

Psalm 51

- We're now back to a Psalm of David, actually the next twenty or so Psalms will be Psalms of David.
- Psalm 51 is the 4th of the 7 "penitential psalms" in which the writer is confessing his sin and expressing his sorrow and brokenness over his iniquity. Craving God's mercy. (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143)

1 Kings 15:5 "... David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that He commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite."

- As the Title declares, this Psalm hearkens back to David's sin with Bathsheba, at the point where he's confronted by the prophet Nathan.

2 Samuel 12:7-13 ⁷And Nathan said to David, thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul: ⁸And 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 unto thee such and such things. ⁹Wherefore 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. ¹⁰Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised Me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. ¹¹Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. ¹²For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. ¹³And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, the Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."

- **David makes 3 basic requests in this Psalm:**

V: 1-7 "Cleanse me."

V: 8-12 "Restore me."

V: 13-19 "Use me."

V: 1 A right perspective on this brings with it the understanding that sin must be judged and dealt with in a biblical manner.

- Have mercy upon me! Not because I deserve it, but because you are a merciful and forgiving God!

God describes Himself:

Exodus 34:6-7 “⁶... the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ⁷keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...”

David, after all his experiences with the Lord describes Him:

Psalm 145:8 “The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.”

- Blot out my transgressions, plural. Sin is falling short, but a transgression is a deliberate act of the will.

God is the only One who can “blot out” our transgressions:

Isaiah 43:25 “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”

V: 2 Wash me, make me clean: That is the hope of the gospel.

Isaiah 1:18 “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

- What dirt is to the body, sin is to the spirit. It was right for David to feel dirty, to feel defiled, and to want to be cleansed.

1 John 1:8-9 “⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- 3 terms tied together, “transgressions” - “iniquity” - “sin.”

Transgression: deliberate, willful sin.

Sin: falling short.

Iniquity: is the sum total of both in our lives - all of it added together.

- From a Jewish cultural perspective in that day, to wash and change clothes marked a new beginning in life, David wanted that new beginning in his life.

V: 3 David is acknowledging, confessing his sins “which are ever before him...”

- His sins were troubling his conscience; he couldn't get it out of his mind, knowing exactly what he had done.
- Christians, believers, cannot sin with impunity - there will be that conviction - which is from the Lord.

V: 4 As we examine this account you would probably think that David had sinned against Bathsheba, or most certainly against Uriah the Hittite.

- As David declares; all sin is against God, it certainly effects others in a very negative way, but primarily it is against God Himself because He is the One who has set the righteous standard. It is God's Word, His law that is being violated.

“... *in Thy sight*...” We can't hide anything from God, He is all knowing, He is all seeing.

Psalm 139:7 “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence.”

- Men seek to challenge the justice of God, the “fairness” of God - but the proof is already abundantly clear, God sees it, God who has seen it is the witness against us, and on top of that we know it - we're sinners and God is holy, just, and true.

The Apostle Paul refers to this verse: declaring that the whole world was guilty before God.

Romans 3:4 “God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged.”

- Men will say anything to justify their behavior, even saying that there is no God – no one to whom they would be accountable.
- Men seek to justify themselves, to rationalize their sin, make excuses - sadly men make their declarations, which fly in the face of the truth that God has seen for Himself. Thus all men are liars and God is just. We're all sinners deserving of death. (Who do I believe? You or my lying eyes?)
- The unfaithfulness of man does not impact the faithfulness of God.

2 Timothy 2:13 “If we are faithless, He remains faithful; he cannot deny Himself.”

V: 5 Shapen, conceived in iniquity and sin. This simply speaks to the depravity of man.

- The depravity of man, the sin nature of man instilled from the beginning of our lives, passed down from generation to generation.

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

- Did he steal the horse and become a horse thief? Or was he already a horse thief who then stole a horse? If you weren't a horse thief, you would never have stolen it...
- Man is both a sinner by nature, and by choice. We're all sinners who sin:

Romans 3:10 "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one."

V: 6 It's only after we come to a right understanding or view of sin that we then come to a right understanding of God, that He is Holy and pure. He is light and there is no darkness in Him at all.

- God desires an inward holiness in his children as opposed to the outward appearance of it.

1 Peter 1:15-16 "15But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16Because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy."

- David has been deceitful, he tried to cover his sins - which was a lie, God desires the truth. When we confess our sins we're telling the truth, we're giving God what He wants, and we're glorifying Him in the process.

Joshua 7:19 "And Joshua said unto Achan, my son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto Him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me."

V: 7 Purge me, cleanse me - and I shall be clean. Hyssop is a shrub like plant that grows between the rocks, it has small featherlike branches that make it look like a broom or brush of sorts which they used for cleaning.

- In **Exodus 12** it was dipped in the blood of the Passover lamb, then it was applied to the door posts of their homes.
- Hyssop was also used in **Leviticus 14** to apply the blood during the cleansing of the leper.
- In **Numbers 19** hyssop was used to apply the ashes of the red heifer and water to the Tabernacle instruments for their cleansing.
- Hyssop was an agent or instrument of cleansing, and David wanted it applied to his heart.

1 John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

V: 8 David is referring to the same incident as in Psalm 32.

Psalm 32:3-4 “³When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. ⁴For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.”

- His guilt was overwhelming him, “help me to hear joy and gladness.”
- David understood that God’s dealings with him were not punitive but corrective.
- This verse is a reference to what a shepherd does when a sheep strays. The shepherd breaks one of its legs and carries the lamb on his shoulders. As the weeks go by, the lamb develops such a close bond with the shepherd that, when its leg is healed, it never strays from the shepherd again.
- It’s as if David says, “I needed to be dealt with in that way, but I’ve learned my lesson, Lord.”

V: 9 Don’t look upon my sins, blot out my iniquities.

Jeremiah 16:17 “For my eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from My face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.”

- God does that! But once we’ve confessed our sins, he doesn’t look upon them, they are indeed blotted out!

Psalm 103:10-12 “¹⁰He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. ¹²As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.”

V: 10 David’s request; as ours should be when it’s needful: “*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit / steadfast spirit within me.*”

- Purify my heart, make it anew - do for me that which I cannot do for myself.

Proverbs 20:9 “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?”

- The obvious answer is that no one can say that, God has to do it for us, thus David’s prayer.
- He / we had a wrong attitude, a wrong spirit relating to sin, Lord renew a right spirit, a right attitude toward sin, toward you.

Proverbs 8:13 “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.”

- Lord; change my heart!

Ezekiel 11:19-20 “¹⁹And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: ²⁰That they may walk in My statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.” (Jeremiah 24:7)

V: 11 David doesn't want to be cast out, away from God presence and please don't remove Thy Holy Spirit from me. (Psalm 27:4)

- We are warned against quenching the Holy Spirit through our sin and disobedience.

Ephesians 4:30 “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

1 Thessalonians 5:19 “Quench not the Spirit.”

- David was concerned because he knew that his sins were grievous, adultery, murder, lying.
- David had also seen how his predecessor Saul had at one time been anointed by God, anointed by the Holy Spirit, anointed to prophesy but that through his rebellion and disobedience he caused God to set him aside, seemingly casting Saul out of His presence, taking His Holy Spirit from Saul. David didn't want that to happen to him.

Samuel's rebuke to Saul:

1 Samuel 15:23 “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king.” (Cast away)

1 Samuel 16:13-14 “¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him (David) in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. ¹⁴But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.”

- Notice David didn't say “can I still be king?” That didn't matter, he is grieved over his sin, he is repentant, he's crying out to God for His mercy - “please just don't cast me away, don't take your Holy Spirit from me!”

V: 12 In the midst of his sin, David has lost the joy of his salvation. That consciousness of God's presence in his life, God's Spirit being upon him, working through him - he lost that and desperately wanted it back. Oh the misery of a divided heart!

- Sometimes we suffer the same thing for the same reason: un-confessed sin.

- The fruit of the Spirit is joy - if the joy is gone, perhaps there is a need to be filled with the Spirit once again, perhaps we need to deal with the sin issue in our life.
- David wanted that renewal in his life, he wanted restoration.
- Not long after Pentecost, Peter was preaching - and he described what David was looking for:

Acts 3:19 “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;”

- Uphold me with thy free / willing Spirit: empower me by your Spirit to please you, to walk in your ways!

V: 13 When you’ve done that, then I will teach transgressors your ways.

- You can’t give what you don’t have; unless God restored David then he would be unable to teach anyone God’s ways, not truly.

Romans 15:18 “For I will not dare to speak any of those things which Christ hath not accomplished / wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed.”

- Lord if you’ll do this for me, then I’ll do that for you - sounds like a vow or promise. The bottom line is that experience is the best teacher, David could preach it and give counsel to others based on his personal experience with God
- He would be pointing others, lost sinners to the Lord, those that would also be forgiven and converted.

V: 14 David is guilty of the blood of Uriah the Hittite.

Genesis 9:6 “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.”

- God is able to forgive, God is able to save.

Hebrews 7:25 “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

- Again, Lord if you’ll do this, then I will sing aloud of your righteousness; sounds again like David is trying to make a deal, but the reality is that if God doesn’t do His work in David and in us, then there is no work that any of us can actually do for Him.

V: 15 Open my lips that I might praise you. Real praise begins in that deeper place.

Romans 10:9-10 “⁹That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Hebrews 13:15 “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.”

V: 16-17 In the previous chapter God said that He would not rebuke them or reprove them for their lack of sacrifices, at this point sacrifice isn't what God is looking for, He doesn't delight in burnt offerings - He wants what should be at the root of it all.

- God is looking for a truly broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart over one's own sin. A genuine humility bourn out of true repentance, a true disdain and abhorrence for one's own sin.
- This may hearken back to the scenario where the shepherd breaks the lamb's leg and carries them on His shoulder - after which the lamb's walk is forever different, never straying from the shepherd. Maybe we all have to go through that experience...
- As guilty as David was, God did not despise his broken spirit, or his contrite heart, God forgave him, just as He will us.

Isaiah 57:15 “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

V: 18-19 Have your way Lord, you are sovereign, do your good pleasure.

- How do you suppose David felt about Zion and Jerusalem? He loved them! So God build a wall around them, protect them - Lord protect my heart, again do for me that which I cannot do for myself.

Proverbs 4:23 “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

- When our hearts are right with you, then we can make those offerings upon your altar and they will be pleasing to you.

Psalms 119:9 “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word.”