

Savoring the Psalms
Psalm 51
A Prayer of Repentance and Restoration - Part I

Introduction

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN NATHAN THE PROPHET WENT TO HIM, AFTER HE HAD GONE IN TO BATHSHEBA.

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!
- ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ 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.
- ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- ⁶ Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
- ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.
- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.
- ¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.
- ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.
- ¹⁶ For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.
- ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
- ¹⁸ Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem;
- ¹⁹ then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar. (Psalms 51:1-19)

- **Good morning!**
- Before today's message, I want to let everyone know what to expect for the rest of the Summer.
- As you've noticed, I've decided, instead of finishing Hebrews today,
- to continue our series in the Psalms.
- **Psalm 51** will be **the last Psalm** we'll cover **this Summer**.
- We'll look at it **both this week and next**.
- Then on **August 24th** Tim Driscoll will speak during our Missions conference,
- And on **August 31st** I (Lord Willing) will conclude our series in Hebrews.
- That will take us to **September** when we'll begin a new series in the book of.....
- So that's the plan.

- Now let's turn to **Psalm 51**.
- Like **Psalm 23**, which we looked at last week, this is a **very well-known Psalm**.
- **Both were written by David**.
- And even though they are **very different**.
- **Psalm 23** describes how the Lord, the Great Giving Shepherd, cares for his Sheep.
- It is a beautiful picture of what it looks like **to experience a loving relationship with God**.
- **Whereas Psalm 51** is a heartfelt **Pray of Repentance and Restoration** in a time when relationship with God has been broken because of sin.
- So, in some ways **these Psalms are opposite**.
- However, what I want us to see is how the truths of **Psalm 23** provide a foundation for **Psalm 51**.
- If you remember, from last week **Psalm 23** begins with the words...

¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalms 23:1)

- The Lord gave himself to David and he gives himself to all his sheep.
- There is a **personal relationship** between God and **his people**.
- And in that relationship, **we shall not want**;
- **We lack nothing** our shepherd deems necessary for us to have.
- And **Psalm 23** goes on to list a number **of the things the shepherd gives his sheep**.
- I'm not going to review them all, but I do want to point out a few.
- In **verse 3** David writes

³ He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Psalm 23:3)

- The Lord gives **restoration and righteousness**.
- Which means that when we stray, **when we fail, when we sin**.
- Our **great-giving shepherd** forgives us and **restores us** in relationship with himself.
- And he can do that because **he leads us in paths of righteousness**.
- He is **our righteousness**, and **he empowers us to live righteously**.
- Then in **verse 6** of **Psalm 23**, David writes...

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psalms 23:6)

- What a bold statement.
- David says, because the Lord **is my shepherd**, because I'm in relationship with Him.
- I will **receive goodness and mercy** throughout my entire life.
- And along with that I will receive **eternal salvation**.
- **I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever**.
- So, in **Psalm 23** among other things, David expresses the fact that the Lord provides restoration, righteousness, goodness and mercy to his sheep (his people).

- **And why do I point this out?**
- Because these are some of **the crucial** things that he **prays for in Psalm 51**.
- You see, because **David had experienced relationship with the Lord**. (as seen in Psalm 23)
- When that **relationship was broken by his sin**.
- David, was able to **come to the Lord in prayer**,
- repenting of his sin and seeking **restoration in his relationship** with God. (Psalm 51)
- Or put another way, If God (our great and HOLY shepherd) does not provide what we lack,
- What is seen in **Psalm 23**.
- David (and we) would have **no hope of being restored** to relationship with Him when we sin.
- If God does not provide our righteousness
- If God does not offer restoration.
- If we cannot **receive goodness and mercy** from him then we (who sin) have no hope of being in relationship with a Holy God.
- We have no hope of **righteousness or restoration**,
- We have no hope of goodness and mercy.
- We have no hope of dwelling in the house of the Lord for **a nano-second**, let alone for all eternity.
- **But** because the LORD does give all of these things and more, we have **hope**.
- And the hope I'm speaking of is **not wishful thinking**.
- It's not **"I hope I get that new job or that a raise."**
- I hope my **classes aren't too difficult**.
- I hope the **Angels make the Playoffs**.
- Or I hope **this message isn't too long**.
- Those are hopes based on our own personal desires.
- But **the hope** we have in the LORD is a **sure hope**.
- Because it's based on who God is and the promises of **His word**.
- Remember God doesn't give us restoration, or righteousness or goodness or mercy.
- because of something we do or who we are. **Psalm 23:3** again...

³ He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Psalms 23:3)

- He gives to us **"for his name's sake"**
- He has **linked his name**, his honor and glory and reputation to His people.
- Therefore, we can come to him in the wake of terrible sin and cry out for restoration, righteousness, goodness, mercy and more.
- That's what we'll see both this week and next as we look at **Psalm 51**.
- And it's my prayer, that this Psalm (this message) will provide encouragement and instruction for coming to God in times of sin, when our relationship with him is broken.
- **Knowing** that **for his name's sake** he will hear our prayers of repentance and bring about our restoration.

- **PRAY!**
- Now to help us better understand Psalm 51, **we must first look at...**

The Context of David's Prayer

- Context refers to what surrounds something,
- What goes before it, what comes after it.
- But in the case of a Psalm, the context involves who and when and why it was written.
- And this is one of the few Psalms that gives us its **exact context**.
- **We find that in the heading.**

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

- Now some of us know **the story of David and Bathsheba**.
- But having it fresh in our minds will help us as we examine **Psalm 51**.
- So, let's look at this story of **sin and its grave consequences**.
- The **"gone in to Bathsheba"** part of the story is recorded very clearly in **2 Samuel 11:2-5**:

² It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. ³ And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" ⁴ So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. ⁵ And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant." (2 Samuel 11:2-5)

- Those are the basic facts, **no embellishment, no sensationalism...**
- As Joe Friday said "just the facts ma'am."
- David fell to **sexual temptation** and **boldly took** another man's wife.
- The **external consequences** (there are internal consequences as well that we find in Psalm 51)
- But the external consequences for his sin begin with **Bathsheba's pregnancy**.
- However, that's not where **the sin or the consequences** end.
- David then tries to cover up his adultery by bringing Bathsheba's husband Uriah home from battle.
- David wanted Uriah to lie with Bathsheba so everyone will think the baby was Uriah's.
- But Uriah wouldn't do it,

¹¹ Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing." (2 Samuel 11:11)

- Uriah was too noble to go in to his wife while the ark or the Lord (which represented the Lord's presence), and his fellow soldiers were on the front lines of battle.
- **So, David compounds his adultery by arranging to have Uriah killed.**

- He sends Uriah back to battle with orders to put him on the front lines and then withdraw support.
- This resulted in Uriah being killed in battle,
- and David then quickly marries Bathsheba to cover the sin.
- So, David not only falls to the **sexual sin of adultery**, but he compounds his sin with murder.
- And in one of the **most understated sentences** of the Bible, **2 Samuel 11** ends with these words:

“...The thing that David had done displeased the LORD.” (2 Samuel 11:27)

- Here is the greatest consequence **to all sin**.
- The LORD, the maker of heaven and earth.
- The LORD who is our shepherd, who created us and loves us and cares for us.
- **The LORD is displeased with our sin.**
- **That word displeased in the Hebrew, includes the idea of grief.**
- Our sin is not only a slap in the LORD’s face,
- **a rejection of his word, of his ways, of his presence in our life.**
- **But it causes him sadness as his sheep stray from the fold.**
- And in David’s case and in our case, when we sin,
- God would be totally justified if he permanently rejected us as his people.
- **But that’s not what he does.**
- In David’s case God sends the **prophet Nathan** with a story about a rich man and a poor man.
- **And not coincidentally, the story is about sheep!**
- The rich man had many sheep; the poor man had one precious lamb.
- And when the rich man needs to prepare a meal for a traveler.
- Instead of using one of his many sheep,
- He **takes** the poor man’s one lamb away, leaving him with nothing.
- And in **2 Samuel 12:5** we read...

⁵ Then David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die... ⁷ Nathan said to David, “You are the man! (2 Samuel 12:5, 7)

- You are the man... **David is caught red handed...**
- Up until that point David probably thought he had, at least externally had gotten away with his sin.
- But that was not the case, God knew, and He would not allow David to hide his sin.
- **Nathan** then goes on to tell David of even greater consequences of His sin...
- **2 Samuel 12:10-11**

¹⁰ Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ ¹¹ Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. (2 Samuel 12:10-11)

- David is confronted with **his sin and its consequences**, and he breaks down in confession,
- **2 Samuel 12:13-14**

¹³ David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die.” (2 Samuel 12:13-14)

- **More consequences**, the child would die.
- This should serve as a warning to us,
- Yes, as we will see, **when we sin**, God is able to forgive.
- But that does not mean there will be **no consequences**.
- Sin is terrible and its consequences,
- both **internally** what it does to our heart and our relationship with God
- and **externally**, what it does to the people around us can be devastating,
- Broken marriages, health issues, financial ruin or even prison can result from our sin.
- And as we have seen David experienced his own grave consequences for his sin.
- But notice, he didn’t experience everything he deserved.
- David took Bathsheba and committed adultery with her.
- And to cover it up he had her husband Uriah Murdered.
- But notice what Nathan says,

“The Lord has put away (or literally passed over) your sin. You shall not die”

- There would be consequences, but for David, **the LORD put away his sin**.
- Just like that?
- Now, if you think about it, that just doesn’t seem fair or right.
- What kind of **a righteous judge is God**?
- You don’t just put away adultery and murder.
- Those are terrible sins that must be punished,
- in fact, as Samuel indicates, **the Law calls for the death penalty for both**.
- **Deuteronomy 22:22** says...

²² “If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die... (Deuteronomy 22:22)

- And **Leviticus 24:17** makes it clear...

¹⁷ “Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death. (Leviticus 24:17)

- According to the Law, David deserved the double death penalty.
- So, what’s going on here?
- Well, what we need to understand is that the **context** of David’s prayer in **Psalms 51** is not just what happened with **David and Bathsheba**.
- If that were the case, **then David must die for His Sins**.

- But we need to see **this story of sin and its consequences**,
- as well as **David's prayer of repentance and restoration**,
- We need to **see it all** in the context of the **entire Bible**.
- And what we find is that **the Law** is not the final word.
- **The final word is found in Jesus Christ.**
- And what do I mean by that?
- Well Paul in **Romans 3** gives us the **context we need**.
- First, he makes it clear that **"there is no-one who is righteous..."**
- **Romans 3:23** tells us...

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)

- No one, past, present or future, no one (including David and me and you)
- Not a single person who has ever lived (save one) lives up to **God's holy standard...**
- In fact, we all deserve death, **the wages of sin (any sin) is death.**
- But in **Romans 3:25** Paul writes...

25 [Christ] whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

- That word **propitiation** means **an atonement for sin**.
- By the blood of Christ, **sins are atoned for** they are paid for, they can be forgiven.
- And all who by faith, trust in Christ and his sacrificial atoning work on the cross will receive the forgiveness that God provided in Christ.
- Paul continues...

This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. (Romans 3:25)

- That's exactly what **2 Samuel 12:13** says God did in the case of David.
- He put away or passed over **David's sin**.
- Why could he do that? How is that **right or righteous**,
- **Because** God knew that one day Christ would be put forward as a propitiation by his blood.
- **And David, who despite his sin trusted in God completely for his forgiveness.**
- The context of **David's sin with Bathsheba**, the context of his prayer, of Psalm 51,
- the context of the Old and New Testaments is the **finished work of Jesus Christ**.
- It's all pointing to Christ...
- He is our **propitiation** – He is our sacrifice, in death he took our place and he atoned for, paid for our sins.
- If God were to sweep David's or anyone's sin under the rug, **then he would not be righteous.**
- But what Paul is saying is that **God in Christ paid the price for the sins of his sheep.**
- For all who put their faith in HIM.
- David's sins of adultery and murder and all his other sins were atoned for (they were placed upon Jesus Christ).

- And Christ's righteousness is given to David, **David (and all who trust in Jesus) receive his righteousness,**
- And therefore, because of Christ's atoning sacrifice,
- God (showing his righteousness) can and does justly pass over David's sin.
- So, the **context of Psalm 51** is that God in Christ Jesus has provided forgiveness for our Sins.
- But again, that doesn't mean **that sin has no consequences.**
- Not only do we often suffer the earthly consequences of our sin.
- Never forget that forgiveness comes at a price and that price **was the death of God's Son.**
- The price was Jesus Christ, who lived a perfect sinless life, taking on our sin and receiving our punishment.
- Christ suffered the consequences for David's sin, for your sin and for mine.
- The wages of sin is death, and Christ received those wages for each and every one of us.
- **He died for our sin.**
- This tells us just how terrible SIN truly is.
- It caused the death of God's one and only Son Jesus Christ.
- It caused a break in the fellowship between the Father and the Son...
- At the Cross, as the sin of humanity was placed on Jesus Christ
- He (Quoting from Psalm 22, another Psalm of David) cried out in agony

46 ... "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)

- Our sin caused a temporal break in the eternal relationship between God the father and His Son.
- So, it's no wonder that our sin causes a temporal break in our relationship with God.
- **Isaiah** wrote in **59:2**

2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)

- When we sin, there is a separation from God.
- It doesn't mean we lose our salvation, it doesn't mean he is no longer our father.
- But there is a separation, a break in fellowship.
- And for those who, like **David as we saw in Psalm 23,**
- have experienced **real relationship/fellowship with the LORD.**
- Then that separation is **the most horrible consequence of our Sin.**
- And it's that consequence, **that break in relationship with God,**
- that drove David to pray what he **then recorded in Psalm 51.**
- And I believe, God has gifted us with this Psalm,
- That we, in the midst of our sin, can have hope and instruction and encouragement
- to (like David) repent of our sin and seek restoration with God.
- Psalm 51 is David's prayer of repentance and restoration.
- And it can be our prayer as well.

- So, with our remaining time let's **begin** to look at the...

The Content of David's Prayer

- This morning, we only have time to look closely at the first two verses.
- We'll look at the rest next week.
- In **verse 1** we find...

1. David Prays for Mercy

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. (Psalm 51:1)

- Remember in **Psalm 23** David wrote...

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow (persistently pursue) me all the days of my life... (Psalms 23:6)

- And so, in **his time of brokenness**,
- David knows that **God's goodness and mercy** is available to him.
- And so, he cries out for God in his abundant (overflowing) **mercy, to blot out his transgressions**.
- Not only to forgive his sins but to give him relief from **their constant oppression**.
- In **Verse 3** David **confesses**...

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. (Psalms 51:3)

- David can't get his sinful acts out of his head... **the guilt must be crushing him**.
- Whatever fleeting sinful pleasure he enjoyed from lying with **Bathsheba**,
- has turned to pain and sorrow and regret.
- And so, he prays for **God's Mercy**.
- **Now what exactly is mercy?**
- Well, our **English word mercy**, is used to translated several Hebrew words.
- In fact, in **verse 1** where mercy is used **twice**, in **Hebrew** these are two different words.
- The second "**Mercy**"

...according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. (Psalms 51:1)

- **is the Hebrew (RA-HAM)**
- **It means** to have compassion on, and we'll talk about that in a minute.
- The first "**Mercy**"

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; (Psalms 51:1)

- Is the Hebrew **HA-NAN**.

- It literally means to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior.
- It is a picture of someone in power or authority bending over to help an inferior in need.
- It has the connotations of **giving kindness, taking pity on...**
- Let me illustrate it with **this (I think true) story...**
- A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son.
- The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death.
- "But I don't ask for justice," the mother explained. **"I plead for mercy."**
- "But your son does not deserve mercy," Napoleon replied.
- "Sir," the woman cried, "it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for."
- "Well, then," the emperor said, "I will have mercy."
- And he spared the woman's son.
- I find **it interesting** just how many people in our world **cry for justice**.
- And **justice is a good thing**, but I'm not sure if most people wouldn't rather have mercy.
- David certainly **prefers mercy** over justice.
- He knows that because of his sin, **justice cries out for his death**.
- And so, all he can do is throw himself **on the mercy of the LORD**.
- Lord, please stoop down and be **kind to me, please take pity on me...**
- You alone can forgive; you alone can **remove the weight of my terrible sin**.
- David is praying that God **in his mercy** will not count his sin against him.
- But he doesn't just want God to pass over his sin.
- If you remember Nathan already said that God would pass over his sin.
- But David calls out for the Lord to **blot out his transgressions**.
- And In **verse 9** he also prays...

⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. (Psalm 51:9)

- In **Psalm 103** David declares.

¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does [the LORD] remove our transgressions from us. (Psalms 103:12)

- And this is what David is crying out to God for.
- He wants the LORD to remove **his sin as far as the east is from the west**.
- His only hope is that the LORD will have compassion on him and hide his face from his sins.
- **And that is our only hope as well.**
- As we saw earlier, the Bible makes it very clear that...

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)

- And your only hope, my only hope is to **throw ourselves on God's mercy**.
- **Have mercy on me OH GOD!**

- But that's not what people tend to do, that's not our natural inclination.
- I've talked to unbelievers about whether they think that when they die they will go to heaven.
- Now some say they don't believe in heaven.
- But for those that do, they are often unsure about whether they will go there or not.
- They know they aren't perfect (they've sinned)
- But they still have hope (it's more like wishful thinking).
- And when I've asked them what would you say to God if he asked you why should I allow you to enter heaven.
- The answer is basically always the same.
- I would tell God about all the good things I've done.
- They would tell God **why they deserve to go to heaven.**
- This is what most people believe,
- That their forgiveness (eternal salvation) is based on the "good" things they do.
- If I'm a good, kind, loving person.
- If I do enough good stuff then God will forgive my sin, **and let me into heaven.**
- But notice that's **not what David thinks.**
- It's so important to see that David doesn't try and make a case for why he **deserves mercy.**
- **He doesn't say...**
- Lord have mercy on me because I trusted in you when **I killed the Giant Goliath.**
- **Lord have mercy on me because I am a much better King than Saul.**
- **Or even have mercy on me because I am a man after your own heart.**
- And in the same way we can't say...
- **Lord have mercy on me because I go to church almost every Sunday.**
- Have mercy on me because I try and tell people about Jesus.
- Or because I read my bible, pray, I try to help people as much as I can.
- And the list goes on...
- You cannot earn **God's mercy!!!**
- You'll never receive it by pointing out **why you deserve it.** Because you don't.
- So often we think there is something in us that should **cause God to give us mercy.**
- But that's not the case...
- Notice however, that David does make a **case for Mercy,**
- He does give a reason that he should receive mercy,
- But the reason is not based on who he is or what he has done
- Instead, it is based on who God is.
- This is what we talked about in Psalm 23.
- That God gives **to us for his name's sake.**
- Because of who he is, for his glory!

- David says...

1 Have mercy on me, O God, (not because I am a slayer of giants and an awesome King but) according to your steadfast love; (Psalms 51:1)

- That phrase steadfast love is one Hebrew word (HESED) and it is full of meaning.
- It speaks of God's kindness, goodness, favor, faithfulness and mercy.
- His steadfast, unfailing love.
- David prays, have mercy on me according to the riches of your loving character.
- David knows that because of who God is, **the immensity of his great love**,
- He is able to have mercy, **even on those who commit terrible sin**.
- So, first David appeals for mercy based on **God's steadfast Love**.
- **Then he adds...**

...according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. (Psalms 51:1)

- Again, the word mercy here is the **Hebrews RA-HAM**.
- It means compassion.
- David prays Lord have mercy (stoop down and be kind to me) because of your great love.
- And Lord according to your abundant mercy (your great compassion) blot out my transgression.
- David's prays for mercy, **for the forgiveness of his sins**, based on who God is.
- And based on **God's love and compassion David received mercy and his sins were forgiven**.
- And the same can be true for you and me.
- Because of who God is because of his NAME because he is a God of Love and compassion.
- We can ask him to blot out our transgressions.
- To hide his face from our sin.
- To cast our sin as far as the east is from the west.
- We can cry out for HIS Abundant MERCY to fall on our lives.
- In the book of **Ephesians Paul** makes this clear...

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,

- Because of who God is, his mercy, his love

5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— (Ephesians 2:4-5)

- Because of God's great love and mercy.
- When we were dead in our trespasses our sin,
- Not because of anything we did (because we were dead) God made us alive in Christ.
- He saved us by His Grace.

- And because of his mercy and love, he continues to forgive our trespasses.
- So, when you fail, when you fall, when you sin, know this...
- You can cry out to God for mercy, and he will answer,
- Based on his steadfast love and abundant mercy, **he will blot out your transgressions.**
- **And that's just the beginning of David's Prayer...**
- Next...

2. David Prays for Cleansing

- Have you ever heard or **experienced** the expression, *"I feel so dirty"*
- I certainly have.
- When we sin, there's a sense of uncleanness.
- A sense that we have been stained by our sin.
- As Jeremiah said to Israel...

22 Though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me, declares the Lord GOD. (Jeremiah 2:22)

- Sin brings about a stain, **a deep sense of shame and guilt**, and we **cannot cleanse ourselves.**
- And this can result in believing that we can't go before God.
- God is righteous, holy and pure.
- And because of our sin we are dirty and defiled.
- So, we think He could never accept us.
- And that is true as far as it goes...
- But there is more.
- We can't forget the **context of Psalm 51...** The context of **Christ**
- Because of what Christ would do for David
- And what Christ has done for Us.
- We can go before God...
- We can pray for and receive cleansing/forgiveness from our sin.
- So, after praying for mercy **in verse 1**,
- David, knowing he has no hope of cleansing the stain of sin in his life,
- in verse 2 He prays...

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! (Psalms 51:2)

- That word iniquity is the Hebrew (**A-vown**) and it means evil, perversion, depravity.
- Sin is an evil perversion of God's perfect plan for our lives.
- And therefore, it stains us.
- It makes us unclean, impure, and dirty.
- But thanks be to God we can be cleansed.
- And how are we cleansed?
- **By the blood of Jesus Christ.**

- David points to that cleansing in **verse 7... he writes...**

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (Psalms 51:7)

- **Hyssop** was the branch used by the priests to sprinkle blood on a house that had a disease in it to declare it clean.
- **David** is crying out to God as his ultimate high priest that he would cleanse him completely.
- That he would wash him in such a way that he would be whiter than snow.
- David's cry for cleansing is not just a cry for forgiveness.
- For his transgressions to be blotted out.
- But it is a cry to remove the stain of sin from his life.
- The Apostle John directs us to **cry out in the same way...**
- In **1 John 1:7-9** we read

7 ...the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:7-9)

- It's the blood of Jesus (his atoning sacrifice) that cleanses us from **all** sin...
- And if we confess our sin to the LORD (as David has and will continue to do)
- the LORD, he will forgive us and cleanse us from **all** unrighteousness.
- Again, by his blood (his atoning sacrifice) Christ has purchased our forgiveness.
- He has paid the full price for our sin and he has purchased our righteousness.
- And because of that we can, in humility, go to the LORD confessing our sin...
- Knowing that he has promised to forgive, to cleanse.
- **So, David begins his pray by crying out for Mercy and cleansing...**
- And that's where we are going to stop today...
- Next week we'll continue our study of **Psalms 51...**
- But that doesn't mean you have to wait till next week to go to the LORD in prayer.
- Maybe (certainly) you have committed some sin.
- Maybe it's terrible or maybe it's "**normal**".
- **In either case**, all sin negatively impacts our relationship with the LORD.
- But for those who trust in Jesus Christ, **we have hope!**
- Because of **Jesus Christ** we can enter into God's presence this morning.
- We can, based not on who we are but on who he is and what he has done...
- We can confess our sins to Him.
- Asking him for **MERCY**, for cleansing, for forgiveness.

- I am going to **close in prayer in a moment**.
 - But first I want to allow for a time of **personal silent prayer** before the LORD.
 - A time where you can go to Him,
 - Asking him to examine your heart.
 - To reveal your sin, and then
 - crying out to him for mercy and cleansing.
-
- So, let's take a few moments for silent prayer..

Closing Prayer

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! (Psalms 51:1-2)