Building On A Bad Foundation

Psalm 51:1-4, 10-12

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 throughly 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.

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.

Bad Foundations

It was about 10 years ago, maybe a little longer,

- when we finally began to attempt to bring to fruition
  o a dream that had been born in our hearts many years before.
- The church, in Bono, had long desired to build a new building.
  o The one that we were meeting in at the time
  o had begun its life as a house,
  o which had been converted to a church
  o and then was built onto several different times.
- For years we had dreamed about a new building
  o and finally it was about to become a reality.
  ▪ But not without some missteps...

We knew that the ground needed to be built up

- and that we would need a solid dirt pad
  o upon which to build
  o but what we didn’t realize, at the time,
  o was that before you ever start to put that pad in place
  o you first have to remove the top layer of loose soil and vegetation.
- In our zeal we started hauling dirt into the job site
  o without first bringing in a bulldozer to remove the topsoil.
- After we had all of the dirt in place
  o we hired a foundation crew to come out and finalize the pad and pour the foundation.
- You can imagine our disappointment when we found out that
  o before we could move forward
  o we first had to take a few steps backwards.
- All of the dirt that had been hauled in would have to be hauled out
  o and those critical three inches of loose top soil and vegetation
  o would have to be removed before the pad could be put in place.
As disappointed as we were, we were also thankful for the grace of God.

- Had we been allowed to move forward with our foolish plans
  - we would have done irreparable harm to the foundation of the building
  - because, over time, that loose soil would compact
    - but it wouldn’t do it evenly.
- Some places would settle more than others,
  - some would settle faster than others.
- The result would be an unstable foundation
  - that was cracking and settling unevenly
  - over the life of the building.
- I learned several valuable lessons out of that experience
  - and one of them was this simple truth:
    - You can’t build a good thing on a bad foundation.

Repentance

Repentance is an amazing work of God.

- No other experience is quite the same as repentance.
  - It is the first step in a life that has turned in the right direction.
  - It is the initial step that Peter commanded on the Day of Pentecost.
- When a sinner repents, his life begins a wonderful transformation
  - and my Bible says that even the angels in Heaven rejoice when we repent.
- Repentance is a spiritual transaction.
  - I can’t explain exactly what takes place when you truly repent
    - but it is more than just the mere confession of your sins.
- Repentance involves a change of heart,
  - a change of mind,
    - a change of direction.
- When the habitual liar repents,
  - he suddenly begins to tell the truth.
- When a thief repents,
  - he goes out and finds honest work.
- When an adulterer repents
  - he becomes faithful again to his bride.
- When the alcoholic or drug addict truly repents
  - they are delivered from chemical dependence.
- There is power in repentance.
  - There is simply no way to begin to comprehend
    - the vast change that takes place in our hearts
      - when true, godly repentance takes place.

Repentance is about inner change.

- It’s not about putting a fair face on a foul matter.
  - It’s not about dressing up our wrongs
• to make them appear acceptable.

• It’s not about putting on a charade of righteousness.
  o Repentance is about a deep, personal, change on the heart level.
    ▪ It is that foundational work of God in our lives.
    ▪ It is the beginning of everything.

• Too often, I am afraid, well meaning people try
  o to build a good life on top of a bad foundation.

• Too often we try to haul in all of the trappings of righteousness
  o and begin the work of a new life with Christ
    ▪ without ever really taking the time
    ▪ to deal with the foundational issues
    ▪ of sin in our lives.

• So many times, folks who started out good,
  o folks who seemed to be on the right track,
    ▪ go astray somewhere along the way
    ▪ and make shipwreck of their faith.

• I am convinced that, more often than not,
  o the problem lies in the foundation of our walk with God.

Let’s face it.
• We are all sinners.
  o We have all sinned
    ▪ and we have all fallen short of the glory of God.

• And, if there is ever going to be any hope
  o of salvation in our lives
    ▪ it rises from repentance.

• Not from our good works,
  o not from the deeds that we do,
  o not from the religious pretenses that we put on.

• Repentance is the only thing that can scrape away the guilt
  o and pain
  o and shame
  o of a life scarred by sin
    ▪ and prepare the foundation
    ▪ upon which God will build your life!

• Too often we come to God with messed up lives
  o and hope that we can somehow fill our lives
    ▪ with enough good that it will somehow cover up
      • all of the wrong that we have done.

• I want to be real plain tonight.
  o I don’t care how long you’ve been in this thing.
    ▪ You can’t afford to neglect the work of repentance in your life!

• You need an altar
  o where you bring your flesh into the presence of God
    ▪ and pray, from the bottom of your heart,
• forgive me God!
  o You can’t live in holiness, until you repent.

Listen to me.

• Some of you lament the fact
  o that things aren’t what they used to be
  ▪ in your walk with God.
• You used to be closer to Him,
  o you used to walk in his power,
  ▪ you used to feel his touch
  o but now it seems as if things have become hollow,
  ▪ as if your life is missing that dynamic power of God.
• You feel as if you can’t quite get the victory in your life.
  o You need to hear what I am telling you tonight.
  ▪ You can’t build a life of victory
  ▪ and overcoming power
  ▪ on a bad foundation.
  o You can’t live a life of holiness unto God
  ▪ when there are things in the foundation of your life
  ▪ that haven’t ever really been dealt with.
• I truly believe that there are folks sitting on church pews
  o who are doing their best to serve God
  ▪ but struggle over and over again
  ▪ with sin issues in their life
  o because they haven’t truly allowed
  ▪ the work of repentance to take place.
• Sometimes we rush through repentance,
  o sometimes we make a half-hearted appeal
  ▪ to God for forgiveness,
  o sometimes we let the specter of judgment and wrath
  ▪ drive us to ask God’s forgiveness for sin
  ▪ when, if the truth were known,
  ▪ deep down on the inside
  ▪ we haven’t really taken the time to repent.

Mercy

• For our text tonight, we are drawing upon one of the best know Psalms.
• This is where David repents for his sin with Bathsheba.
  o Walk with me, for a few moments tonight through this text:

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

• David’s first plea is a plea for mercy.
  o A plea for mercy is, by definition, a confession of guilt.
• David’s prayer for repentance begins with his knowledge of his guilt.
  o You’ve got to believe that there is a reason for repentance,
    ▪ you’ve got to understand that you have transgressed the law of
      God,
    • before there can ever be genuine repentance.
• Repentance that starts with self-justification is not repentance.
  o It doesn’t matter why you sinned.
    ▪ It doesn’t matter whose fault it was.
    ▪ It doesn’t matter what was done to you.
  o It only matters that you have sinned
    ▪ and you need forgiveness.
• So David starts his repentance with the knowledge of his sin.
  o But notice that he didn’t begin the prayer by talking about his sin.
    ▪ David starts by reminding God of his mercy.
    ▪ He appeals to God’s loving kindness.
      • Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy loving kindness.
• But David doesn’t stop there,
  o he goes on to address the very nature of God
    ▪ that grieves over the failings of his children.
• According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.
  o David is reminding God of his nature.
    ▪ David is reminding God
      • that He is the God of a multitude of tender mercies.
  o He’s saying, I’ve read the books of history and the law,
    ▪ there are volumes of evidence of your mercy.
    ▪ There are multitudes of stories of your amazing Grace.
    ▪ This is what you do.
      • Your mercy knows no limits
      • and your forgiveness has no end.
• So often we undermine our prayers of repentance by our lack of faith.
  o We don’t deserve mercy,
    ▪ we know we’ve failed,
    ▪ we know we’ve fallen short
      • and we predispose ourselves to believe
        • that, somehow, we’ve gone too far this time.
• I believe David is reminding himself of the mercies of God
  o as much as he is reminding God of what he has done.
• Have mercy on me God.
  o I know I don’t deserve it.
  o I know I haven’t earned it.
    • But I know that you are a God of mercy!
• The scriptures bear record of the multitude of your mercies!
I know that if I turn to you
- I will find that you have already turned to me!
  - Have mercy on me, O God!

God’s mercy was never based on anything that you did.
- His mercy was never based on your righteousness.
  - You never earned it,
  - you never deserved it,
  - you were never good enough,
    - and nothing that you can ever do
    - will put you in the place
      - where you deserve the mercy of God.
- But He is merciful anyway!
  - That’s the testimony of scripture!

Wash Me
- 2 Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

Wash me thoroughly.
- Now we are getting down to business.
  - Buoyed with confidence in the mercifulness of God.
    - David begins to pray in earnest.
- Wash me God.
  - Then wash me again.
    - And keep on washing me until you’ve washed me clean!
- This is repentance.
  - It’s not just a simple begrudging, God.
    - I’m sorry now lets move on.
- David says, wash me thoroughly!
  - Wash me completely.
- Have you ever gotten a spot of something on a favorite shirt or blouse?
  - You know, the kind of thing that you are certain will stain.
    - I have and I know what I do.
      - I run to the washroom
      - and spray some of that spot remover on it
        - and I scrub it just as hard as I can.
      - Then I do it again, and again, and again,
        - until it comes clean.
- That’s the kind of cleansing that David is talking about.
  - Wash me. Cleanse me.
    - Remove the spot from my life and my heart.
- It’s time to call in the earthmovers.
  - This is where repentance begins to scrape away that bad foundation.
• I really believe that we sometimes shortchange the work of repentance in our lives.
  o We want to be washed clean
    ▪ but we don’t want to take the time
    ▪ to let repentance wash us thoroughly.
• One of the first lessons I learned in married life,
  o some 20 years ago,
    ▪ is that there is a difference between my version of cleaning house and my wife’s version.
• Mine involves moving a few things around.
  o Mine involves moving the junk from the living room to my bedroom.
  o Mine involves a surface level that my wife calls straightening.
• Her idea of cleaning goes a whole lot deeper.
  o I never even thought about the fan blades.
    ▪ That never crossed my mind.
    • You mean you have to wash those things.
    • Who ever heard of that?

• Sometimes we treat repentance in the same manner.
  o I know I’ve messed up,
    ▪ I know I’ve made a mistake,
    • I’ve done something that I shouldn’t have done
      o and the guilt is eating me up.
• So, in order to assuage the guilt,
  o we pray a simple, half hearted prayer of repentance
    ▪ and then, with our conscience appeased
    ▪ we move on without giving another thought
      • to what has just taken place.
• And then we wonder how habitual sins get a hold on us,
  o we wonder how our flesh begins to assert authority over us.
• Its because repentance isn’t just about your guilt!
  o Its about the fact that you’ve transgressed the law of God.
    ▪ You don’t just need your conscience scrubbed,
      • you need the grace of God to wash you thoroughly.
• You see, you want a surface kind of cleaning,
  o but God wants to do a foundational work in your life.
• The surface thing will get it done for the moment,
  o but it never deals with the root of the problem.
    ▪ You will go back to that same sin
    ▪ and do it again and again,
      • because you haven’t ever dealt with
        • the underlying issues.
• You need to washed thoroughly!
  o You need the cleansing of repentance
    ▪ to go way down on the inside
• and deal with the heart issues
  • that are giving rise to sin in your life.

• Until you do, mark my words,
  o you are going to be stuck in a vicious cycle
    • of sin and repentance.

Own It

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

• It’s a hard thing to say you are wrong.
  o But that’s exactly what you have to do in repentance.
    • You have to acknowledge your transgression.

• Your flesh will do everything it can to bypass this step.
  o It will do everything it can
    • to down play the wrong that you have committed.

• But if repentance is going to do its work
  o then you’ve got to own your transgression.

• Don’t get on your face and say,
  o “Lord, if I’ve sinned, please forgive me...”
    • Give me a break!
    • You know you’ve sinned.
    • You know you need mercy.
    • Don’t sidestep the issue.
    • Get down to business with God.

• I know I shouldn’t have gone there on the internet.
  o I know I shouldn’t have said those things.
  o I know I shouldn’t be drinking or smoking.
  o I know I shouldn’t be looking at those things
    • or reading those things
    • or listening to that kind of filth!

• You’ve sinned.
  o Own it!
    • Acknowledge your transgression.

• You don’t have to tell the whole church,
  o you don’t have to come tell the pastor,
    • but you better get down to business with God
      • and confess you sins.

• It’s a vital part of repentance.

• What our flesh wants is just a general cleansing.
  o Spray me down with a fire hose.
    • Wash me all over real quick.

• That’s the kind of repentance that got you into the mess you are in.
  o What you need is a deep cleaning.
    • You need to be scrubbed.
• You need to be examined.
  ▪ You need to get the stain remover out
  ▪ and go to work on some specific flaws in your character,
    ▪ some things you’ve allowed into your heart
      ▪ that are giving rise to this behavior.
• Your flesh wants to deal with the symptoms
  ▪ but what you need is to get to the root of the matter.
    ▪ You may be repenting because you can’t control your anger.
      ▪ But that’s just a surface thing.
    ▪ Deep down in your heart there’s some deep-seated wound
      ▪ that needs to be addressed.
    ▪ As long as you let that bitterness fester inside,
      ▪ you’re never going to control your anger.
• Acknowledge your transgressions.
  ▪ Sometimes we want to hide the root problems
    ▪ and hope that if we ignore them
      ▪ they will just go away.
  ▪ Let me tell you something, friend,
    ▪ it isn’t going away without genuine repentance!

The God Focus

• 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.

• Here is the crux of the issue:
  ▪ True repentance is born out of a vision of the holiness of God!
    ▪ When I sin I sin against God.
• The reason why we have weak anemic repentance in our lives
  ▪ is because we make our repentance about us.
    ▪ We make it about escaping judgment.
    ▪ We make it about alleviating our guilt.
    ▪ We make it about soothing our conscience.
• Listen to me real closely,
  ▪ until you recognize that you have sinned against God,
    ▪ you will never break free from sin.
• Repentance isn’t just about escaping the wrath of God,
  ▪ its about acknowledging the holiness of God.
    ▪ He who saved me by his grace,
    ▪ He who laid down his life for me,
    ▪ He who has shown me mercy upon mercy,
      ▪ I have sinned against Him.
      ▪ I have transgressed his love.
      ▪ I have transgressed his mercy.
      ▪ I have transgressed his great grace.
        ▪ I have sinned against God.
Notes by Pastor Tony McCall

Building On A Bad Foundation

The Pentecostals of Lake City

• Paul said, in II Corinthians 7:10, “For godly sorrow worketh repentance…”
  o Repentance is the work of godly sorrow.
• What David was saying was,
  o “God I’m not here just because I got caught.
    ▪ I’m not here just because of the damage
      • that my sin has done to my kingdom
      • or to my reputation.
    ▪ I’m not here just to try to escape
      • the judgment and wrath of God
      • for my wrong choices.
  o I recognize, God, that I have sinned against you.
    ▪ I am concerned because of the offense
      • that I have caused you!”
• The reason this is so important
  o is because it opens our eyes
    ▪ to the true affront that sin is.
• Often when we allow things into our lives
  o that we know shouldn’t be there
    ▪ it is because we have a self-centered view of sin.
      • You need to shift the focus from yourself.
• Sir, Ma’am, your sin affects more lives than just your own.
  o Your sons and your daughters,
  o your family and your co-workers,
    ▪ all are affected by your sin!
• And your relationship with God is undermined by sin in your life!
  o Until you recognize that,
    ▪ you will never have godly sorrow working in your life.
      • This isn’t just about you!
      • You need to get a glimpse of the holiness of God.
      • When you sin, you sin against God!

Joy
• Finally, David prays, in verses 10-12:
  • 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.

That’s the true goal of genuine repentance.
  o Create in me a clean heart, O God.
• Repentance is about getting the foundation right.
Once you get the foundation right, then you can build something good and pleasing unto God.

Create in me, O God...
   ▪ Build something in my life...
   ▪ Renew a right spirit within me...
   ▪ Cast me not away from your presence...
   ▪ Take not thy holy spirit from me...
   ▪ **Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.**

Some folks wonder where the joy has gone in their walk with God.
   ▪ I can tell you where it has gone:
     ▪ It has been swallowed up by guilt.

You've let the carnal stuff of this life
   ▪ seep into your spirit
     ▪ and you've not allowed true repentance
       ▪ to do its godly work in your life
   ▪ and what you are left with
     ▪ is the empty, hollow, joyless life
       ▪ of trying to serve God
       ▪ out of the efforts of your flesh.

When you take away the powerful work
   ▪ of true repentance in your life
     ▪ what you are left with is self-righteousness.

When you try to serve God out of self-righteousness,
   ▪ living for God loses all of its joy.
     ▪ You lose the presence of God in your life.
     ▪ You lose the life giving power of the Holy Ghost.
       ▪ And you lose your joy!

**You can’t build a godly life on that kind of foundation!**
   ▪ If you want your joy back,
     ▪ you need to find a place in an altar
       ▪ and let repentance do its good work in your life.
   ▪ It’s time to quit laboring under the heavy load of self-righteousness.
     ▪ It’s time to quit living under the guilt and condemnation
       ▪ of sin and failure in your life.
   ▪ It’s time to find your way into the presence of God
     ▪ and let the one who began a good work in your life,
       ▪ renew that work in your heart!

   ▪ **Create in me a clean heart, O God...**
     ▪  **Restore unto me the joy of my salvation!**

   ▪ That’s what repentance will do for you.

Close

Building On A Bad Foundation
Joy comes after forgiveness.

- The big dilemma with unrepentant humanity
  - is that you go on in life
    - trying to find joy without being cleansed of guilt.
  - You want to laugh,
    - you want to have joy,
      - but all of your joy carries the hollow echo
        - of unresolved issues in your life.
  - No matter what you try,
    - you aren’t ever going to find joy
      - until you get those issues
      - under the blood of Jesus.
  - I have no doubt that you will try.
    - People run to every imaginable source of distraction to escape guilt.
      - They immerse themselves in entertainment,
      - they lose themselves in music,
      - they turn to pornography
      - or alcohol,
      - or some other temporary fix.
    - They try to improve themselves.
      - They try to improve their lives,
      - they try to make a fresh start.
    - They get lost in all kinds of frivolous pursuits,
      - even something as simple as shopping
        - can become an avenue that you use
          - to try to escape the effects of guilt in their live.
          - **But none of it brings joy!**

- Joy comes from forgiveness.
  - Joy comes through repentance...
- I can’t help but believe that God wants to
  - restore to you, tonight, the joy of your salvation.
- It starts at an altar of repentance.
  - Why don’t you find a place in this altar tonight
    - and lay your life before the Lord?
  - You have sinned.
    - You have fallen short.
    - You’ve made mistakes.
  - But God is merciful!
    - He will hear your cry.
    - He will answer your hearts plea.
  - Why don’t you find a place and cry out to him,
    - Wash me thoroughly, O God.
    - Cleanse me of my iniquity!
    - **There is JOY in repentance!**