# 2 Samuel - Commentaries by William (Bill) Prost

Aberdeen Conference: 2017, Besetting Sin and Getting to the Root

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Guess I should have known there'd be water here. Brethren, I have a burden on my heart that I hope you'll allow me to share with you. Our brother Steve has given a most. Enjoyable and wonderful overview of God's ways with man and where it all culminates. Wonderful to enjoy these things. And we have enjoyed in the reading meetings the first chapter of Philippians, which, as we have mentioned in the readings, gives us normal Christian experience. But I couldn't help but notice. And I appreciated it, a remark that Jim made when he was speaking to the effect that there. There are sometimes those who start out well in the pathway of faith. And then somehow, things don't go so well. We're all susceptible to it. But I would suggest that there is one thing that affects all of us, both individually and collectively. And that is. Are we willing before the Lord to judge the root of some particular sin, some particular failure in our lives, that if not judged, may eventually result? In our making shipwreck of the faith now, it doesn't have to be that way. But how easily it can come about? Let's turn to a few verses in the Book of Psalms, most of them well known to us. First one in Psalm 19. Psalm 19. Verse 13. Keep back thy servant also from. Presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Psalm 51. Psalm 51. Verse 10. Create in me a clean heart. O God. And to renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence. And I'm going to read this as it is more accurate in the Derby translation and take not the spirit of the holiness. From me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold Me. With thy free spirit and then back a little to verse 6. Behold, thou desirous truth in the inward parts. Psalm 139. Psalm 139. And notice the tense of the verbs in the verses. I want to read verse one. Oh, Lord, thou hast searched me, and knowing me thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off. But now go down to verse 23. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. And finally the verse that we are all familiar with in first John chapter one. First John one and verse 9.

If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Most, if not all of us here are familiar with. The fact that not only are our sins washed away through the blood of Christ. But we have deliverance from sin through the death and resurrection of Christ. Romans 6 and other scriptures make that very clear. And maybe we have in the words of that verse in Romans 6, and we won't turn to it. But maybe we have reckoned ourselves to be dead indeed under sin, but alive unto God. Maybe we have at least. In a general way taken that position. But I speak to my own heart. How many times there are things that perhaps are hidden in my heart. Besetting sins The sin which doth so easily beset us as we read in Hebrews 12 how many times there is a besetting sin that lurks in the background. They sing a song sometimes up at Morningstar Camp. I can't repeat all the words, but it goes something like this. My heart is like a house and how that I open the door to let the Savior in. And there are many rooms in which we visit from time to time and now and then. But then there's a room where I don't go. Because in the bad English that suits the cadence of the hymn, there are some things in that room that I don't want no one to know. Yes, and maybe for a time in my life the Lord allows me to go on, but then he puts his finger on that sin and says it's time. You need to deal with it. And whether we do it or not may have a long, reaching effect on our lives. And how many times that can be true. And again, I speak to my own heart. David could say thou hast searched me. He knew that. But then at the end of Psalm 139, he recognizes that maybe there's more, maybe things need to be reviewed again. And so he asks the Lord search me and know my heart. David knew what he was talking about. He had a fall. And you know, sometimes the root of a sin is far different from the fruit. How can we say that? Turn back for a moment to Second Samuel. What does it say there? Second Samuel. I think it's chapter 12 maybe. Second Samuel, Chapter 12. Yes. Second Samuel 12. We all are generally familiar with David's sin, but let's read what happens when Nathan the Prophet comes to him in verse 7. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed the king over Israel, And I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul. And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the House of Israel and of Judah. And if that had been too little, I would, moreover have given under these such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord? To do evil in his sight thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Very instructive and revealing. Notice that Nathan does not even mention the initial act of adultery. He heads for the root of the problem.

Far different from the immediate cause on the surface. Why does he? Speak of something different. Oh, because the root of the problem was not merely lust after another man's wife. It went far deeper than that. It was, if I might put it this way, the excuse me. The abuse of Davide power and authority as a king. And that included adultery. It included the whole picture. But what was even more serious than the initial lust and act of adultery was the attempt at the cover up. And we could cite other examples. Time won't permit us. Job was in the same boat. So was Abraham and others. There was some failure in their lives, but God knew how to get at the root of the problem. And sometimes only the Lord can help us to identify the root, but He wants to get it out. I grew up on a farm and I loved gardening and I don't know what you call it out here, but in my day we called it pigweed. Very, very common weed in the garden. A long tapped route that went a long way down and if you tried to pull that weed out, especially when the ground wasn't too moist, it would invariably break off. And sometimes we boys thought that was enough until my dad saw it. And then he would make us do whatever was necessary, even if it meant getting a trowel or a shovel. Get that root out. That's why it says in one John 1:00 and 9:00. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. But there's more than that. The forgiveness is to forgive the fruit, but to cleanse us from all unrighteousness means he wants to get at the root. May God give us grace to do that. Pardon me for saying this because I know my own heart only too well, but I have seen those who were faced up with a serious root in their lives and who were in denial about it. Or perhaps taking the other tack, they looked at others and said, well, others are guilty of sins too. They're just as bad as I am, and how easy it is when somehow I am faced up with a serious root in my life. That I go on the attack to others instead of saying. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. I'm not answerable for someone else, but I am answerable for myself. Excuse me? I hesitate what I'm going to say next. I had it on my heart and I prayed about it. I hope it doesn't step on any toes. I have no situation or anything in mind when I say this. It has been on my heart for a long time. If there's a need to judge a root individually. Is there sometimes a need collectively? Turn

back to Second Chronicles. Chapter 6. Solomons prayer at the dedication of the temple. And notice what he says here, among other things. Second Chronicles 6. And verse. 28. If there be dearth in the land. Oh, that's collective. If there be pestilence, if there be blasting or mildew, locusts or Caterpillar. Caterpillars, I should say. If their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land, whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be. Then what prayer, or what supplication, so ever, shall be made of any man? Or of all thy people, Israel. But notice this. When every man shall know his own sore, and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hand in this House. Our brother Steve commented that in a coming day there is going to be a national repentance of Israel.

A national change of heart. But it will be a national repentance. And if we were to go back and we don't have time to the book of Zechariah, we will find that nobody points the finger at anybody else. In Second Samuel Nathan pointed the finger at David and said Thou art the man. But in Zechariah we read the House of Nathan shall mourn apart, and the House of David shall mourn apart, and so on. Nobody will be pointing the finger. There will be national. Repentance. Is it necessary sometimes, as an assembly, turn over to 1St Corinthians for a moment. This verse has. Carried a lot of weight with my own soul. I pass it on to you for whatever the Lord. May lay on your heart as well as mine. First Corinthians, chapter 3. Verse 2. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able, for ye are yet carnal, and notice this. For whereas there is among you, and being in strife and divisions. Are ye not carnal and walk? Is meant. That characterized an assembly. And we notice that. There were many other serious things going on in Corinth. There was wicked immorality going on. They were getting drunk as they came together. To remember the Lord, they were taking one another to court and other things. But the first thing the apostle addresses is envying and strife and divisions. Is there a reason for that? Is there a reason why that was the first thing he addressed? We would probably have addressed the immorality, we would probably have addressed the drunkenness and many other things. Paul addresses something. Why? Because the spirit of God knew how widespread that would be. Pardon me if I sound a bit emotional. A few years ago. My wife and I were in England. We'd love to visit our brethren there, but this wasn't a good opportunity because we were jet lagged. Day was night and night was day. I don't even remember now where we were coming from. So he stayed in a hotel in the southeast of England. I don't know whether we did the right thing, but my wife and I. Said to one another. We're not far from a place called Tunbridge Wells. Let's drive there. We had a rental car, so we drove there. And it didn't take too long to find a meeting room. A meeting room where Brethren began to meet way back in the 1800s. Same one. There were people still meeting there. There was a sign there giving the meetings. Remember we got out of that car? And looked at that meeting room. Gazed at it for a long time. As many know, it was the epicenter. Of an issue that caused one of the division, one of the biggest divisions among brethren, well over 100 years ago. Was it right to respect the decision taken there? Absolutely. But was there more going on than merely a case of discipline? That ought to have been simple? Indeed, there was. When you know the inside story. Which I have read and heard from various ones. There was strife and envy. Family feuds, personal grudges and all the rest of it.

And I don't believe they are any longer gathered to the Lord's name. I suppose it's all right to tell this story because it happened between 50 and 60 years ago. And everyone involved has long since with the Lord. But I knew of an assembly where they had a case of discipline that came up. That ought to have been simple, and it caused the assembly to split down the middle. The discipline was carried out, but the strife and difficulty continued until after a year and a half they did a wise thing by calling in brethren from 2 neighbouring assemblies. And those brethren came in and looked over the situation and finally made some wise remarks. They said, brethren, your issue of discipline is rather complicated and we would have to be here a month in order to get a handle on it. But they said, brethren, that is not your real problem. They said, brethren, there has been strife and envy and personal grudges and family feuds. And bad feeling in this assembly for 20 years. Deal with that. And you will find the Spirit of God will make you of one mind as to what to do about your problem. Excellent words. I'm thankful to tell you that the brethren of that assembly took it to heart and it worked. Again, I am emphasizing that I point the finger at no one or any particular situation. All I say is that if there is a need for personal judging of a route, is there sometimes need of a collective judging of a route. If the problem in Tunbridge Wells had only been concerning that assembly, God could have kept it localized. He allowed it to affect brethren in a widespread way. And we don't go into the reasons for that. The Lord knows. But how often? When a difficulty arises, there is a need to point the finger right here. And if Israel, when Caterpillar and locusts and all the rest of it, overran Israel, there was a need for every man to know the plague of his own heart, and there to be a collective repentance. Oh, how much more among you and I. Among you and me, I should say, who have the privilege we've dwelt on our privileges and a brother just remarked to me just. This afternoon, the wonderful privileges that you and I have, we have far more than Israel had. Far more blessing, far more reason to walk before the Lord. Are we willing to pull up the roots of problems? We can do it. The Lord is ready to help us do it. May God give us grace. Not merely to look at something on the surface and say we'll cut off the chute. That's what it means in Philippians chapter Chapter 3. Beware of the concision. That's kind of snipping off the fruit of the flesh without getting to the root of it. Now I hasten to add, and you all know how true it is, that we will always have the flesh with us until the Lord comes. It will be an ongoing thing, but if there is a bad route that the Lord is calling upon us to deal with. Let me start right here and then if there's an opportunity. Let it spread collectively. So that the Lord has his way with us, He wants to make us what we had in Philippians, one with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. Oh, how wonderful that is. But on the other hand, what an awful testimony it is when those who have the gospel and have the whole truth of God. Are found at loggerheads with one another, and most of the time it's something that isn't that important. Now I don't say there aren't important things, there are right principles that need to be upheld. Allow me to take one more minute. And maybe some of who heard me tell this story before, but let me repeat it again. It impressed me at the time, and it was well over 40 years ago. I remember well.

And I wasn't around at the time. I only heard about it afterward. We lived in town at that time for a short while, and way back in the 1970s there used to be a man that came up and down the street with a little apparatus on a cart, and he sharpened scissors and knives and all the rest of it. He had a little bell that he rang as he went down the street and all you had to do was run out with whatever piece of cutlery, scissors, knives, whatever it was, and he would sharpen them for you on the spot. Well, my wife was up to her elbows in baking, so she quickly said to our daughter, who was four years old at the time. Here, here's some money, take this knife out and get him to sharpen it. Well, it was rather a formidable looking knife, about a 10 inch carving knife. And of course our son who was only about two years old, He toddled along to see what it was all about and apparently the two of them stood there while this man honed that carving knife to a razor sharp edge. Well, the man's mother tongue was in English and as he turned to hand that knife back, he quite naturally hesitated a little, handing that formidable knife to a little 4 year old girl and her two year old brother. And his comment to her was now, you know, killing the brother with that. Well, our daughter was a good mimic, and the only reason I found out about it was that she came into the house and repeated that to my wife, complete with the accent and everything. And of course, it was a little amusing. But I thought of that, and pardon me if I go a moment overtime. Is a knife a good thing to have? I love sharp knives and I sharpen my own knives, and my wife's too. I've got a special apparatus in the basement of that. I use it with special belts with certain amounts of abrasiveness on them, so that we can put a razor edge

on that knife. And my wife really appreciates them in the kitchen. That's like divine principles, isn't it? Very, very good when they're used properly and used in the power of the Spirit of God and according to God's Word. But oh how damaging, how terrible they are when used in the wrong way. That man, quite properly was afraid that our daughter might not be safe with that knife. She was, but he was a little concerned and I could see why. Brethren. We have divine principles. It's good to behold them. But let's if I can say it not to be funny, but let's be careful not to kill the brother with them. Thank you. Game #235. 35. The truth is. For us this afternoon.

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