

The Essentials: The Psalms

Session 6: Psalm 51

Opening Collect

Together: Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Watch Video

Read: Psalm 51 (out loud)

Discussion:

1. When we compare ourselves to others we can easily minimize our sins. Discuss how coming into the presence of God reveals our sins to us.
2. When you confess to God, have you ever struggled in believing God's mercy and loving kindness? How has that impacted the way you confess your sins to him?
3. Why does David claim that he has sinned only against God when he has clearly also sinned against other people? Does those imply that David does not need to seek forgiveness against all of those he has sinned against?
4. Read vv. 1-5. Often when we seek forgiveness with God and others we seek to explain away our sins. Compare making excuses with what David says in vv. 1-5.
5. Read v. 11. David realizes he needs more than simply being cleaned. He asks God to create in him a new heart. How does this compare to when Jesus says we must be born again?
6. Read vv. 16-20. Only after David gives God his brokenness can he enter into the temple. Discuss why the Book of Common Prayer places the confession immediately before the Eucharist.
7. What does Psalm 51 teach us about Jesus and what does Jesus teach us about Psalm 51?

Check in and closing prayers

Psalm 51

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

- ¹ Have mercy on me,^[a] O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.
- ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- ⁶ Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
- ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right^[b] spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.
- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
- ¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.
- ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- ¹⁶ For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.
- ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
- ¹⁸ Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;
build up the walls of Jerusalem;
- ¹⁹ then will you delight in right sacrifices,
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.