

On the Road to Recovery

(Psalm 51)

8/31/16; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

We take for granted the fact that people go to foreign countries all the time to work as missionaries, but that was always the case..

In fact, the idea of sending people to foreign lands to preach the gospel to them only came about 200 or so years ago...

Though I don't have time to share his life story, William Carey was the first to take foreign missions seriously.

You see up until the time of Carey, Christians felt the God leaves certain people in foreign lands in darkness as part of his judgment upon them...

Carey resisted that idea and took people to Matthew 28 where Jesus told the disciples and Christians everywhere to take the gospel into the entire world...

And that is what he set his mind to do..

So in 1792, Carey formed a missionary society in Great Britain and then offered to be the missionary for that society.

He packed up his family in Great Britain and they moved to India...

And he had it very rough there for 7 years.

He had trouble communicating in their language.

He got malaria.

One of his children died there.

His wife went crazy trying to stab her husband and had to be restrained.

Then after 7 years, a native of India gave his life to Christ...

Carey continued to minister there for 41 more years without ever returning home to Great Britain.

Yet, by the time he died, there were churches in India and Carey had led the Bible to be translated in the 7 major languages of India and hundreds of local languages there..

Now, I say all of that to say...

What an incredible testimony of a man who gave up much of his comfort to do great things for the Lord...

In my mind, he's a great hero...

Yet, as he lay dying in 1834, he was asked what he wanted said at his funeral, this is what he said...

"Oh, I feel that such a poor sinful creature is unworthy to have anything said about him; but if a funeral sermon must be preached, let it be from the words, 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.'"

In my mind, I read that and thought....

William Carey, such a man of God, yet William Carey is still a man who realizes that regardless of what he did for the Lord, he still needed God's mercy and forgiveness...

And he simply wanted to have this first verse of Psalm 51 read at his funeral...

That's the kind of humility that we all need because that the kind of forgiveness that we all need...

And no one knew that better than King David, who wrote Psalm 51..

Tonight, I want us to look at this incredible psalm of David...

Though I plan to move into a NT book on Wednesday nights, I want us to look at Psalm 51 tonight since David is fresh on our minds....

Having spent months with him in 1 and 2 Samuel...

And Psalm 51 is one of David's most well known psalms...

It is the psalm that David wrote after his sins of adultery and murder in 2 Samuel...

It is the psalm that exposes the heart of David as a man after God's own heart...

It shows David stripped off his crown and throne and royal robe and simply pictures him as a...

Poor, wretched sinner, desperately needing the mercy of God in his life...

And guess what?

That is true of everyone one of us in here tonight...

Take away our reputations and jobs and possessions and when you get to who each of us truly is...

We are simply people dependent upon the Lord's mercy due to the incredible amount of sin we commit...

With that said, let us spend the remainder of our time tonight looking at Psalm 51...

I have divided this psalm of David into 4 parts....

I. Confessing His Guilt (1-6)

II. Crying for His Restoration (7-12)

III. Committing His Obedience (13-17)

IV. Calling for Blessing (18-19)

As we go through this psalm tonight, let us consider David's sin, but let us not be so removed from the page that we fail to see ourselves in the same cry for mercy...

I. Confessing His Guilt (1-6)

Let's begin in the heading to this psalm....

For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when [a]Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Remember that the headings for the psalms are part of the Scripture...

The title is not.

It has been made by whoever published your Bible, but the heading is part of the Word of God even though it has no verse number beside it...

So, the setting of this psalm is the time after David went in with Bathsheba and committed adultery and Nathan the prophet had been sent by God to confront David in his sin....

If you remember, Nathan actually told David a story about two men in a town...

One rich with many sheep and one poor with only one sheep..

Yet, the rich man took the poor man's only little lamb to use it for a feast at his house when a visitor came through that town...

David's anger burned against the rich man and he demanded that he pay back the poor man for his crime...

And then Nathan told him those famous 4 words...

You are that man!

And David realized that he had taken Uriah's only wife for his own even though he had multiple wives and lots of wealth....

And David simply said in response to Nathan...

I have sinned against the Lord...

But psalm 51 is a fuller elaboration of David's admission of guilt for his sin of adultery and murder...

So, David writes in verses 1-6....

51

1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness;

According to the greatness of Your compassion 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, I have sinned
And done what is evil in Your sight,
So that You [c]are justified [d]when You speak
And [e]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 [ff]innermost being,
And in the hidden part You will make me know
wisdom.***

Let me just make a few notes in this opening section where David simply confesses his sin before God..

#1- David makes no excuses here for his sin...

Look at how he describes his sin...

The words “my” and “I” are all over theses opening verses...

David knows that he is to blame for his sin...

That is so unlike our world today where everything is blamed for sin except the person committing it....

I had a bad childhood....

Everyone has turned their backs on me....

The devil made me do it...

We sin because we desire to sin...

We sin because we were sinners when we were conceived...

That is what verse 6 teaches...

David is not commenting on his mother's sexual immorality here...

He is simply saying that he had sin nature that had been passed down to him from Adam...

And he had nature even in the womb of his mother and all through infancy and the early life, and it had followed him into adulthood and even kingship...

And he sinned simply because he was led by his sinful nature and gave in to the temptation...

But second, take not of this...

#2 - David realized who his sin was against.

Verse 4..

***Against You, You only, I have sinned
And done what is evil in Your sight,***

One of the arguments of the world when they commit certain sins is this....

If there is no victim of my sin, they why is it wrong to this or that...

And the simple is this...

Sin always has a victim, and that victim is God who has established what is right and wrong in the world...

Even if no one finds out or knows your sin, God does and He is hurt by it...

Let me sum up these first 6 verses with this...

Only people who truly see themselves as sinners are truly capable of being forgiven...

If you don't think that you are the problem, you will never find a solution...

Until you believe that you are as evil as your neighbor, you will never appreciate forgiveness as you should...

David saw his sin, and he didn't cover it...

He exposed it to the Lord.

Now that leads to verses 7-12, where David cries
for restoration....

II. Crying for His Restoration (7-12)

Verse 7...

7

*[g]Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
[h]Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

8

*[i]Make me to hear joy and gladness,
Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.*

9

*Hide Your face from my sins
And blot out all my iniquities.*

10

*Create [j]in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew [k]a steadfast spirit within me.*

11

*Do not cast me away from Your presence
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*

12

*Restore to me the joy of Your salvation
And sustain me with a willing spirit.*

David asked for forgiveness in the opening 6 verses,
but he also desires restoration...

One thing you must remember is this...

David lived in the OT, before the days of Jesus Christ...

David was under the law of the Old Covenant, yet that didn't stop him from longing for some of the blessings of a New Covenant....

And what you see here in these verses are some of the realities of what is true about Christians today...

Verse 7....have we been made whiter than snow if we are in Christ?

You better believe we have....

All of our sins have been wiped out in Christ...

Verse 8....are we filled with joy and gladness?

You better be.

Verse 10...has God given you a new heart at salvation?

Yes, he has...

Verse 11...has the Holy Spirit been taken form us?

Absolutely not!

He has been given to us...

In other words, David needed forgiveness, but he also needed what?

He needed restoration....

It was not enough for David's sins to be blotted out, he wanted to be restored to fellowship with God...

And the great lesson of this section of Psalm 51 is that sin destroys fellowship with God...

I love how David says it in verses 8...

Let my broken bones rejoice...

David is using a picture of how our bodies even feel when we sin against God...

It feels like our bones are broken...

And guess what sin also does?

It steals the joy of our hearts...

Not in all cases, but many times, depression is the result of unconfessed sin and refusal to repent...

David may have felt that as his sins with Bathsheba went unconfessed to God...

He even writes this again in verse 12...

***Restore to me the joy of Your salvation
And sustain me with a willing spirit.***

As you can plainly see, sin affects your relationship with the Lord, but it also has the power to affect you mentally by taking your joy....

And even physically by weight of guilt that falls upon your bones....

David needed restoration and he begged God for it...

Now that he has confessed his sin and asked God to restore Him, David makes a few pledges and commitments to God....

III. Committing His Obedience (13-17)

Verse 13...

13

*Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
And sinners will [l]be converted to You.*

14

*Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God
of my salvation;
Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your right-
eousness.*

15

*O Lord, [m]open my lips,
That my mouth may declare Your praise.*

16

*For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I
would give it;
You are not pleased with burnt offering.*

17

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not
despise.*

In verses 13-17, David pledges to do two things in response to God's forgiveness and restoration..

The first is found in verse 13...

David vows to teach others about God...

What kind of teaching is David talking about here?

First, I would suggest that David is speaking in a general way...

AS he goes through life, he will point others to His God by his actions and His words...

But specifically, I would suggest that David is going to also teach others about the dangers of sexual immorality...

Maybe David will speak to his men about the dangers of giving in to the lust of other women who are not their wives....

Maybe David will teach men about the value of protecting their eyes and not isolating themselves as he had when he fell into sin with Bathsheba...

I would also think that David will make it a point of his teaching to speak of the Lord's incredible mercy and forgiveness to blot out the worst of sins...

That is certainly something that sound be a part of teaching about David's God...

I was reading a woman's story of how he she had an abortion as a young lady, and then how she had came to faith in Christ....

And her ministry was not just counseling women not to get abortions, which is clearly a great ministry..

She also focus on the fact that forgiveness for abortions is available in Christ...

She said that the lady going into a clinic was her focus, but she didn't turn her back on the lady coming out of the clinic either....

Often times, we let our minds put sinners in a category from which we never let them leave...

Sure, people are in jail for murder, but God forgives murder, right?

He did for David.

But David not only commits to teaching after his forgiveness and restoration, he also commits to praise....

Verse 14...

14

***Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation;
Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.***

Not only will David teach, David will praise the Lord for His forgiveness and and restoration...

And he will do it with his tongue in song...

Please notice this men..

I am so astounded that so many men don't sing hymns to the Lord...

Look, I can't carry a tune in a bucket, but I try my best every time the piano cranks up...

Simply because I can't help but sing to a God who saved me...

And please notice this verse...

This verse is very specific in what it says...

My tongue will SING of you righteousness...

I have no idea how people who claim to be saved can keep their mouth shut when the hymns play in church...

I hear excuses all the time, but their is no excuse for a man or woman to make it a habit to never sing to the Lord....

Maybe they should pray the prayer of David in verse 15...

15

***O Lord, [m]open my lips,
That my mouth may declare Your praise.***

And let me add something here that needs to be noted...

There are 3 types of people you will find in churches...

Those who don't sing at all...

They simply stand not to feel left out...

Then there are those who move their mouth, but their hearts and heads aren't in it...

They just act like singers...

And I would tell...

God is displeased with both of those groups....

And then there is group 3...

Those who sing to the Lord from the heart....

You see David understood something that many in the church today don't understand....

God is not pleased with ritual and going through the motions...

God is only pleased with worship that comes from the heart...

That is what David is saying in verses 16-17...

God you don't like sacrifices and burnt offerings...

You see those those were external things like moving your mouth but not having any idea what you are singing...

God is not concerned with external obedience out of ritual or tradition...

Because God always looks upon the heart...

I know I just talked about the need to sing and express our praise...

But if God were to give you a medical condition where you couldn't sing, you could still worship because worship happens in the heart of a man or woman...

Look, David could have gone through the act of finding and offering an animal sacrifice to God to cover his sins...

But the greatest way to cover his sins was his heart repentance and desire to do the right thing..

God wanted David's brokenness not a not a dead beast of the field...

So, far what is David's response to sin?

Admit it and acknowledge it to God....

Beg God to restore him and change him...

And then vow to God to teach and worship...

But there is one more brief response to look at?

Verses 18-19..

IV. Calling for Blessing (18-19)

18

***By Your favor do good to Zion;
[n]Build the walls of Jerusalem.***

19

***Then You will delight in [o]righteous sacrifices,
In burnt offering and whole burnt offering;
Then [p]young bulls will be offered on Your altar.***

Please note a couple of things here...

#1 - David asks God to repair the damage done by his sin.

Look, there is always a need to deal with our sins against God first, but we must recognize that our sins affect others...

Clearly, David's sins as the king of Israel affected the nation..

When the leader commits adultery and murders, the whole nation suffers...

So, David asks God to bless Israel and specifically the city of Jerusalem...

To protect the city and the people in it...

Remember, David had a deep love for Jerusalem and for the people in his care as King...

Once you see your sin, confess it, ask God to restore you, vow to obey him, and pray that he protects others from the consequences of your actions..

Then David writes, protect Jerusalem, so that God can delight in the sacrifices that will be offered there...

If you have been paying attention, you may say....

Well, David just said that God doesn't delight in sacrifices or burnt offerings, but he is saying He does...

So, which is it?

David was saying in verses 16-17 that God does not delight in sacrifices that are just ritual and without emotion...

God doesn't want a sacrifice if the heart is not in it..

But He is delighted by sacrifices offered from a full heart...

Look, I sacrifice to the Lord and you do too when you read your Bible or come to church or serve your neighbor, or when you give of your money.

There is nothing wrong with that as long as your heart is in it...

God has established a sacrificial system and he wanted sacrifices but he wanted heart as well..

That is David's point...

Protect Jerusalem and the people there so that we can offer sacrifices to you from hearts that desire to sacrifice to you...

That is always the best kind of sacrifice.

David had been going through the motions and the people of Israel and Jerusalem were going through the motions...

But that God has forgiven David and restored David, he prays that God would protect and restore the people of Israel as well so that they could offer their sacrifices from a pure heart....

Conclusion

On December 20, 1958, while he was home for Christmas break, Elvis Presley received his draft notice in the mail...

The US Army needed some soldiers and Elvis Aaron Presley's name came up, and so a letter was sent to his home address of Graceland in Memphis TN...

And a few months later in March of 1958, Elvis entered the army where he eventually rose to the rank of Sergeant before being honorably discharged in 1960.

For many people, it was a shock to see a famous person being subjected to what everyday people experience.

But the US Selective Service System played no favorites and Elvis' name was simply the next on the list..

I say that to say this...

Sin is no respecter of persons...

Psalm 51 reminds us of that...

Whether you are a king or common person, you still have the same problem...

Your sin before a holy God.

And there is no way out, right?

Doesn't matter if you are God's chosen king or the criminal on the street.

Sin equalizes us all and puts us on our knees begging God for forgiveness and restoration...

And David has been a good model of how to do that in Psalm 51...

Admit your Sin.

Desire Restoration.

Promise Obedience.

Ask for Blessing for yourself and others...

Let us pray.