

DAVID

The Prayers of the King

Pastor's Bible Study 2020

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Episode 5: True Repentance

February 12/13

Psalm 51, Psalm 86

I. Psalm 51: A Double Edged Sword

II. The Context: David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:1-12:25)

- a. *"To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba."*
- b. While his army is out fighting against the Ammonites, David remains in Jerusalem. At this time, however, he commits adultery with a woman named Bathsheba, whose husband Uriah is away fighting in David's army (2 Sam. 11).
- c. David conspires to have Bathsheba's husband die in battle.
- d. God sends Nathan the Prophet to expose David's sin. (2 Sam. 12).
- e. ¹³ *David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." (2 Sam. 12:13).*

III. Psalm 51---A Prayer of David---A Prayer for us. "when Nathan the Prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Replace these words with your own sin.

IV. David's Claim: A Plea for Mercy (verses 1-2)

- A. The opening plea, *have mercy*, is the language of one who has no claim to the favor he begs.
- B. But *steadfast love* is a covenant word. For all his unworthiness, David knows that he still belongs to God.
- C. Sin is serious and it must be dealt with seriously. Dutch Theologian Herman Bavinck describes sin as spiritual "pollution."

V. David's Confession (verses 3-5). David knew his sin.

- A. What were David's sins? Murder, Adultery and Treason.
 - a. According to the Mosaic law, a person who commits adultery is to be stoned to death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22) and a murderer is to be killed (Exod. 21:12; Lev. 24:17).
 - b. Based on the legal requirements of the law, therefore, David is worthy of death on two accounts.
 - c. Treason. To say '*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.*'
 - i. Sin is first, **Rejection of God**—through rebellion, or denial or ignorance, and
 - ii. Second, it is **Rejection of people**—through hostility, abuse, neglect or apathy.
 - d. Verse 5. This crime, David now sees, was no freak event: it was in character; an extreme expression of the warped creature he had always been. David is

coming to terms with both the reality and environment of **sin** in the world and human condition and his personal **sins**.

VI. Restoration 51:6–9.

- A. **Remediation** is a critical part of the restoration process and **Remediation** is a technical word for “deep cleaning.”
- B. How does he deal with the pollution (sin) that corrupts our lives? How does a holy God restore his unholy people?
- C. David is asking for God to give him a deep cleaning.
 - a. *Blot out*, means ‘wipe away,’ like the writing from a book (cf. Exod. 32:32; Num. 5:23).
 - b. *Wash me thoroughly*, uses a verb normally connected with the laundering of clothes.
 - c. Verse 7: *Purge me with hyssop* alludes to the cleansing of the leper, sprinkled seven times with the sacrificial blood into which the bunch of hyssop was dipped as a sprinkler (Lev. 14:6f.); or it may refer to the ritual for cleansing those who had come into contact with a dead body (Num. 19:16–19).
 - d. Verse 8: *Let me hear joy and gladness* ... David seems to picture the outcast’s return into society, greeted by the sounds of welcome and festivity (like the prodigal returning home to the celebration prepared by his father).

VII. Inward renewal (verses 10–12)

- A. The word *Create* [Hebrew *Bara*] is the word used in Genesis—used exclusively with God. Only God “creates.”
- B. Verse 11. The likely background to this fear of being *cast away* was the example of Saul, from whom the Spirit of the Lord had departed (1 Sam. 16:14).
- C. A critical part of restoration—Return to God’s Word! Look back at verse 6. Psalm 86:11: *Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. We cannot be restored without attention to God’s Word.*

VIII. Proclamation and Worship (verses 13-17)

- A. With his heart restored, his testimony is restored (Evangelism is Restored).
- B. Psalm 51 is an evangelism passage!
 - a. 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.*
 - b. Why does God restore us? For the purpose of sharing his glory! This is the reason!
- C. Worship Restored
 - a. The enormity of his sin continues to horrify David.
 - b. Verse 15. He longs to worship freely, gratefully again; and he believes that by the grace of God he will.

IX. Prayer for the People (verses 18, 19)

- A. This is not just about David. As the King, he is the “figure and head of the people. What is true of him is true of the nation.”
- B. This may be a later—exilic—addition. Conceivably, David could have added these words himself, but it is likely that future generations made David’s penitence their own, adding these verses to make their prayer specific.