

Psalm 51

1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. 9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. 15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. 16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

Introduction:

1. “To the chief Musician” (1 Chr. 25:1-6) – Asaph, Jeduthus, Heman.
2. “A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba” (2 Sam. 11:1-12:25).
3. There are seven penitential Psalms (Pss. 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).

Outline:

- A. Prayer for Personal Restoration (vv.1-2)
- B. Confession and Contrition (vv.3-6)
- C. Prayer for Cleansing (vv.7-12)
- B.’ Results of Repentance (vv.13-17)
- A.’ Prayer for National Restoration (vv.18-19)

Observations:

1. Impassioned cry (vv.1-2). Metaphor for sinful condition: a record that needs to be expunge; filth that needs cleansing; a disease that needs healing.
2. “my...mine...my” – personal ownership.
3. Intense contrition (vv.3-5).
4. Ultimately, all sin is against God (v.4).
5. Terms: transgressions, iniquity, sin, evil.
6. God’s desire: a sincere heart (v.6).
7. Repentance is not only remorse for the consequence of sin but also about the sin itself which is the source.
8. Repentance results in joy (vv.7-8).
9. “hyssop” – a small bush (Lev. 14:4, 6, 51-52).
10. Repentance results in cleansing (v.9-10).
11. Repentance results in acceptance and renewal and restoration (vv.11-12).
12. Repentance results in praise and usefulness (vv.13-15).
13. “bloodguiltiness” – guilty of causing a man’s death. David caused Uriah’s drunkenness and death (cf. 2 Sam. 11ff).
14. God’s requirements: (vv.16-17) – Broken and contrite heart.
15. Inspired request (v.18).
16. Important results (v.19).

Lesson: God promises to pardon repentant sinners on the basis of His lovingkindness (רַחֲמֵי – *chesed*) – or mercy, or covenant-kindness = His grace. God forgives and restores. The Gospel is about full pardon and restoration because of God’s grace.