

Starting Over Psalm 51:10-12

Preface

In his book, "Doctrines of the Christian Religion", William Stevens calls sin, "**the fly in the ointment in man's relationship with God.**"

While sin has all sorts of consequences, **nothing is more tragic about sin than the separation from God.** Sin places a wall between us and God that prevents us from experiencing fellowship with Him.

But even though sin separates us from God, **His Holy Spirit always beckons us home.** There is no greater feeling than to know that God loves you so much that He convicts you and calls you home to Him and away from sin.

Read Scripture Psalm 51:10-12

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

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. ¹² Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Psalm 51:10-12 KJV

Introduction

Psalm 51 is one of the few psalms where we are given the historical background. The inscription reads, "A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba." This identifies clearly for us the incident out of which this psalm was written.

It was the time when David became involved in the double sin of adultery and murder while he was king. He had walked with God for many years. He had gained a reputation as a prophet, a man who understood the deep things of God; and he had established himself as the long time spiritual leader of his people. Then suddenly, toward the end of his reign, he became involved in this terrible sin.

The interesting thing is that David himself records this sin for us. It must have been a painfully humiliating experience for the king. He was on his palace roof one day when the army had gone out to battle and he saw a beautiful woman next door bathing herself. His passion was aroused and he sent over messengers and ordered her to be brought to him. He entered into an adulterous relationship with her as she was a married woman. Her husband, a soldier in David's army, was away fighting for his king.

Later, when David learned that she was expecting a child, he panicked and tried to cover up his actions. He ordered the husband, Uriah, to be sent home from battle, hoping that he would sleep with his wife and the child would then be accepted as his own. But Uriah was a faithful soldier, committed to battle, and though he came home at the king's orders, he would not go into his own house but slept with the soldiers at the palace and returned to the battle the next day.

David knew that ultimately his sin would be found out so he took another step. **That's always what sin does -- it leads us on deeper and deeper, farther than we ever intended to go.** Before the king knew it, he found himself forced into a desperate attempt to cover up his sin. He ordered Uriah, the husband, to be put in the forefront of the battle where he would most certainly be killed. And when news of Uriah's death reached King David he felt off the hook, he had safely covered his sin. But his conscience continued to bother him.

This week I emailed several of our Deacons and asked them who Uriah was in the Old Testament. It was sort of a trivia question for them. One Deacon replied, “Odd man out in a love triangle.”

In Psalm 32 David records how he felt during that terrible time when he was trying to cover up his sin. He said, *“When I kept things to myself, I felt weak deep inside me. I moaned all day long.”* (Psalm 32:3, NCV). David found it impossible to live with his guilty conscience. David’s guilt became unbearable.

So God sent a prophet to David. **God loved this king too much to let him go on covering up his sin** and thus damaging himself and his entire kingdom. So God sent the Prophet Nathan to David.

When David was confronted, he acknowledged the terrible sin he had committed. He fell on his face before God and out of that experience of confession came the verses of our text.

God is a God of 2nd chances. We serve a God who is loving and forgiving as we see in David’s life.

Content

1. Starting over means a heart cleansing

“¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Illus: This week Austin and I finished up our little hunting camp. It is about the size of a motel room and we are quite proud of our work. This week we installed ceramic tile on the floor. The tiles are glued down with something called thinset. That is the nastiest stuff I have ever worked with. You mix it in a five gallon bucket using a large drill and big mixing bit. The problem is that it slings all over you. I had thinset down both legs and all in my shoes. When I finally got home that night, I had to scrub and scrub in order to get that stuff off of me. I could not stand the dry nasty thinset all over my body.

Sin leaves a Christian with the same dirty shameful feeling. We feel unclean and ashamed before God.

The problem with our relationship with God is our sin. The Bible also tells us *“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* And because we have all sinned, we’re all in need of forgiveness and a thorough cleansing.

Illus: Have you ever done something for which you felt awful? Perhaps you hurt someone deeply and you wished so badly that you could take it back. You even wished you could somehow make the other party forget it ever happened.

That is what David is asking of God. David is asking God to give him a clean heart. He is asking God to **once again look upon him as if his heart was clean and he had not done such awful things.**

“Create in me a clean heart, O God.” A few verses earlier, he wrote, *“Wash me thoroughly from my sin, and cleanse me from my sin.”* (Psalm 51:2). And then in verse 7, *“Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”* (Psalm 51:7).

When we seek God’s forgiveness, He is faithful to forgive us and cleanse our heart. He renews our spirit so that we can rise up and walk again for Him.

God allows us to start over in our life by completely cleansing us. **He forgives us in such a way that He no longer sees our sin.** He scrubs us completely clean.

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7

David doesn’t say, “Change the way I behave.” He says, *“Change my heart.”* It’s not just how we behave is unimportant. **We’ve got to start at the heart.** We can go through all the right motions without our heart being right, but if the heart is right, everything else will fall into place.

That's why in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, *"I don't want you to sit back all proud just because you've never murdered anyone. I want to know what's in your heart. And I don't want you to think you're somebody special just because you've never committed adultery. Let's take a look at what's in your heart."*

So David says, "Even if I never ever commit murder or adultery again in my entire life, there's still something here that's a problem. So God, I want you cleanse my heart. **I want you to cleanse the things I think about, my priorities and my desire.**

2. Starting over means having God's presence

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

David was aware that Saul was removed from the kingship for his sin. So David pleaded with God not to **take** His Spirit away from him.

There is no worse feeling for one of God's children than to experience separation from God.

The most beautiful part of this story is that God answered David's prayer and gave David another chance. **God is willing to do the same for you. God's delights in every opportunity to forgive.** And when he forgives, he doesn't continue to hold it over our heads.

Illus: You may have seen the article in the Baldwin Register this week where our church through its Mulligan Ministries donated \$1,500.00 to Ecumenical Ministries to help those in need. One of the ways money was raised at the golf tournament was players could purchase mulligans for \$10. In golf, a mulligan is a do-over shot and these golfers needed lots of do-overs.

God gives us do-overs, mulligans if you will. Forgiveness in the Bible literally means, **"I know longer hold you accountable for it."**

Another way of stating it would be, **"It no longer stands between you and me."**

What a joy to know when we ask for forgiveness, God doesn't stay away. His presence is there in our lives if we are genuinely repentant of our sin.

3. Starting over means restoration of joy

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

Illus: I remember watching a Hallmark movie titled "Love Comes Softly." It's about a little girl and her widowed father. The mother had been dead for a couple of years and the two were struggling to make it own their own. Finally, the father met another woman who had lost her husband and was struggling herself. She was hired to help out at the farm and teach the little girl lady things. One day while they were doing chores, the man and woman began throwing hay at one another and laughing. The little girl looked up and said, "Paw, Paw!" When he stopped and looked at her, she said "Paw, you got your smile back."

When our heart is cleaned and we began to experience God's presence, we get our smile back.

God restores us with the joy of our salvation.

Conclusion

Illus: I read a story about the owner of a Rolls Royce. The great British automaker takes great pride in the reliability of their handcrafted automobiles. An obviously wealthy owner of a Rolls Royce took it to Europe on an extended trip. While traveling in France the car had some mechanical problem. He called the Rolls Royce factory and asked that they send out a mechanic immediately to fix the problem. The company responded in royal fashion. They put a mechanic on a private jet with all of the necessary tools and flew him over to France to make the repairs. The owner was so wealthy that he wasn't at all concerned about the cost, and would spare no expense to make sure that his beloved Rolls Royce was properly repaired.

However, after several months he realized that he had not received a bill. He had his secretary contact the Rolls Royce factory to inquire about the bill. He received this reply from the Rolls Royce company: In typical British fashion, it said simply, **"We have no recollection or record of any Rolls Royce having ever had a breakdown or being in need of repair anywhere in France."**

This is how God forgives His children!

"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." (Psalm 103:12)

God offers you the opportunity to start over with Him.

Do you need a fresh start in your relationship with God?

Do you need to get your smile back?