

PSALM 51 – THE YEARNING OF REPENTANCE

Introduction

- 1) **Psalm 51** – According to the superscription at the beginning of the psalm, this is “a psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba”
- 2) This story is found in **2 Samuel 11-12**
 - a) David committed adultery with a married woman, Bathsheba (11:1-4)
 - b) Bathsheba became pregnant and David unsuccessfully tried to get Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband, to be with his wife (11:5-13)
 - c) David had Uriah put in a position where he would be killed in battle (11:14-27)
 - d) The Lord sent Nathan the prophet to confront and condemn David for his sins (12:1-12)
 - e) David admitted that he had sinned against the Lord (12:13a)
- 3) Sometime after this admission of sin, David wrote this psalm of repentance and confession of sin as he yearned for that which only God could give him

I) **A Desire for Divine Mercy and Cleansing (vv. 1-2)**

- A) David yearns for God’s compassion and lovingkindness – his only hope! (Lk. 18:13)
 - 1) God is rich in mercy because of His love for us (Eph. 2:4; an abundant supply!)
 - 2) God’s forgiveness is not earned by our own righteousness (Titus 3:5)
- B) David repeats his intense desire for forgiveness
 - 1) **Blot out** my transgression (see Acts 3:19)
 - 2) **Wash** me thoroughly from my iniquity (see Acts 22:16)
 - 3) **Cleanse** me from my sin (see 1 Jn. 1:7)

II) **Acknowledgment of Sinfulness (vv. 3-6)**

- A) Sin cannot be hidden from God – must be laid open before God (cf. Prov. 28:13)
 - 1) “More people would learn from their mistakes if they weren’t so busy denying them”
- B) With sin comes the guilt of sin – “ever before me” – terrible burden to bear!
- C) All sin is first and foremost against God – must deal with this problem first
- D) God is just and blameless – we cannot blame God (Job 1:22)
 - 1) “It’s the way God made me!” “Why didn’t God help me?” “Why did God let me do that?” (Prov. 19:3)
- E) David strongly comprehended his sinfulness; God desires heart-felt repentance

III) **Reversing the Effects of Sin (vv. 7-12)**

- A) God’s cleansing brings gladness, healing, and rejoicing (Acts 8:39; Phil. 4:4; 1 Cor. 6:11)
- B) We need the restoration of fellowship and divine aid (“do not cast away” – “restore”)
 - 1) Reconciliation (Rom. 5:10-11) and spiritual help (Heb. 4:16)

IV) **Teaching Sinners and Praising God (vv. 13-19)**

- A) He would teach the proper way of being restored to God and praise Him above all
- B) The proper sacrifice to God is that of a humble, obedient heart (1 Sam. 15:22; Micah 6:6-8; Lk. 15:17-19; Jas. 4:10)
 - 1) Deeds and words without a humble, obedient heart is vain (Matt. 7:21-23; 15:9)
- C) God’s way is always the right way, and will prevail – let us please Him in all we do

Conclusion

David opened his heart to God as he yearned for forgiveness. He allows us to hear his penitent yearnings that we may know what God desires in those who pray for repentance of their sins. Sin brings no joy, therefore he wanted to be restored to the joy that only God’s forgiveness can give (see Psalm 32). Does your heart yearn to be set free from sin?