

Repentance, forgiveness, and restoration

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Date: 24 March 2019

Preacher: Rev Alan Montgomery

[0 : 00] This morning's reading is from the book of Psalms, and we're going to read together Psalm 51. So that's Psalm 51.

Now hear God's word. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. According to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words, and blameless in your judgment.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth and the inward being, and you teach me wisdom and the secret heart.

[1 : 22] Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God.

O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.

[2 : 28] You will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart. O God, you will not despise.

Do good to Zion in your good pleasure. Build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then you, then will you delight in right sacrifices, and burnt offerings, and whole burnt offerings.

Then bulls will be offered on your altar. Amen, and may God bless these words to us. Father, I pray indeed that your Holy Spirit will fall afresh on us this morning, without exception.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. The 51st Psalm reflects the condition of David's life after he had committed his great sin.

And, you know, no one is too far away from God that they cannot be forgiven. no one sitting here is too far away from God that they cannot be forgiven David's witness and character had declined because of his broken relationship with God and we know that when he came to himself just like the prodigal he became conscious of an overwhelming feeling of loss and so he pours out his heart to God his spiritual bankruptcy comes vividly to light for when he came to himself he realized he had lost his peace and he prays for forgiveness he had lost his purity and cries for cleansing he had lost his joy and he pleads for restoration he had lost his power and he craves for renewal and all the church today needs to be renewed in strength in love in faithfulness in relationship with each other and with God and he prays for those things and may we make it our prayer too that God would do those things with us and for us he says in verse 12 and 13 as we have it restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will turn back to you and how we long to see men and women who are still in sin turn back to God

[5 : 45] David's purpose was to learn from his mistakes and teach the way of God to those who had lost their way an essential condition of his success is this he prays for the restoration of all he has lost restore to me oh Lord the joy of your salvation he prayed that his his his recovery he would recover his lost joy and when we fail it's inevitable that we lose some of the joy within for no one can

be happy in a relationship with God which is fragmented sin simply obscures the evidence of our sonship interrupting our fellowship with God it robs us of our peace of mind it dries up the spiritual blessings

God desires to give the way we sing that song where was the blessedness I knew when first I met the Lord oh he cries out to God that God would restore him revive him refresh him and renew him and as he prayed that we see these things happening in verse 8 he speaks of his broken bonds and that was exactly how he felt crushed mangled sore we may have felt like that physically but how often have we felt like that spiritually we are sore because we offended God and you know we can't escape the consequences of our sin sometimes

God has to break us to bring us to our senses it's not our neighbours our friends but God in his infinite love breaks us and brings again to himself where is the blessedness I knew when I first saw the Lord where is the so refreshing view of Jesus and his word we've just been singing the spirit of living God fall afresh on me oh that that might be true this morning in our fellowship in our church that God's Holy Spirit would fall afresh upon us renew us and revive us restore us refresh us and bring us again into that place where we first knew him and the connection between a sense of joy and effective service is one of relationship we remember the story of Nehemiah how he prayed over his city

Jerusalem he asked God to do something and he himself wanted to sit about doing that he prayed and within that context of that book Nehemiah in the 8th chapter as we have it says the joy of the Lord is your strength and that's what David lost the joy of the Lord restore to me Lord renew me refresh me rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice says Paul and when we have that joy and presence of God's spirit in our lives when we are renewed and refreshed we have a glad heart a glad heart means a radiant heart radiating happiness gladness and holiness and we need to get back to being a holy people fresh in the holy spirit day by day moment by moment

George Muller said that he discovered the most important matter each day was to be happy in God and the most effective way of accomplishing this was through prayer Muller was a man of prayer a stalwart in prayer he was a mountain of prayer and know that we too may resonate and come to realise the necessity of prayer sometimes we just play it being prayer warriors but we need to be a prayer warrior a true prayer warrior a radiant life radiate the joy of the Lord day by day the glad heart also means ready lips when we are aware of that joy through unbroken communication with God we have a desire to share him with others we're not afraid we're not worried what other people will say because opportunity is given through others noticing our character and attitude how we lost that character and that attitude because we're not in a true relationship with God something's broken we have opportunity for example through the cafe that we have here to let people see the radiant joy that can come from us our lives and can come from their life through a relationship with God and a glad heart also means a courageous spirit we begin to discover that new confidence and begin to sense

[13 : 20] God at work in our lives and what we do we do not through our own weaknesses but through his enabling Paul remember has said for we do not have a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and so often we are too timid in what we want to share with others or how we want to share it let it be a people of power and strength a people filled with the holy spirit a people given over to God surrounded and saturated by his spirit let's not be afraid but let's know his joy and as he recovered his lost joy and we can recover ours too we can recover any lost power that we may have

David was conscious of his need of the inner strength of God and when our sin our failures our faults cause our relationship with God to be broken we become impotent and we fail he used the word hyssop in the psalm asking God for a spiritual cleansing not just physically but spiritually in his life and how we all need to be spiritually cleansed those words were used in John's gospel as Jesus went to the cross Roman soldiers gave him hyssop water and how we need to renew our faith in God our strength to be renewed our joy to be renewed our relationship to be renewed you see to all intents and purposes we may appear to be fine from outside our outer grandeur may be fine but the final punch lies in the spirit's power we may lack that and we have to pray for the restoration in our lives the psalmist reminds the psalm reminds us of how

David found again that peace and power which he had lost he confessed that was a point he came to know he confessed and however small our sin may be irrespective of the colour people talk about just a wee white lie my friend it doesn't matter where it's a white lie a blue lie a green lie a purple lie a red lie sin is sin no matter how it's packed up it's sin and it causes relationship with God

to be broken he pleads that God will show forgiveness and he recommitted his life to a new way of obedience it wasn't just saying sorry sorry can easily slip off our tongue and I know I have said on occasions

I'm sorry for what I've done but it was only when I came and asked that person will you forgive me it made a difference yet you've said sorry on occasions sometimes it's just slipped off your tongue but real sorry comes in the word forgiveness Lord will you forgive me for what I've done and when that happened in David's life David knew he was made to live again how we see God's unfailing love love to one who was willing to acknowledge his waywardness and feelings this man this young boy who once was a shepherd boy who knew the faithfulness of

God who knew God surrounding him in all his dangers forgiveness right he made a mistake that he regretted but he knew he had to ask for forgiveness when we do that we have the confidence in knowing that God returns to the individual or the fellowship who truly acknowledges its feelings the joy and power it once knew do you recall when you first became a Christian and a follower of Christ do you remember the promises and covenants you made to follow Jesus whatever I have decided to follow Jesus no turning back no turning back but I ask you this morning ask myself how often have I turned back and failed the Lord how often has he failed me never he remains closer than a brother return oh holy ghost return sweet messenger of rest

[20 : 22] I hate the sins that made thee mourn and drove thee from my breast let me mention just briefly the purpose he says in his psalm that when he's restored he will teach sinners the way of God the result of his forgiveness is that when filled with joy and power he cannot fail to speak and therefore cannot fail to succeed success simply means being faithful simply commending others to the grace of God experience in our lives it shows it shows and in speaking about God in sharing our faith in being restored and renewed and refreshed we will have a new note in our message a note of compassion when he that

Jesus saw the people he had compassion on them because they were like harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd my friend allow God and allow me God to continually soften my heart so that it beats for what your heart beats for people fill with compassion fill with sympathy feeling sorry for someone even if you have not been there yourself and nobody knows how much you know until they know how much you care someone once said that empathy is like giving someone a psychological hug and we're never we're never to look down on anybody unless it's simply to help them up and we have to have conviction

Charles Spurgeon said you cannot preach conviction of sin unless you have suffered it you cannot preach repentance unless you have practiced it you cannot preach faith unless you have exercised it true preaching is artesian it wells up from the ground depths of the soul and if Christ has not made a well within us there will be no outflow from us we need to let go and let

God let go of our wrongfulness our sin our weaknesses our waywardness our failures and let God take control of our lives let that be true today in this place that God will change us for the better he can't change us any other way change us for the better and let the glory of God be seen in our lives father God thank you for David his realization he had sinned his seeking of forgiveness may that be true for us too whatever our sin may be help us not just to say sorry but to order something deeper and seek forgiveness through your son Jesus Christ in his name we pray amen restore the Lord the honor of your name