

THE SINNER'S GUIDE TO GOD

TEXT: Psalms 51:

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free spirit.

13 Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness.

15 O LORD, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise.

16 For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in Burnt Offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with Burnt Offering and whole Burnt Offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine Altar.

The God of Heaven, Whose all-seeing and searching eye is ever on His saints, is directing from Heaven the redemption and deliverance of His own children here on earth.

2 Samuel 12:1: And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

The scenic background of the text is **2 Samuel 12:1** with a parable sermon by Nathan, God's Prophet, to a congregation of only one man. The man's name is David. The sermon took some time to soak in. The preacher's message was over the head of his congregation. It was a searching rebuke for the king whose conduct was far below the standard of God's plumbline for His saints.



Isaiah 28:17: Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

Amos 7:7-8:

7 Thus He showed me: and, behold, the LORD stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in His hand.

8 And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the LORD, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of My people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more:

About 14 years elapsed from David's sin until Nathan's appearance. It has been years of misery, agony, and sorrow. The plumbline recalls the fact of sin. Only when Nathan came in with God's plumbline did David see himself aright. He was undisturbed in doing evil until God sent arrows of conviction home through a preacher.

There is a disposition in all of us to ignore the warning signs of conscience, because we know it is an alarm system within us. We imagine that nobody else knows just how we feel. We neglect to heed its warnings. We slip away from its conviction.

There is a disposition in all of us to ignore the warning signs of conscience . . .

So, today in modern religion, there is a disposition which teaches us to ignore the necessity of repentance, or at least to treat it as of secondary importance in the matter of salvation. But Christ — the exalted Prince and Saviour — preached: **“Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish”**.

Luke 5:32: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

In the Great Commission, Jesus gave His followers the following: “Repentance

and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” We dare not make the Gospel offer freer than God Himself has made it.

Acts 17:30-31:

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will Judge the world in Righteousness by that Man [Jesus] Whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He [The Lord God] hath raised Him from the dead.

There is a sorrow that works death which has some resemblance to repentance, but it is unavailing and deceiving.

There is a sorrow that works death which has some resemblance to repentance, but it is unavailing and deceiving. There is remorse that smarts the heart of even stout sinners. A sinner may tremble at the very thought of death, may vow reformation, and even join a church. Yet in his heart, he never turns to God because there is no genuine repentance.

You will help yourself by knowing whether your heart is faking sorrow for sin or not.

God had David write his own experience:

- 1. True repentance begs God for MERCY, and causes one to turn to God and not to a church or a man for help.**
- 2. The heart intensely loathes its wickedness, and wants to be clean and free from its corrupting influence.**
- 3. The true penitent makes a full confession and does not hold to some secret pleasure of sin.**
- 4. The penitent recognizes that his sins are against God.**
- 5. The sinner sees that his sins are incurable without God’s help.**
- 6. The sinner is truly convicted, sees the holiness of God’s laws, and see how horribly his conduct has broken those laws.**
- 7. He is willing to do what God commands to get rid of guilt and be forgiven.**
- 8. He doesn’t make excuses or justify self. He recognizes how sinful his sinful nature is.**
- 9. These are the characteristics of true repentance:**

a. a heart broken by sin

b. a desire to turn from that sin

What happened to cause David to write these verses? A great fall had come to this man who was high up in God. This man had lost his heart grip on the Lord. He forsook his Shepherd. He became guilty of the vilest sins, evil thoughts, unholy desires, adultery, and then murder. He wrecked the home of a faithful, loyal soldier, and stole his wife. He worked every scheme in the book to cover up his evil deeds.



Where did the sin start? By being idle, lazy, goofing off, taking it easy, and loafing around!

2 Samuel 11:1-5:

1 And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

2 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

3 And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.



The most dangerous days in any life are those spent in taking it easy. Savage temptations attack the righteous. The most dangerous days come to us when we feel we have arrived at the pinnacle of success. Very few can stand success and keep pure, Christlike. Failures keep us humble and digging. Success does not. This is where young people especially go wrong. The idle mind is the devil's workshop. So much leisure time in the summer — nothing to do.

Youth has its dangers, but so does middle age. In middle age we have stopped giving attention to pansies, and are not devoting all our time to cultivating potatoes

and making a living. The summertime of life finds us vacationing — not any longer working our fingers to the bone making a living for the family. Middle age has its prosperous, successful class. David was here.

David's temptation was first only a forbidden look; then an evil thought; then the evil act of murder. He never dreamed his sin would go that far!!



Old age, too, has its pitfalls. When the devil gets us on his toboggan slide, no telling where we will stop. A preacher, Clarence V. T. Richardson, began his early ministry with innocent flirtations with girls in his congregation, and ended up murdering a girl he had wronged. He was sent to the electric chair. Sin has terrible growing power!

But — wonder of wonders — David found his way back to divine favor! How did it happen? What is the secret? We all stand in need of forgiveness.



The first step was on God's part. He sent His preacher to hit David's sin with a sledge hammer message. This preacher took his life in his hands to call David down. He was skilled by God. He was brave. He told David a stirring story of the injustice of

one man against another.

He told how a wealthy man who had great herds stole a little lamb from a poor man. David clenched his fist, bit his lips and said: *"The man shall die that did this thing!"*

It is so easy for us to rage against other sinners. It is not so easy to be indignant about our own sin. David was like many in our congregations today — he didn't take the message home with a rake, but used a pitchfork.



Nathan was digging up that scoundrel who was sheep

stealing, then he did a very courageous thing — he pointed his finger right under David's nose and said to the lust-smearing, blood-stained king: *"Thou art the man"*.



Then what happened? Many men would try to kill the preacher, or would at least walk out in a rage, ranting and raving about the church. Herod did this. But David's

face grew pale, his lips quivered, his knees shook, and down he went into tears and confession.

Thank God for Nathan and Jonah preachers. When I hear one who trims the message to tickle the ears of Sister loud-mouth, Miss Worldly-minded, Mr. Spineless, and Mr. Booze-keg, I know they are no longer a servant of Christ, but of the devil. Every true minister gives what God gives, so He gives what we need, not what we want to hear.



Now, hear David praying? ***“Have mercy upon me, Oh God, according to Thy loving-kindness . . . to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity.”***

Over and over, David speaks of his sins, iniquity, and transgressions. He offers no excuse or alibis. He doesn't lay the blame on another's shoulders. I have heard many do that, just as Adam and Eve did. As long as we blame someone else, we are saying we are blameless. We come with stain on our heart and go away with it after prayer, but we don't really repent for ourself.

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WASH ME THOROUGHLY:

Exodus 29:17: And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head.

Leviticus 8:12: And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.

2 Kings 5:10-13:

10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the Name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?



Isaiah 1:16: Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Isaiah 4:4: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

Jeremiah 4:4: Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest My fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

Proverbs 30:12: There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

I shall be whiter than snow:

Acts 22:16: And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the Name of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:11: And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are Sanctified, but ye are Justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Ephesians 5:26: That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,

Titus 3:5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.



Hebrews 10:22: Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of Faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Revelation 1:5: And from Jesus Christ, Who is the faithful Witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His Own Blood,

Revelation 7:14: And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

Even birds and cats want to be clean. A prison is a quarantined place for sinners not fit for exposure to the public.

Isaiah 1:18: Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

There is a great danger in delay, because it involves sin.

Come NOW! No delay allowed. There is a great danger in delay, because it involves sin. Sin is cancerous. Sin is called SCARLET — it is double dyed — a sinner by birth and by choice. Scarlet is a permanent color, fixed.

Listen! There is no power in chemistry that can take scarlet out of a fabric without destroying it. But what is impossible with man is possible with God. Man uses chemistry. God uses Grace. The Bible color for sin is not black, it is scarlet!

Matthew 27:28: And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe.

Away in the far north on the brow of a hill, snow-covered, illuminated by the Polar Star, lies buried a member of an Arctic Expedition. There is a large stone grave marker, and on it a tablet inscribed, “*Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow*”. There amidst eternal snows is a man’s cry and passionate longing for a pure heart.

Note: whiter than snow! What can be whiter? It is calculated that an ordinary 3 or 4 inch snow fall carries to the ground in a large city 343 tons of solids, and 75 tons of dissolved solids, 142 tons of suspended water, 100 tons of coal, 25 tons of salt, and one ton of ammonia. There is something whiter!



Don't get old before your time.

Psalms 32:3: When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

Conscience.

David wanted God's Joy back. Joy is associated with salvation. Joy deepens as we get more thoroughly in the Spirit's will.

Psalms 51:8: Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.

His ears wanted to receive the joyful sound. With unforgiven sin, there is no real joy and no heavenly melody; instead there is discord in the heart. Some get so sour in their sins that they can't stand or tolerate spiritual joy, but everyone wants to find out why the other person is laughing. Sin always brings discord. Before joy and gladness come, there must be forgiveness and cleansing.

What joy it brings to know that all is well within, and that God's smile and favor is upon us. But even then we want to hear a cheerful note.

Open my lips.

Praise is not easy at times. It is called a *sacrifice*.

Hebrews 13:15: By Him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name.

Only God can undo the lips by way of the heart.

Psalms 51:14-19:

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness.

15 O LORD, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise.

16 For Thou desirest not Sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in Burnt Offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: build Thou the walls

of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with Burnt Offering and Whole Burnt Offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine Altar.

Verse 14 — blood guiltiness: David had another man's blood on his hands. We ministers must cry out against sin, or be guilty of the same. We must declare the whole counsel of God to be free. We must give a warning. John Wesley charged his fellow ministers that to be really free from the blood of all men, we must go into every house, teach everyone — old and young — God's ways.



Acts 20:26: Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

Ezekiel 3:17-21:

17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the House of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me.

18 When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20 Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

Ezekiel 33:1-9:

1 Again the Word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman:

3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the

trumpet, and warn the people;

4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the House of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me.

8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

After hearing about confession, sin, and unworthiness, then we come face to face with Zion. Bricks, mortar — what have these to do with a clean soul? It seems out of place, a stranger to the chapter, but they are related!

Psalms 51:18-19:

18 Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with Burnt Offering and Whole Burnt Offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine Altar.

Verse 16-17: There is no provision in Mosaic Law for murder or adultery.

These were punishable by death. Penitence alone had no saving element in it. But in Christ, true repentance produces forgiveness as a benefit of the Cross. Impenitence bolts and bars the door of Heaven against sinners. Mercy and grace can only come when the sinner confesses and forsakes his sins.

Psalms 51:16-17:

16 For Thou desirest not Sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in Burnt Offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Verse 17: A Broken Heart.



Everyone who has ever felt real conviction of sin by the Word of God and the Spirit of God knows the meaning of this verse. The natural, unrepentant heart is unbroken, hard as stone.

Isaiah 46:12: Harken unto Me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness:

Jeremiah 5:3: O LORD, are not Thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.

Why? Because satan is in possession, and they refuse to turn from their sin. When convicted, they turn to lies for refuge. Even though they may pray, go to church, and donate to the church and to charity, this doesn't last long, for the sinner stands in slippery places and soon slides into something worse.



The awakened heart is wounded, but not broken.

When God deals with the soul, He brings the law to awaken the conscience. The Holiness of God is used by the Holy Spirit to convict sinners. The Spirit then wounds the sinner's heart by showing his helplessness to make himself any better.

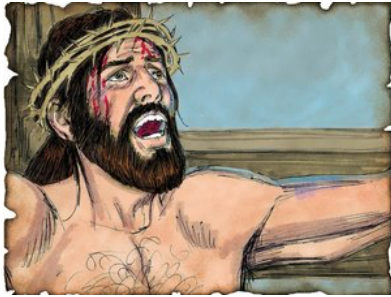
Repentance of sin, and faith in Jesus, is the only way of salvation. That salvation is a gift of God. Works are of no value to salvation. Nothing makes a lost soul more miserable and offended. Some are enraged at the thought!

Repentance of sin, and faith in Jesus, is the only way of salvation.

But the broken heart is turned from its own self-righteousness. The Holy Spirit leads us to the Cross where we are broken from seeking salvation by our own efforts. The work of Christ is so perfect, so complete, and all powerful to make a lost soul good, right, clean, and righteous; it puts us to shame. The grace of Christ is so wonderful to set us free from sin. All our efforts could never do this. How we so long have neglected, despised, hated, and placed mountains of arguments against God's plan of salvation shows the resistance of a sinner in

the hands of satan.

The awakened heart, convicted of sin, sees the hatefulness of sin and the ugliness of his own heart. He loathes himself. He gladly believes in Christ Who alone can save. He wonders why he ever struggled so long fighting against Christ trying to save himself.



Then we see how our sins separated us from the Lord Jesus and from the joy of having our sins forgiven. Burdens are lifted, and the great gulf and the kindled fires of Hell no longer terrorize.

The Cross of Christ, where Jesus suffered, bled, and died for us, becomes God's means to let us see the reason for Salvation as a free gift.

All of our unhappiness is from being a sinner. Now we mourn sore that we refused such love and mercy.

Ezekiel 20:43: And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.

The advantages of a broken heart:

It keeps us from being offended at the preaching of the Cross. Before being saved, we often become enraged at the preaching of another man's righteousness that we must have or perish! Many have left our services on this account. The offense of the Cross has not ceased.

But a broken heart can't be offended at the preaching of the Cross.

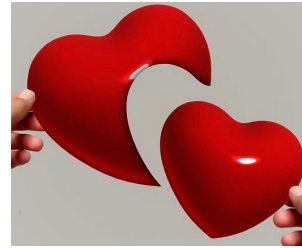
1 Corinthians 1:18: For the Preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are Saved it is the Power of God.

Ministers can preach plainly to a broken heart, and it will sit contented to hear of righteousness without works.

Many are offended when we preach plainly against sin. When we hold up God's law, many offenders, Sabbath-breakers, and pleasure-lovers are stirred to hate.

But a broken heart can't be offended, for it hates sin worse than ministers can show its awfulness. The plague and burden of his heart is gladly cast on Jesus for mercy!

Won't you cast your heart upon Him now?



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