

Theme: Psalm 51 offers a comprehensive description of the traits and fruits of biblical confession and repentance for sin.

## I. Intro - Real Confession, Real Repentance?

- A. When powerful people are caught, they often “confess”
- B. We all face the same thing in our own lives & with kids
- C. What does real confession and repentance look like?
- D. David’s confession of sin in Psalm 51
- E. Seven penitential Psalms - this is the greatest
  - 1. Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, and 130
  - 2. We will look at Psalm 51 & 32 as the greatest
  - 3. Also - they are related to David’s sin in 2 Samuel 11
    - For the director of music. A psalm of David. **When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.** Psalms 51:0
    - a. The superscripts are later additions - not Scripture
    - b. However, we take them as generally reliable
    - c. Clear links between Psalm 51 and 2 Samuel 11,12

## II. The Traits of Confession & Repentance

- A. Confession & repentance are based on God’s grace
  - Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion** blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Psalms 51:1–2
  - 1. The request is for forgiveness & cleansing (v1b-2)
  - 2. But this is based on God’s character

- 3. No point in asking for mercy unless God is merciful!
  - 4. God is merciful (gracious), loving (hesed), compassionate
  - 5. We need not fear confessing our sins, because God is gracious, merciful, and faithful to forgive our sins.
- B. Confession and repentance openly acknowledge my sin
    - Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out **my transgressions.** <sup>2</sup> Wash away all my **iniquity** and cleanse me from **my sin.** <sup>3</sup> For I know **my transgressions,** and **my sin** is always before me. <sup>4</sup>Against you, you only, have I **sinned** and done what is **evil** in your sight.... Psalms 51:1–4
    - 1. Note how many times David refers to his sin!
    - 2. Note how many different words he uses - transgression, iniquity, sin, evil
    - 3. Confession acknowledges MY sin without excuse
    - 4. True confession never seeks to cover or excuse sin, but openly acknowledges it and seeks forgiveness.
  - C. Confession and repentance recognize that all sin is ultimately against God
    - Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Psalms 51:4
    - 1. David recognizes his sin was against God ultimately
    - 2. This does not mean he did not sin against others, for he clearly did. Rather, ultimately he sinned against them because he had first rejected God and His ways.

3. "Evil in your sight" - 2 Samuel 11:27; 12:13
4. This means that God is right to judge David, for David has sinned against God
5. True confession recognizes that all sin is ultimately rebellion against God and His Law.

D. Confession and repentance recognize the depth of sin in us

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Psalms 51:1

1. Note chiasm and parallelism
  - a. A - Have mercy ON ME
  - b. B - According to Your great love
  - c. B' - According to your great compassion
  - d. A - blot out MY Transgressions
2. Sin is not some external thing separate from me; I am a sinner

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. <sup>6</sup> Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Psalms 51:5-6

3. Sinful from conception - I am sinful from my first moments
4. This is the doctrine of original sin - we are sinful to our very core
5. We are sinful right down to our DNA - this is the depth of our problem

6. Conversely, this is why we need truth and wisdom to penetrate into our innermost being
7. True confession recognizes that my sinful actions are an expression of my sinful nature, not mere random actions.

E. Confession and repentance desire to be forgiven and cleansed

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. <sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. <sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Psalms 51:7-9

1. Cleanse, wash, hide, blot - take away my sin!
2. Same as v2 - Wash away iniquity, cleanse from sin
3. Hyssop - used in Passover, and to cleanse lepers
4. True confession knows and desires that sin be cleansed and removed by God.

F. Confession and repentance recognize the need for internal change that only God can bring about

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. <sup>11</sup> Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. <sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Psalms 51:10-12

1. Create pure heart, renew steadfast spirit same idea
2. David realizes he needs an inner renewal; the reason he fell so deeply in sin was his heart had drifted far from God, even while he outwardly professed and practiced faith.

3. Many times David had prayed for God to change his external situation and deal with his enemies. Now he realizes that his problem is internal, and his greatest enemy is his own sin.
4. Such renewal can only be done by the power of the Spirit, so he pleads for the spirit to not depart from him as He did from Saul
5. All of this restores the joy of salvation and gives David a spirit that longs to follow close to Yahweh.
6. True confession realizes that sin arises from deep within and seeks full cleansing and restoration of the heart.

### III. The Fruits of Confession and Repentance

#### A. Confession and repentance lead us to tell others of God's grace

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. Psalms 51:13

1. David knows he is not alone in need of forgiveness - all have sinned and fallen short.
2. Those who have confessed and repented and received grace, mercy, and forgiveness are quick to tell others so that they might receive grace as well.
3. New question in the devotional guide each week: Can you think of someone with whom you can share what you have learned this week? Pray for them and ask God to open a door for you to share His Word this week.
4. There is nothing sweeter or more freeing than receiving the freedom of forgiveness from God, and we need to share this with others.

#### B. Confession and repentance lead to praise and worship

Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. <sup>15</sup> O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. Psalms 51:14–15

1. David has been forgiven for murdering Uriah and saved by God, and so he sings of God's praise
2. True confession opens the mouth to sing and speak the praise of God.
3. This praise is no mere external ritual, but wells up from a heart that is broken and contrite before God  
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. <sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Psalms 51:16–17
  - a. David is not against sacrifices and offerings, but he now knows more than ever that they mean nothing unless they arise from a heart full of gratitude for the grace of God.
  - b. What God desires most is our heart and life.  
Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Romans 12:1
  - c. But when there is true gratitude in the heart, it will show up in external acts of worship with the people of God.  
In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem. <sup>19</sup> Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar. Psalms 51:18–19
    1. The overflow of receiving God's grace is a concern to see Zion - the Church - prosper and be strong.

2. The overflow of receiving God's grace in that we and many others join in worship as the church.

4. External "worship" with God's people without internal renewal of the heart is a rotting corpse of false religion; internal "worship" that does not lead to gathering with the local church to worship God is an anorexic faith.

#### IV. Applying the Word

A. A call for true confession and repentance:

1. Based on God's grace
2. Openly acknowledges my sin
3. Recognizes that all sin is ultimately against God
4. Recognizes the depth of sin in us
5. Desires to be forgiven and cleansed
6. Recognizes the need for internal change that only God can bring about

B. The Table of Confession and Repentance

#### Biblical Confession and Repentance

Psalm 51  
August 26, 2018  
Communion  
Jude 1:2

Teaching keywords: confession and repentance; forgiveness; law and gospel; sin

Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance - through Jesus Christ our Lord! Jude 1:2

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. <sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. <sup>4</sup> Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. <sup>5</sup> Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. <sup>6</sup> Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. <sup>7</sup> Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. <sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. <sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. <sup>10</sup> Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. <sup>11</sup> Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. <sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. <sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. <sup>14</sup> Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. <sup>15</sup> O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. <sup>16</sup> You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. <sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. <sup>18</sup> In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem. <sup>19</sup> Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar. Psalms 51