

Gathering

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness? We all want it, even though we do not deserve it, especially in our relationship with God. Luckily, God's economy is not like our human economy! He gives us what we do not deserve, which is forgiveness through His grace.

David was in desperate need of forgiveness. He knew he was loved by God, but also knew his actions affected his relationship with God. He needed to repent. Psalms 51:10 lets us know that David knew his issues were all a matter of where his heart was. He says, "*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*"

David knew God intimately and brings God's character into the equation in his plea for forgiveness. He says, "*Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions*" (51:1).

We learn a lot from the forefathers of our faith. Like David, we love God with our whole heart, but we have times of weakness and failure. Just as God loved David, he loves us. He seeks us out. He is compassionate towards us and His love for us never ceases. He is always willing to forgive the repentant sinner. David laid out his lament in Psalms 51, modeling for us a heart of repentance before God.

Repentance for our transgressions is an important part of forgiveness. Fortunately for us the most important part has been accomplished by a Loving Father through His Son. Jesus said: "*It is Finished!*"

After reading scripture, consider these questions

- In this psalm, David uses 3 different words for sin, (*sin is one of them*) what are the other two? What is the difference between the terms?
- Read verse 4, who was David's sin against? He says, "*against God only*", is that true?
- On verse 7 David asks to be 'cleansed with hyssop', why does he say this? What is the correlation between hyssop and forgiveness?
- What is the importance of repentance in our desire for forgiveness?

Psalms 51

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Psalm 51

¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

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

⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.

⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

⁶ Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

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

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

⁹ Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.

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

¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.

¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.

¹⁸ May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.



Repentance and searching of our hearts should be a continuous part of our relationship with God. 1

John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Consider the next Scripture verses to help you examine forgiveness in your heart as part of your relationship with God.



FORGIVENESS OF OTHERS IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR OWN FORGIVENESS:

Discuss Mark 11:24 together.

2 CORINTHIANS 7:10 DESCRIBES THE TYPE OF REPENTANCE DAVID SHOWED IN PSALMS 51.

What does 'salvation without regret' mean to you?



*Written by Major Rick Starkey,
Northern New England Division*

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