

"A SOUL CRYING FOR CLEANSING"

Psalm 51

This is probably the most significant plea for mercy and forgiveness (ever made.) Most scholars believe that this was written by David after Nathan had accused him of his sin with Bathsheba. David was a sensitive spirit. There is no Psalm in which we find a varied concept of sin as this. The Psalmist is ill. He longs to be healed. And yet, the greatest passion of his heart is to be forgiven. Because he views his physical condition as a result of the Lord's punishment for his sins.

He begins with a cry to the Lord for cleansing. There are three different terms that are used for sin.

First (transgression.) The sin of conscious rebellion. This is a Hebrew term. It is an act which violates a known standard. And it means disobedience to the law - really a defiant attitude. When a man says "I will do as I please."

The second is (iniquity.) Which deals with the sin of error. And means to be twisted out of shape. It means to be dwarfed.

Third, is (sin.) It means missing an aimed at mark. Falling short of the goal that God has set. Now these three terms of sin are used by the Psalmist and he also uses three vivid terms for forgiveness.

The first, (blot out) Which means to wipe off or to erase. Like the ritual performed by the priest of washing off that which has been written on a tablet. Num. 5:23.

The second term is (wash). Means to ^{tread, tramp} ~~try~~ it out. The method used for washing garments, by thoroughly treading. Ex. 19:10.

The third, declare me (clean) It is a ceremonial term. It is when the priest pronounces the worshipper clean. Lev. 13:6.

Now this is not popular to talk about sin. But this is something that the mightiest man in the Old Testament has left us with. And he gives us all the facts about what sin has done and his cry for cleansing.

I guess most people have some defects. I read after the honeymoon the new husband asked his bride, you don't mind if I point out to you a few of your little defects, do you?

Not at all, replied the bride. It's those defects that kept me from (getting a better husband), dear.

A woman once said to a Doctor - you have to help my husband. He thinks he is a refrigerator.

The Doctor says, now don't get excited. That isn't such a big problem.

The woman said, maybe not for you - but he sleeps with his mouth open and the light keeps me awake.

Yes, I am sure that we all have a few little defects here and there.

Now in this Psalm, I want to talk to you about the cause of sin. And second, about the confession made. And third, about the cure. There are at least these three things that are implicated here.

I. THE CAUSE

We turn to 2 Sam. 11:12, and we read about the cause. It is most interesting to note that David himself records the sin for us. It must have been a very painful experience for the king. You remember the account - he was on his palace roof one day. His army had gone to battle. He saw a beautiful woman bathing herself. His passion was aroused. He sent over messengers. Ordered her to be brought to him. He entered into an adulterous relationship. And she was a married woman. Her husband a soldier, was in the Army fighting for the king.

Later, David learned that she was expecting a child. He must cover that up. He ordered the husband home from battle and sent him down to his home. Hoping that he would sleep with his wife, and the child would be accepted as

his own. But Uriah was a soldier. Committed to battle. He had the orders of the king. But he slept in the soldier's place and returned to battle the next day.

David knew the sin was ultimately to be found out. So deeper and deeper, he was forced in a desperate attempt to cover up his sin.

Psalm 32 - David records how he felt during the terrible time. He was trying to cover up his sin. "I kept silent, he said, my bones grew old through my groaning all day long. "For a year he tried to live with a bad conscience.

The husband was killed and the king felt that everything was safe.

Until one day, the prophet Nathan came. Now, how would the prophet approach this situation. He could not come out and accuse the king but he told a story. He said that while he was abroad in the kingdom a certain incident occurred. There was a certain rich man who owned a flock of sheep. And a traveler came by - to whom he wanted to show hospitality. Instead of taking one of his own sheep and offering it for food - he went to his poor neighbor who only owned one little lamb. And took that lamb and prepared it. When David heard that, he was upset. Such a man ought to make restoration four-fold. And he then ought to be killed. In a most dramatic way, Nathan pointed his long boney finger at the king. You are the man. David, then knew that his sin had been uncovered before the face of God. And that is where we get this Psalm from.

I remember reading the story of a pastor whose telephone rang early one morning. It was a distressed call. It was an ungodly hour. And he went to a man who was in despair. A man who had been drawn away by his own lust. And, sin - when it is finished - bringeth forth death. The morning newspapers would carry a sad story. Every one would know that this man's feet were of clay. His children would be shamed, his wife crushed, and his home broken. His life nothing. And he told the story to the pastor.

The pastor reached for his Bible and read 2 Sam. 11 & 12. Which told about the great sin of David. Then he turned to Psalms 51, and read David's confession. And plea for forgiveness. He led this man through the same experience, and as David cried - have mercy upon me, oh God. So did this man. Now David fell victim to a custom. As other rulers were doing this. But he learned what everybody else was doing was a poor excuse for sin. There are too many of our social standards set by Hollywood rather than the church.

There are many alcoholics today who can say the social drink is what got me. Everybody was doing it. There are a lot of boys and girls today who take undue liberties because they say - others are doing it all the time. There are a lot of people who are trying to make an extra dollar in a dishonest way. There is a lot of compromise.

Furthermore, David thought that to cover up his sin - it would be easy to do. But that scheme didn't work. God knew about it all the time.

There is a verse of Scripture - Num. 32:23. Be sure your sins will find you out.

There is another Scripture - Gal. 6:7 - Whatsoever a boy or a girl soweth, that shall he reap. David reaped, the little child died. And what a tragedy. Here was a man - because the cause he told himself.

II. THE CONFESSION

As we think of the second part of confession - we think of what a marvelous understanding of the nature of sin - and the character of God and his forgiveness that we have here in the first verses.

V. 1-2, there are two or three things that David asks for.

V. 1
First, he understands that (sin is like a crime). And sin is a violation of justice. And he says, blot out my transgressions. Have mercy upon me. And thereby, he reveals that he understands that sin is like a debt. He owes something.

And finally, he cries - wash me thoroughly and cleanse me. He understands that sin is really ugly. And that it defies a man, it stains his character. And so, he is asking for deliverance.

Now understanding the basis for forgiveness - he says, two things. First, according to thy steadfast love. He understands that he deserves nothing. Except God's boundless love. People are never able to realize that forgiveness is possible because they think they do not deserve it. And there are others yet that think that God owes it to them. But David knew better than this. God's love is the only basis that it has for asking it. And, the second thing here - he says, according to thy abundant mercy. Again, he indicates that he understands God. That God is not a penny pincher. He does not give his mercy out just a few drops at a time. But when God forgives - he forgives. And this is a great figure of speech. "As far as the East is from the West, so far that he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. How far is that. How far is it from the East to the West. You never can come to the West - if you started going West. Then God will "cast your sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19. And so, someone has added - that God puts up a sign that reads - no fishing. Do not go down there and try to fish old sins out. God has dealt with them. What a relief that is. You'll never be able to fish those sins out again.

David had pulled aside the curtain and he invites us to look at his personal life and problems. And really the hot tears are flowing down his cheeks. He is guilty of all of these sins. And he is the king. But he is helpless. He has soldiers but he is still defenseless. He has a multitude of goats and lambs and he can put those on the altar. But they will not make his life clean.

And of course, the turning point had been when Nathan said, thou art the man.

He knew full well that some remedy had to be taken.

You remember the Bible describes sin as crookedness. Playing the fool. Lawlessness. All of those. Well, David had used these words, these basic words -- missing the mark, the target. Shooting wide of the target. A bad aim. He lacked the power to reach that target.

What had happened was that David had missed the target and come so short - he is just so far off. He is saying, have mercy on me, Oh God. He lost his hold on God. And this brought him a lot of heartache. And when this happens, of course, he wants it blotted out and he wants things dealt with.

V. 2 - He wants to be washed thoroughly. His iniquity meant that he was twisted, warped, and crooked. And what he did, he could have gone out and committed suicide. He did not harden his heart and plunge deeper into sin.

Nor did he try to justify his sin by blaming the woman. Nor did he blame Uriah, nor did he blame the social customs of his day. But in simple confession he says, (cleanse) me of my sin.

His sin was a great worry to his heart.

There are three verbs here that indicate that he wanted God to do something. First, he says, (blot) out. Second, (wash) me. Third, (cleanse) me. Take care of my record he says in the record book. Wash me thoroughly - I am defiled. I need some scrubbing. And finally, cleanse me - absolutely cleanse me inside.

David was concerned about the punishment and the consequences of sin. This is a most difficult thing in a man's heart - to say that I have sinned. I have made a mistake. My home was unhappy, I was a victim of circumstances. I followed the crowd. So, we just say things happen. But David did not use any of these things. He just said like a man - I have sinned.

V. 3. V. 3 - He says, for I acknowledge my (transgressions). And my sin is ever before thee - I am the man. Now this man did not blame his ancestors. He does not blame the standards of his day. He doesn't blame his associates. He simply says (I am the man) (I have sinned). It is always before me. He does not try to cover this up.

We tend to cover our sins. It sounds nicer if we do this.

Now this is interesting. We have one list of terms to describe sin in us! It is entirely different to describe the sin in someone else! Now other people have prejudices - and we say we have convictions. Other people have a fowl temper but we say we have righteous indignation. We try to cover our sins. But we'll never be forgiven because we haven't taken the first step. There is a hymn that says, "if I have wounded any soul today. Or caused one foot to go astray. If I have walked in any willful way, Lord forgive." Now there is really no confession in that song.

Ray C. Steadman
Well, Lord there might be a slight possibility that I have done some little evil thing. Although, it is not very likely. But if I have, then forgive me. That is the kind of confession that can never really compare to what David is doing here.

If we are going to defend ourselves, John argues in his first letter - then we cannot have the defense of the appointed (advocate). At the Father's right hand, who is ready to defend us. To defend ourselves, we say it is not our fault. Because this happened or something did this, that, or the other. Then the Lord Jesus Christ cannot defend us.

It is very clear that David acknowledged his guilt. He names the sin. He does not blame God. And David says against thee and thee only have I sinned. It is not that he does not understand that others have been damaged by his sin. There was the woman's reputation. There was her marriage, that was broken because of a murder. There were hearts that were grieved because there was a child that was born - and that child died.

Now it is (God's love) that has been (wounded) here. And the only way to handle it - David is coming the right way.

However, his problem is not over yet. Notice how he strikes deeper as he goes on the way. He says that he was a fool. And he made a fool of himself.

V. 5-6 - David admitted that he was a sinful man. I was (born) he says, as the Scripture says here. Brought forth in iniquity. Now here we understand that sin is a combination of unfortunate circumstances. He now recognizes that sin goes farther and deeper. He said, in sin did my mother conceive me. Do not misunderstand this verse of Scripture. It does not mean that there was anything wrong with the (act of conception). Now his mother was not sinning when

she conceived David. This is not what he is saying here at all. There are some who read this as though (sexual intercourse) was in itself some kind of a sin. But in the marriage relationship, it is blessed and is honored of God. And is a delight to the heart of God.

Now what he is saying is that the (act of conception) (introduced him) into sinful humanity. He was born into a sinful race in which sin was already deeply indebted. Now there are many who may challenge this. They may question the doctrine of (original sin). But this is a theological term. Though I may not be very accurate on it. But the idea is, that the whole race is basically fallen. Now (if you deny) this, then the question comes - who taught you to sin? Where did you learn to lie? You don't have to go to school to learn how to be dishonest? Did your parents have to train you to deceive others? No, every parent here knows that children do these things naturally. This evil shows up about the time a baby can express himself. There is a little bit of rebellion and independence. And self-assertion, even in an infant.

Now this is what David is saying - he says, I see now. (My sin) problem is not on the surface - it is a deep problem. It is really down in my nature. And he says it is in my whole being. No wonder he begins to pray. And how God needs to come and help him out of this. We must understand this.

III. THE CURE

There are several (steps) which David takes here, in this cure, as he upon God - for God's help. Because he recognizes it.

v.6
 The first thing that he wants is that God would (teach him wisdom) for his heart. He says give me. He wanted an understanding of the facts of life. To have God show him the reality and show him the way. In other words to help him to understand the truth about the secrets of his heart.

v.7
 Now the second thing is in V. 7. He wanted to be figuratively (purged from his sins by blood). He prayed for full cleansing. Not only does he want to receive God's presence. But he wants (to be fit) for God's presence. Now this is more than just a restoration. And it was - as he looked at his life. And God had completed the operation. He wanted God to sprinkle the hissop upon him. Indicating that he had God's approval and that he was now set aside for God's work.

v.8
 The third thing is in V. 8 - fill me with (joy and gladness). And let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice. The Hebrew here means - "make me to hear." "Say something to me," oh God. This, he says, tell me what it means. Say something to me about it and let me know what your word is.

"
 If I put it in our words - let me hear music again in our souls. He begs for joy and gladness that will be his portion. It will be a new day for him when he hears the Heavenly music in his soul again.

v.8
 The fourth step, V. 9 - (hide thy face) from my sins. And (blot out) my iniquities. Here he is saying Father, if I am going to be free from falling again, something has got to be done about the past. I can't always have this thrown up to me forever.

David must have felt a little bit depressed or discouraged. How he was going to be wretched or miserable the rest of his life. He is asking God - hide your face from my sin and blot out my iniquities.

V. 10
The fifth thing - V. 10. He prays for a (new heart) and a (new life). Create in me a clean heart. What destructive power sin had had. He prays for a brand new heart. He must deal with the old life and the old heart. But he says, I am tired of it. I am tired of this old life and I want God to do something about it. And that's very important.

V. 11
V. 11 - In the sixth step, he says, cast me not away. Now take not thy Holy Spirit from me. He begs God to keep him close.

Now I do not think that here the Psalmist is just praying that he might lose his salvation. No, but here is assurance that the Holy Spirit is going to be with him. And David needed that assurance. Cain was banished and had to wander outside of God's will. And David prays that he cannot live unless he is living in the presence of God.

Would to God that we could get that conviction. Our lives would be so miserable until we were guided in his steps day by day.

V. 12
The seventh step - V. 12. He prays for the (joy of salvation) to be restored. David is like a hungry boy. He wants that joy.

What a loss he had sustained.

I've found (church members) sometimes who will say, my life is empty! How appropriate this prayer. Sin takes away that joy. And we are talking about a cure now. And here is a man that wanted to get back into God's blessings.

I read about a preacher who got a letter from a person once. Telling about his moral failure. The man attempted to be honest. And he did not sign the letter - but the preacher knew that he would be in the service. So he decided to address himself to that problem. And so he brought out the truth of the power that we have of breaking away from our sins. 2 Peter 1:3. The very possession of the life of Jesus Christ in us is the power that takes away the habit of sin. No person will ever be free from the grip of sin, upon his life - until he understands that God is able to do it. And of course we have to be a willing spirit. We do not wait for the feeling to come to be forgiven. We do not wait for the feeling of power to possess us. God has declared that he has already given you the power. And that's by faith.

V. 13
816
The next step that we find in David's wonderful cure - V. 13. Here is (a sacred commitment) a vow, that he promises that he is going to try to teach transgressors thy way. He promises to seek out his (friends) that have fallen in the same pit. He promises to bring the good news. He is going to tell people of God's grace.

What a wonderful understanding this man had of the character of God. Which has gone beyond anything that we can possibly imagine. He is going to become a teacher of his experience. And he is going to talk out of his experience and help those that are struggling with the same guilt.

V, 14-15
9th
Now finally, he comes to the words of (praise) V. 14 and following. He says my tongue shall sing aloud. He is going to praise God.

V, 16
V. 16 - He says I would, if you desire, I would bring sacrifices - I would give it. His mind is turned to the temple. And he would be glad to bring a hundred or a thousand goats.

V, 17
10th
V. 17 - In (his commitment), he says I will offer a broken and a contrite heart. The sacrifices of God are this - (true repentance). And what a wonderful understanding this man had. I will praise God he says. For taking away my guilt. And second, I will have a broken and not a willful spirit - but a contrite heart. So I can praise you oh God. I will not be stubborn any longer.

V, 18
V. 18 - He said that he was going to (do good in Zion). To build the walls, the very city of God. In all of God's greatness. He had found that God had healed him, in his sin.

V, 19
11th
And finally in V. 18 - and 19 - (the worship will be realistic). It will not be mere form. Every song sung, every prayer uttered will not be repetitious.

Do you know that you are the ruler over your little kingdom. That you have influence over your family and friends. And what happens in your little kingdom - if sin reigns unchallenged in your life, it falls apart. You know what to do. God offers to restore you and to rebuild your kingdom. And this is the thing that David was going to do the pleasure of Zion. And he was going to rebuild it.

With that we could call for this.

I read in the newspaper of (William Thomas Turner), Bradenton, Fla. He had been warned of the tragedies of alcohol. He was driving home from his work to a trailer court when his car struck a boy riding a bicycle. He panicked and he did not stop. The boy was killed in the collision. The car was dented. Police roped off the area in the community in which Turner lived. And witnesses described the death car. They found it parked in front of his house. After a search, the officer found Turner hiding in the attic. Drinking from a bottle of liquor. They questioned him for more than an hour. They charged him with man slaughter, and leaving the scene of the accident. And then, they told him the rest of the story. His own 12 year old boy, Randal riding home from school on his bicycle was whom he had killed. Of course, the man had a (broken heart) just like David. And because of his confessed sin, William Turner will answer for himself. David will answer for himself. You, too, will answer for yourself. The scourge of sin must be handled.

The crime, like David's, could not be purged like animal sacrifices. He deserved to die. He knew it. And he cast himself upon the mercy of God.

X
Marilyn Monroe was found dead. She was grasping the telephone with one hand as though she was trying to call for help. Someone remarked, she was calling for help - but there was no one on the other end of the line!

Now this is not so for those who call upon God in repentance and faith.
" Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his faults. And let him be Lord and he will have mercy upon him. And to our God who will abundantly pardon. Isa. 55:6-7.

1
X
Once after ^{Dwight L} Moody had finished preaching, a little boy with a handsome face was brought to the platform by an officer. He had found him wandering around in the crowd, evidently lost. The preacher took the little fellow in his arms and standing before the great throng, ask the people to look at the lost child. This boy has a father who is no doubt looking for him with an anxious heart. The father is more anxious to find the boy - than the boy is to be found. It is just so, with our heavenly father. He is seeking us today. Seeking us for long years - he has been following you as a sinner. And he is following you still.

At that instance, a man elbowed his way forward to the platform. He drew near the little boy, and the boy saw him, and ran over the platform and threw himself into his father's outstretched arms. The multitude of people witnessed the scene with breathless attention. And then broke into a mighty cheer. Thus cried, Mr. Moody, will (God receive you) if you will only run to him today!!!

Consider now, this cry for cleansing. Will this become your cry. Do you need the hurt of your heart healed. Have you been going with a broken heart. Is there damage in your life? Is there something destroying you or hurting somebody in your family. Have you been clinging to some evil. Now may God help you as he helped David. Oh, finally, reached out and confessed and acknowledged, and received the delight that only God had to offer.

Allex Hardner 1794-1857

British Seaman - Majors's Navy 1840-42

Mother's typical Room chd on Day 11/18/42
on floor sleep - retired - get the handicap

Age 14 in Navy - two years, and
age 15-25 Boarded year - Denial of God

Letter, Friend of Mother, Rel. body

Mean of his Conversion

- Told him what was best

- Words of David Ps. 57:10

- Nothing whole inquire can enter Heaven

- Be found in Death as she found her

Letter from Singapore went Back

Allex Hardner had been and in the life

H. Paul became his Hero

Ship was Irish Irish Irish

7 men - Stones gone - one by one swirl

Supply ship not come

2 left Belgian Irish Irish

Canoe - not listen feet - land

Belief Party come land

Painted on the Painting to love 4

Underneath (Ps. 62:5)

Dying of cold and hunger but

Waiting upon God!

That is Faith

Diary - beads from

"Although my daily bread has failed

and know from where it came;

and still this faithful promise

are the every day the same."

His Words are some for us

as when they were given,

Yes! Blessed Thought!

They cannot fall through earth

to be moved or heaven!"

Last words - "Yet a little

though grace we shall gain

That blessed Thought to bring

The praise of Christ through

eternity, and neither

hunger nor thirst though

it have been for (5 days)

without food, Marvelous"

Kindness to me a Sinner,

Commander Hardner