

The Repentant Heart: A Confessing Heart, III

The Repentant Heart

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Let us remain standing at this time and let us open the word of God to Psalm 51. Psalm 51. We continue our series through this Psalm which is a Psalm of repentance and we now continue in the second section of this Psalm that is found in verses 3 through 6, and our concentration this morning, however, will be specifically on verse 6 but I will begin our reading with verse 1.

People of God, this is the word of our God.

1 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight--That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

Thus ends the reading of God's word this morning from Psalm 51. Let us go to the Lord and pray for his illumination this morning.

Our heavenly Father, we come to You this morning with hearts that are full of humility for we approach Your word as a divine document, not composed merely of the thoughts and opinions of men but that which is ultimately authored by one Holy Spirit. In this very word is found not philosophy, not the opinions of wise men, but is life that is found therein. Lord, we approach Your word of life this morning and ask that by Your Spirit You would work upon our souls, illumine us to the understanding of Your truth, and by it transform us. Speak, Your servants are listening. For it is in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

You may be seated.

We continue with our consideration of this Psalm of David that gives us insight into the repentant heart which is the title of our series as we go through this Psalm. Certainly this Psalm gives us insight into David's heart of repentance, in fact, it's a very helpful window into this man of God's heart who is grieved over his sin. But remember that this Psalm is indeed a Psalm and as a Psalm, it is intended to be words taken upon the mouth of each of God's children as they come to their God again and again and again in repentance of their sin. May the words of this very Psalm be the expression of our own hearts as we turn in repentance

This turning away from sin and toward God, pleading for his mercy, is one that necessarily includes a heart that confesses. A truly repentant heart is a confessing heart. This confessing aspect to David's repentance we find here in verses 3 through 6, this second section of the Psalm. Part of David's confession has two "behold" passages where we find the word "behold" starting them off, verses 5 and 6. In our last message, we considered the first "behold" passage which is found in verse 5, but this morning we consider the second which is found in verse 6 where we read, "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom."

Now in David's confession in verses 3 through 6 that we have considered so far, what we have found his confession to be is a very honest heart, one that is honest about his assessment of his situation. He hasn't shied away at all or sugar-coated anything. David's repentant heart has confessed the presence of sin. He doesn't hide it, sugar-coat it or put it in a corner or leave some behind. No, he says there very plainly in verse 3, "I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sins are ever before me."

This is an authentic, honest heart that confesses the presence of sin and he owns up to that sin as his own, claiming it as his own. He does not point the finger at Bathsheba, he does not point the finger at Uriah or anyone else. He doesn't point his finger at God. He alone points his finger at himself and sees that, "I alone am responsible for my sin."

And with this repentant heart, he sees clearly. His sin, he sees it for what it truly is, not for what it's not. It's not a mere mishap, it's not a mere bad choice. No, it is an offense against the Lord. "Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in my sight. Ultimately my sin is against Thee." In other words, my greatest grief is not that I twas injurious to me, my greatest grief is not that my sin was injurious to someone else, though certainly it was, his greatest and deepest grief is ultimately that he has offended his God. There we hear the heartbeat of repentance, don't we?

But David even goes further in verse 5 to confess that not only does he have sin but he has a sin problem; not only has he sinned but he himself is a sinner, conceived and born in sin. Here we find David further condemning himself, lamenting the sheer depth of his sin and, oh, how deep those waters go into the depths of his soul.

So what we have essentially found in David's confessing is that David is confessing what is present in his life that ought not to be there. It ought not to be there. He confesses his

sin that ought not to be there. He grieves because what he finds there is something that displeases God, what he finds there is something in which God does not find any delight whatsoever. But as we turn to verse 6 now, what we find David doing is he's making a different yet complementary confession to what we have found in his confession so far. In verse 6, David moves from confessing what is there that ought not be there to confessing what is not there that ought to be there. He moves to confessing that there ought to be something there that is pleasing to God; there ought to be found there something in which God does delight. So he confesses, "Behold, You desire," or perhaps better rendered, "You delight in. You desire, You delight in truth in the inward parts." That is what ought to be there and it's found lacking.

The truth that David references here is something similar to that of Psalm 15 which reads, "He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart." You see, the Lord desires that my inward parts, my inward-most being, that it is filled with integrity. He desires and delights in finding it filled with uprightness and godliness and true piety. That's what ought to be found there.

It's here we find David, you see, reaching down deep into where the roots of his whole problem lies. Notice that David isn't confessing he outwardly in his behavior ought to live in integrity and uprightness and true piety, that he shouldn't commit adultery and he shouldn't have sent for the death of Uriah, her husband, after committing adultery with her. He's not confessing that, "I ought to clean up these outward behaviors." Do you notice that's not what he is confessing? No, this integrity and this uprightness and this godliness and this true piety is to be found in his inward-most parts. The depth of his soul is where it ought to be found. He's interested in a true, honest walk with the living God that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, the path of sinners, but whose inward delight is in the will of the Lord and meditates on that will day and night.

That's where we find David's heart here. David sees that his outward behavior of adultery and murder were only the outworkings of what was within his heart, in his inward-most being, those desires and that will. God delights in truth in the inward parts but David finds his inward-most being to have motives and desires and lusts and intentions that were not pleasing to God. The repentant heart is far from wanting an external change of behavior. You see, that's what we find here in our text. We don't find David wanting merely this external change of behavior. No, the repentant heart wants the heart filled with what pleases God. It wants an honest and true inward life that seeks to delight in that which God delights.

So what we find in Psalm 51 is that the repentant heart is a confessing heart that includes within its confession not only an acknowledgment of the sin that is there that doesn't delight the Lord, but it confesses what ought to be there that does delight the Lord and will not settle for an outward uprightness, for the Lord delights in an uprightness of one's innermost being, you see. That's what he's confessing here.

What often happens in our walk with the Lord, it happens often, we become comfortable with a sin or comfortable with sins even though God is never content and is never

comfortable with any hint of sin. We may, indeed, acknowledge that they are sins and they ought not to be there, however we find our hearts are not truly grieved, they're not truly confessing and truly repenting of those sins because we do not confess and believe what ought to be there, an inward-most being that beats with true piety, delighting in what God delights in.

"Behold, You desire," You delight in "truth in the inward parts." But isn't that the very thing that we struggle with? David struggled with it too but David is not through confessing. He hasn't stopped yet. He confesses something further. We've only looked at the first line of verse 6. He confesses with confidence that what the Lord desires to be the reality of his soul and inward-most parts, the Lord himself will provide. Look at verse 6, the second line, "And in that hidden part You will make me know wisdom."

Now we ought to see these two lines of verse 6 as syntactically parallel. In line 1, he uses the word "inward parts." In line 2, he parallels this concept with "hidden part." These are not two mutually exclusive different things, but they are to be taken as the same. The inward parts are the hidden part.

In line 1 of verse 6, he uses the word "truth" for that which the Lord desires. In line 2, he parallels this concept with "wisdom." These are not two mutually exclusive things, but they're to be taken as the same. The truth that God desires within is that which he makes me know or teaches me. The wisdom to be known and the wisdom to be understood, to which David is referring here, is not merely knowing what is true and what is upright as it consists intellectually, but it is appropriating that truth, that knowledge of uprightness and godliness into one's life.

And what David is doing is he's making a confession here that is filled with hope. You see, he is confessing that he is wholly dependent upon the Lord to make known unto his inward hidden part true piety, that true uprightness that God so desires and delights in. But not only is he dependent upon the Lord to do this work in his inward hidden parts, but he's confident that the Lord will do it. This beats with hope and anticipation, hence the usage of the future tense. He says, "You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom." You will make me to understand how that truth fleshes itself out in my life, what it ought to look like in my life, what that uprightness and true piety looks like. In other words, if we can put it this way, "Lord, what You desire, what You delight in, I myself cannot produce within the depths of my soul but only You, not only You can, can bring about this but I'm confident that You will produce it within me. So I look to You, the One who can bring to the inward parts what You desire, and indeed I'm confident that You shall."

This isn't a pull yourself up by your bootstraps matter, it is matter of humility before the Lord, looking to him to shape your mind, to shape your will, to shape your appetites, to shape your likes and your desires and your tastes. It's a looking to the Lord and saying, "Lord, You did not author my sin. My sin is all mine. But You are going to be the author of shaping my inmost being to match Your delight. You're the One who will author that so I look to You."

So we learn here that the repentant heart is a confessing heart, a heart that not only confesses one's sin for what it is, an offense against God, but also it confesses with confidence that what the Lord does desire to be the reality of my inmost being, he himself will produce it and David is here looking to the Lord in faith to produce it. That's what we find him confessing at the close of this section. Notice kind of from a macro level the function of verse 6. How does verse 6 function in this section of Psalm 51? It functions to provide us the overall orientation of David's confession, namely that the goal of confession is not self-abasement but the goal of confession is renewal within. That's what it's all about. While confessing sin for what it is, while doing this, the heart is simultaneously looking to the Lord in faith to produce within the inmost being that very righteousness and uprightness and true piety that the Lord delights in and desires. It's happening simultaneously. As one confesses sin for what it is, we confess that the Lord can and will produce that piety within that he so desires.

"Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom." That's part of David's confession. And who is the Lord ultimately shaping you and I into by producing truth within, and by making us to know wisdom? Who is it that ultimately he's shaping us into? He is shaping us into the image of that one whose inward parts perfectly accord with truth, for not only was our Lord Jesus Christ's external behavior perfectly upright, perfectly holy and pious and true, but his hidden inward parts were perfectly upright, perfectly godly, perfectly holy, perfectly pious and true. His every desire, his every longing, his every will, his every intention, all of it was perfect and upright within and without. It is that one, the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we receive mercy as we turn to the Lord with repentant hearts. It is in him that we receive this mercy and it is that one, our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we receive the renewal of our hearts that we so desperately need as we turn to the Lord with repentant hearts and we're conformed more and more and more into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Oh may it be and may this confession that we find in verse 6 be the confession of our own souls this morning.

Let's pray.

Our loving Father, indeed You desire in our hidden and inmost parts uprightness and truth, a true piety that finds itself not just as merely an external matter but as that external matter is just but an expression of an outworking of a heart that beats for Your glory. Father, we pray that You would cause our hearts to match what we delight to be that which You delight, that which You desire within. Father, may it be that which we desire and pursue as we call upon You to work it within us. Indeed, Father, we are the only authors of our sin. Our sin is our own. But Lord, we look to You to author that inward wisdom and uprightness and truth in which You delight. May it be by Your Spirit, we plead and pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ, hear now the blessing from the throne of God. Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord now and forevermore. Amen and amen.