

Psalm 51

Read: Psalm 51: 1-19

Summary:

Psalm 51 is one of 7 recorded for us in the Bible that deals with repentance: confessing guilt, appealing to God for forgiveness and then living different. We know that this Psalm was written by King David after having been confronted by the prophet Nathan over his behaviour. This would have been the blackest moment in David's life.

The Appeal David does not focus upon himself, but his hope is in God. He appeals to God's character: one of mercy, compassion and unfailing love. It is great to know that whatever we have done we can still come and call him 'Father'

The Confession David is no longer trying to cover his tracks but admits what he has done. He is very clear that his sin is against God, his creator and judge. In fact David does not just own him to doing something wrong but declares that he is a sinner: he has fallen short of God's high standard, missed the mark, been rebellious.

The Prayer David knows that he has failed but also knows that God won't. David asks God to cleanse him, create a pure heart... a supernatural work. David is desperate not to lose the presence of God (something that happened to Kings Saul before him). Note that David does not ask God to remove the consequences of his sin.

The Thanks His gratitude for the mercy of God means that David will not be able to contain his thanks. He will tell others about how great God is; he will want to sing, shout and praise about God's goodness; he will walk through life in humility.

The Impact Some have suggested the last 2 verse were a later addition – we do not know. Are they a foot note asking God to rebuild what has been ruined by sin? Do they outline the national impact of our individual sin? Surely they do highlight that our ultimate concern should be about God and His glory.

Application:

1. Was there anything shared on Sunday that needs clarifying for you?
2. What did God say to you and what are you going to do as a result?
3. Who loves you enough to point out your sin? How could you welcome the insight of others?
4. In what ways are you 'aware of the presence of God' and what difference does this make to your life?
5. What is the difference between feeling embarrassed being caught for doing something wrong and being repentant?
6. Reflect upon your outreach, praise and humility. Does this show how grateful you are for what Jesus has done for you?
7. In what ways do you try and cover your tracks? Does this ever really help?