

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 8.25.2024

PSALM 51 - REPENTANCE AND RENEWAL

I. INTRODUCTION

Psalm 51

1 Have mercy on me, O God,

according to your steadfast love;

according to your abundant mercy

blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

and cleanse me from my sin!

3 For I know my transgressions,

and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against you, you only, have I sinned

and done what is evil in your sight,

so that you may be justified in your words

and blameless in your judgment.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,

and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,

and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Let me hear joy and gladness;

let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

9 Hide your face from my sins,

and blot out all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

18 Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;
build up the walls of Jerusalem;

19 then will you delight in right sacrifices,
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

- The title attributes this psalm to David and sets the backdrop as David's response after he was confronted by Nathan, the prophet of the Lord after his sin with Bathsheba. (2 Samuel 12)
- This is one of the seven penitential psalms in the Psalter (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).
- There are a few ways we will look at this psalm.
- Certainly, in its context, it is part of the historical account of David and the background of 2 Sam 11-12.
- We will study this psalm theologically to learn its message about true repentance.
- And we will be encouraged to make this psalm our own and apply its message in light of our salvation through Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins we have because of his redemptive work.

- In v13, David declares that if the Lord does what he has requested of him, then he will teach transgressors God's ways so that they might repent and turn to the Lord.
- As we read this Psalm, we see that it is a realization of David's purpose.
- David makes public his intensely personal confession and repentance in order to instruct transgressors—just like us!
- We step in to the fulfillment of that promise today and benefit from David's experience of repentance and renewal.

II. PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

MERCY

- "Have mercy on me, O God..."
- David is in desperate need of divine forgiveness, like all sinners, he can do nothing but cast himself on the mercy of God.
- As we will see in this psalm, David has experienced the separation his sin has caused in his relationship with God.
- Isaiah 59:2 but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.
- David knows that he has broken covenant with God, he has no right to blessings from God.
- But David doesn't appeal to anything in himself, he doesn't point to anything of merit that he thinks he may have, he appeals to something in God.
- David appeals to the Lord's steadfast love and abundant mercy.
- He appeals to God's covenant faithfulness and promise to forgive, and his forgiveness is based not on the merit of the sinner but solely on his gracious mercy, love and faithfulness.
- Exodus 34:6-7 The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."
- David can plead for mercy because God is merciful and compassionate, his covenant love for his people means that this appeal will be heard.
- The forgiveness he seeks from God can only come as an act of divine grace.
- That's why he appeals to God's own character for the forgiveness he seeks.

CONFESSION

- David cries out for God to blot out his transgressions, to wash him thoroughly from his iniquity, and cleanse him from his sin.
- Three synonyms for sin that convey the depth, seriousness, and heinous nature of his sin.
- Transgression means active rebellion against God.
- Iniquity is a deviation from the right moral way.
- Sin means to miss the moral mark.
- This is sin in all its ugly fullness and reality.
- Do you see sin for what it really is—transgression against a holy God?
- Sin is a treasonous act.

- Sin is committed against a being of infinite perfection, purity, holiness, and majesty.
- “Blot out my transgressions” - he wants his sin-debt to be cancelled and erased.
- “Wash me ... Cleanse me” - this is language of ritual purification in the OT that symbolizes the removal of sin and renewal of fellowship with God.
- He needs comprehensive forgiveness—and only God can provide that!
- Vv3-4 David explains why he needs forgiveness and cleansing.
- “For I know...” David is fully aware of his condition before God.
- “And my sin is ever before me.” He is confronted with his sin.
- “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.”
- He sinned against Bathsheba, and Uriah, and others in his coverup scheme.
- But he confesses that his sin is a personal affront to the Lord.
- David’s confession acknowledges the most grievous reality of his sin, and all sin—his action defiled God’s holy word and he despised God.
- David’s sin and guilt means that God’s condemnation of him is righteous.
- Any judgment God brings against him is justified, God is blameless in his judgment of David.

DEPRAVITY

- vv5-6 David confesses his depravity. From the earliest moments of his existence, from his mother’s womb, he is shaped by iniquity and sin.
- He’s not a sinner because he sinned, he sinned because he is a sinner.
- This is the doctrine of original sin.
- Because of the sin of Adam, the entirety of the human race was plunged into a sinful state.
- Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—
- This is universal sinfulness.
- We are sinful through and through. Sin pervades our entire being.
- David is not using the reality of his innate sinfulness as an excuse.
- He confesses in v6 that God delights in truth in the innermost parts of man, and only God can impart that divine wisdom on the inside, “teach me wisdom in the secret heart.”
- On the inside, David knows he is wicked and sinful and only by receiving divine revelation from the outside can the inside become whole.

CLEANSING

- In v7, he uses similar language as he did in v2 of ritual cleansing, “purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”
- He is petitioning the Lord to be his priest and make him clean (see Leviticus 14).
- Experiencing God’s forgiveness and cleansing is what David seeks and only God can blot out his sin, remove the guilt of his sin and any reminder of his sin.

- David prays for a restoration of joy. Can you imagine the misery of living with unconfessed sin for as long as he did?
 - He has been under God's discipline, which he metaphorically describes as having broken bones.
 - He wants joy and gladness. He wants to have once again the security of being reconciled to the Lord.
 - David believes that repentance and confession and petition can result in obtaining the mercy from God that cleanses, heals, restores, and lead to his rejoicing again.
- V9 is the essence of the psalm's message.
 - David makes two requests in v9:
 - First, for God to hide his face from his sin.
 - Second, for God to blot out all his iniquities.
 - David's sin had separated him from God, in essence, his sin caused God to hide his face from David. (Is 59:2)
 - The hiding of God's face is a sign of his displeasure.
 - He is asking God to make it so that God no longer sees his sin.
- Either we see our sin and confess it so that God will not look on it, or we hide and conceal our sin and it is ever before God's holy face in righteous anger.
 - David did not want to live in God's displeasure, but rejoice again in God's forgiveness and salvation.

III. PRAYER FOR RENEWAL

- How can man truly live for and please God if he is born in sin?
 - How can a sinner please God?
 - God is holy and he will not relax his righteous standards for they cannot be changed.
 - If God cannot change, and his standard cannot change, then what must change is the man who would live for and enjoy God's holiness.
 - Here, the emphasis in the psalm shifts from prayer for forgiveness and confession, to a petition for God's renewal.
 - David doesn't just want to be cleansed from his sin, he wants to have a clean heart.
 - "Create in me a clean heart, O God..."
 - "Create" indicates bringing into being what did not exist before. (Genesis 1)
 - David is not asking God to just cleanse his old, sin-stained heart, he wants a new heart.
 - He wants a heart in which God delights, a heart that delights in God and wants to obey God, a heart with holy affections and longings.
 - And that can only come as a sovereign work of God by the sovereign grace of God.
- "Renew a right spirit within me"
 - A right spirit is one that is morally steadfast, a heart whose allegiance is undivided, loyal to God.
 - This prayer for a renewed right spirit is echoed again in v12, "uphold me with a willing spirit."
 - He wants a complete renewal on the inside, to be transformed into a different man, one who, from the heart, loves and lives for God.
- This prayer of renewal anticipates and believes the promised new covenant in Jeremiah and Ezekiel and ultimately fulfilled in Christ.
 - Ezekiel 36:25-27 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse

you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

- 2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
- This remedy for human depravity and our sin nature is for God to make us something new.
- He gives us a new nature in place of the old.
- He gives us a new heart filled with new desires and longings for God

- Christ's work doesn't just result in the forgiveness and cleansing of our sins—as amazing as that is and as desperately we need that.
- But all of Christ's redemptive work is graciously applied to us by the Holy Spirit when he makes our heart new.
- He takes out our cold, lifeless heart, filled with every sinful and wicked desire, and gives us a new heart, beating with new life and fresh desires.

- David's longing is for God to make him new or else he fears his fate will be like that of his predecessor Saul.
- God rejected Saul and God's Spirit departed from Saul. (1 Samuel 15-16)
- David has offered his penitent heart, his broken spirit and contrite heart, as a sacrifice because that is what God wants more than the offering of animals on the altar.

IV. OUR RESPONSE

- As I stated at the beginning, David declares that if God does this for him, forgives his sins and transgressions, cleanses him, renews him, restores to him the joy of his salvation, then he will teach transgressors the moral ways of God.
- The king does that here by teaching us that we must repent and shows us how to repent, confess our sins and bring them into the light, to fling ourselves upon the mercy of God in Christ, asking God to renew our hearts.

- God's forgiveness results in praise and thanksgiving; our hearts burst with gratitude for God's grace and mercy shown to us in Christ.

- What do you do with this psalm that teaches you true repentance and confession?
 - You repent and confess your sins.
 - Repentance means you see your sins for what they actually are, acts of treason against a holy God.
 - You acknowledge your every sin is committed against God. "Against you, you only, have I sinned."
 - When you sin, deal with it quickly, confess your sins to God and receive the assurance of forgiveness you have in Christ.

- Confess your sins individually and participate in our corporate confession of sin.
 - Each Sunday, we model confession and repentance corporately and we take care to point us all to Christ our Savior, to receive assurance of pardon for our sins based on his redemptive work alone.

- When you sin, don't try to hide from God, confess it, repent, and remember you have an advocate, Christ Jesus our Savior (1 John 2:1-2)

- The reason we can come to him is because what David longed for, for God to create in him a clean heart, is a present reality for us in Christ.
- If you are struggling with sin, if you are in bondage to sin—you need a new heart, you need a new nature. Believe in Jesus, look to him as your only rescue from sin, and ask God to create in you a clean heart to follow him and live for his glory.
- He will do that!

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?