience of grace and love and mercy and so what I need and what you need is to experience every day the grace love and mercy of

God so you need to go to Jesus now as I need to go to Jesus now and just pray again as we need to pray daily have mercy on me oh Lord and we need to pray that God will free us from the guilt of our own sin and cause us to love him richly and fully one of the interesting things David we see where David here is this is that he's not wanting to escape really so much the consequences of sin but what he wants is to escape from the sin itself so you see you get people who become religious or they become Christians because they're afraid of the consequences of sin you know I want I don't want to go to hell I don't want to be judged I don't want the bad karma that's going to come from the bad stuff that I've done and so they're their motivation in becoming a Christian is purely negative they want to escape the consequences of sin but in Christianity the the motivation for becoming a Christian is positive it's loving

Jesus for what Jesus has done for us and when we love Jesus for what Jesus has done for us we don't just want to escape sin because of its consequences we want to escape sin because we see how much sin cost Christ on the cross so one way of putting that then is to say it's not the consequences of sin for me that move me rather it's the consequences of my sin for Christ that move me to see him pierced crucified for my sin is what breaks my heart and makes me want to turn from my sin to know and love Jesus Christ