

Repentance Psalm 51

Repentance Introduction

- Christ's sacrifice is enough to defeat the power of sin in us.
- But there is a step that we must take to experience that.
- That step is repentance.
- Without repentance – a change of mind that leads to a change of behavior – sin will retain its power over us.

- David was a man who sinned severely in ways that all the citizens of Israel could see.
- Yet he tried to hide it, deny it and pretend it wasn't there.
- That worked for a while.

Repentance Psalm 51:0

- The heading gives us the context of the psalm.
- Most of us know the story.

- David commits adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite.
- Bathsheba gets pregnant.
- David sees to it that Uriah is killed in battle.

- David marries Bathsheba.
- The child is born, but shortly thereafter gets sick and dies.

- Nathan the prophet confronts David.
- David repents.
- This is his prayer of repentance.

Repentance Psalm 51:1-2

- Here David asks for forgiveness.
- He uses the same combination of terms as in Psalm 32.
 - Transgression a rebellious act – crookedness from the straight line of righteousness
 - Sin missing the mark of perfection
 - Iniquity the guilt associated with sin

 - *We must be like him [David] in not allowing the fact that we are loved by God to blind us to the fact that we are also fundamentally flawed before God. We, too, must always acknowledge that we are sinners, albeit sinners whom God has chosen to save.*
 - *Nupanga Weanzana, Bangui Evangelical School of Theology, C.A.R.*

- David realizes that he needs God to cleanse him if he is ever going to be clean.

Repentance Psalm 51:3-6

- This is a confession of sin.
- David's transgression is "staring him in the face." (Broyles)
- God will sometimes give us a nagging conscience in order to bring us to a place of confession before him.

- 51:4 Against you, you only, have I sinned.
- Regardless of who else was affected by David's sin, he sees that God is the one primarily sinned against.
 - *David is not denying that he has hurt others. What he is doing is acknowledging that God is the righteous and holy judge. When we stand before him, naked and helpless in repentance, we will have eyes for no one else. His judgment, and his forgiveness, will be all that matters.*
 - *Nupanga Weanzana, Bangui Evangelical School of Theology, C.A.R.*

- 51:5 I was brought forth in iniquity ... in sin did my mother conceive me
- This verse alone would not be enough to prove the doctrine of original or inherited sin.
- Nonetheless, it is consistent with the concept – which is supported elsewhere in the Bible.

Repentance Psalm 51:7-9

- Now David asks for cleansing.
- Hyssop was used in rites of purification.
- It is related to mint, but is bigger and looks more like lavender.

- The priest wet the hyssop in the blood of a sacrificial animal, then sprinkled it on the unclean person (a healed leper) to remove the impurity (Leviticus 14:4, 7).
- Hyssop was also used to sprinkle water in a similar way (Numbers 19:18–22).

- Hyssop at the cross.
- John 19:29 (ESV) A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.

Repentance Psalm 51:10-12

- Here David asks to be spiritually restored.
- 51:10 Create in me The verb for create is reserved uniquely for God in the Old Testament.
- For example, it also appears in Genesis 1:1.

- 51:10 The word "right" might also be translated as "steadfast."
- If we had steadfast spirits we would remain faithful in our service to God.

- 1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV) Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.
 - *Alas! our ideals fade within a few hours, and the withered petals are all that remain. We need the steadfast spirit. But this God can give us by his Holy Spirit. He can renew our will from day to day, and infuse into us his own unaltering, unalterable purpose.*
 - *F. B. Meyer (1847 – 1929)*
- 51:11 David had seen the Holy Spirit depart from Saul when that former king persisted in disobedience.
- David's fear is that the same thing could happen to him.
- Since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit indwells us at our conversion and does not leave.
- He may not be very active in some people's lives, but he lives within every believer from the moment of our regeneration.
- Romans 8:9 (ESV) You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

Repentance Psalm 51:13-17

- David now resolves to praise God publicly.
- God usually desires to work in us before he ever works through us.
- It all begins with that broken and contrite heart.

Repentance Psalm 51:18-19

- Finally, David calls out for the prosperity of Jerusalem.
- There is no inconsistency between 51:19, God's delight in right sacrifices, and 51:16-17 above.
- The problem was not the sacrificial system, which accurately pointed to Christ.
- The problem was with people who sacrificed hypocritically, without the repentance that David reveals here.

Repentance Conclusion

- *David as a younger man would sometimes cry out for God's justice to be done. Now, as a wiser, older man, he cried for mercy ... He recognized the need for his heart to be cleansed and for his relationship with the Holy Spirit to be restored.*
 - *Chuck Smith (1927 – 2013)*
- Mature Christians will see the need to keep their accounts short before God.
- Still, when our sin becomes clear to us, the devil can use that clarity to drag us down.

- He will accuse us and try to make us feel defeated.
 - *When you listen to Satan's accusations, you will focus your attention on yourself and your sins; and this will only lead to defeat and despair. But when you listen to the Holy Spirit's conviction, you will look by faith to Jesus Christ in heaven, your Advocate at the throne of God.*
 - *You will remember that he died for you and that God cannot reject you, because you belong to Christ. It is because of the heavenly intercession of the Son of God that you and I can defeat Satan's accusations.*
 - *Warren Wiersbe*

- David turned to God in repentance and was restored.
- We should have more confidence than he had, because we live on the other side of the cross.
 - *Depth of mercy! Can there be*
 - *Mercy still reserved for me?*
 - *Can my God His wrath forbear,*
 - *Me, the chief of sinners spare?*

 - *I have long withstood His grace,*
 - *Long provoked Him to His face,*
 - *Would not hearken to His calls,*
 - *Grieved Him by a thousand falls.*

 - *Lord, incline me to repent;*
 - *Let me now my sins lament;*
 - *Now my foul revolt deplore,*
 - *Weep, believe, and sin no more.*

 - *Still for me the Savior stands,*
 - *Holding forth His wounded hands;*
 - *God is love! I know, I feel,*
 - *Jesus weeps and loves me still.*
 - *Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)*

- Let's end with a time of silent prayer before God.
- We will then close by reading the entire psalm through.