Psalm 51: God, Create In Me A Clean Heart Now. If a title could be given to this psalm, it would have to be “True Repentance”. Within the words of this psalm can be seen the anguish of a man who had suddenly realized the enormity of his sin before the Lord. The Psalm begins in verses 1-4, “*Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge.*”

In the NASV, there is a short descriptive introduction above Psalm 51 that states that the psalm was written by David after he had been confronted by Nathan. If that is correct, then the psalm was written at one of the darkest moments of David’s life. David’s lust had driven him into adultery with Bathsheba, and he ultimately had her husband, Uriah, killed so that he could marry her. It was then that the prophet, Nathan, proclaimed God’s condemnation before the King.

Even in the world of violence that exists today, David’s actions would be viewed as shockingly criminal. How could a man, who is apparently so close to God, fall into such sin? Of course, the answer can be found in Paul’s words when he wrote that all have sinned. Even David had to battle with that “old man of sin”, and, in this case, he failed miserably.

Today, when someone is accused of something, the response may be hostility or an attempt to shift the blame. Another result can be guilt

and remorse over what had happened. But remorse and repentance are not necessarily the same thing. When Judas realized what he had done, he experienced a great feeling of remorse. He tried to ease his conscience by giving back the money he had accepted. When that failed, he committed suicide.

However, David's actions were different. If Psalm 51 was written after the adultery, murder, and accusation by Nathan, his actions were especially significant. Instead of hiding, or denying the charges, David turned to God in prayer and repentance. He did not try to justify or explain his actions. He recognized what he had done and threw himself on the mercy of God. Regardless of what happened, the important point is that David did turn back to the Lord.

Today, most Christians can say truthfully that they are not guilty of the same actions of David. However, each Christian does have his, or her, weaknesses or faults. It may be gossip, an unforgiving spirit, alcohol, unfaithfulness, a lack of commitment, or an infinite variety of other things. When a person has failed to control that particular passion or drive, the realization of sin and weakness must be faced. At such times, the same cry will be heard, "*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.*"

For Christians, there is an added assurance that David did not have. David's prayer for mercy was based upon a faith and love that did not have the revelation of the good news about Jesus Christ. The Lord knew that His children would stumble and fall, but the sacrifice of

Jesus Christ would be the source of constant cleansing. The key for a Christian would be faith and love for the Lord.

Today, the fulfillment of God’s plan is here. Even though Christians try and fail, there is forgiveness in Jesus Christ. For a Christian, that forgiveness is guaranteed AS LONG as that Christian walks in the light of the Lord. The only way that that promise can be lost is for a person to deliberately reject and turn away from the relationship that is established in Jesus Christ.

Verses 7 through 12 teach an important lesson about what happens to a person that rejects the way of the Lord. The result of such actions are spiritual darkness and pain. David’s joy and motivation had been destroyed by his actions. They could only return through the forgiveness of God. Likewise, a broken relationship between an erring Christian and God will result in a tragic life. Like Adam and Eve, the first thought is to HIDE from the Lord God. However, in Jesus Christ there is always forgiveness for those that truly repent and return to the Lord.

Verse 17 carries a final thought that is the key to the entire psalm, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God you will not despise”. As people surrender their lives to the Lord, the darkness will leave, and a true sense of peace will be found. It really is that simple.

Advertisements