

The Gift Of A New Heart Psalm 51 Songs of the Heart 4

The introduction to Psalm 51 ties this psalm to the story of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11 and 12.

A cry for mercy

¹ Have mercy on me, O God...

"Mercy" is a word that comes out of a place of powerlessness.

The good news is that we can throw ourselves on God's mercy, because of who he is. ¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion

No-one deserves mercy, because mercy can't be deserved.

Confession of wrong-doing

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me...

"Confession" = "to say together"

When we confess our sin we are agreeing with God on his judgement of our sin. We are saying, together with him, that he is right, and we are wrong.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Ultimately, all sin is against God.

Clarity about what needs to happen

Forgiveness for the past

⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow...

In the Old Testament sin was seen as a kind of contamination that made a person unclean before God. To be "white as snow" was a picture of forgiveness.

A new heart for the future

Verse ten takes us beyond forgiveness.

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Forgiveness can only be applied after the offense. Forgiveness doesn't address why we sin. There has to be a better way than constantly failing and going back to God for forgiveness. That way is for God to give me a new heart and a new spirit, to radically change who I am at the core of my being.

A commitment to giving back

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways...

Too often we preach the gospel as though the final step is being forgiven our sin and restored to relationship with God. You haven't completed the programme of getting free from your sin addiction until you're reaching out to others and helping them get free too.

Continuing in authentic worship

¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

God isn't looking for religious people. He's looking for people who will come to him, confess their sins, receive his forgiveness and his gift of a new heart, a heart that is soft and open towards God.