

A Heart in Pursuit of Mercy

Psalm 51 ▪ Sunday, September 29, 2024 ▪ Ryan Wildauer

A heart in pursuit of mercy... (vs. 1-2)

Feels the _____ of their sin. (vs. 3-6, 17)

Cries out for God's gracious _____. (vs. 2, 7-12, 14)

Is eager to share the _____ of God's goodness. (vs. 13-16)

Psalm 51

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. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: Why is it often so painful to be confronted with specific sins in our life?

Read & Discuss: Psalm 51

1. In verses 1-5, what different words are used to refer to sin? What do these words communicate about the nature of our sin? What other words might be appropriate to describe the nature of our sin?
2. In this psalm, what does David ask God to do about his sin? Upon what basis does David make his request of God (vv. 1, 4, 6, 16-17)? What sort of response do you believe God wants from us with regard to our sin?
3. All of us are at times tempted to justify our sin rather than repent. What are some ways we try to justify our sin? How do such attempts demonstrate a misunderstanding of sin's seriousness?
4. **Re-read verses 7-11.** In what ways does David describe the impact of sin in his life before God restored him? How would you describe David's heart toward God in the midst of this prayer?
5. If you are willing, share about a time when you felt desperate to receive God's forgiveness. What did you do? How did you experience God in this desperation?
6. What are some God-centered motives for desiring God's forgiveness? What might be some self-centered motives for desiring forgiveness? How should the pursuit of joy factor into our repentance? Where do you see evidence that David is seeking joy?
7. From verses 13-17, what are some of the additional things that David anticipates will flow from his life once he is forgiven by God? How do these things flow from the forgiveness you have received in your life?
8. How would you explain verse 17 in your own words to a friend struggling with sin? What has been your experience in cultivating a "broken and contrite heart" before God?

Apply: Are you more in danger of underestimating the seriousness of your sin or of overestimating sin's power over you? How does this psalm shape your thinking in these areas? How does Psalm 51 encourage you to rejoice in the work of Christ?

Pray: Ask God to build within each of us a right attitude toward both sin and His grace. Thank God for His mercy and ask Him to help us walk every day in joyful relationship with Him.