

CALL - Create a Clean Heart in Me

Text: Psalm 51:1-17

Priority Verse: Psalm 51:10

Big Idea: True repentance does not only ask God to forgive our sin; it asks God to change our heart.

Greetings in the name of the Lord and savior Jesus Christ !

Good morning Church! Praise the Lord! Today we continue our sermon series, **CALL TO ME**. Our theme comes from Jeremiah 33:3, where the Lord says, **“Call to Me and I will answer you.”** Throughout this series, we have been learning how God’s people prayed in different situations. We have seen people call on God in suffering. We have learned to pray for others. Jesus taught us how to pray. In Gethsemane, we learned to surrender our will to the Father. Through Hannah, we learned to keep praying when the answer is delayed and to trust the God who remembers us. Today our prayer becomes even more personal. Many times our prayers sound like this: **“Lord, change my situation. Lord, help my family. Lord, open this door. Lord, answer this need.”** These are good prayers. God invites us to bring our needs before Him. But there comes a time in our spiritual life when we need to pray something deeper: **“Lord, don’t only change what is happening around me. Change what is happening inside me.”**

That brings us to Psalm 51, one of the most powerful prayers of repentance in the Bible. David wrote this Psalm after the prophet Nathan confronted him concerning his sin with Bathsheba. David had committed adultery. He tried to cover his sin, and Uriah died because of David’s actions. David was still the king. He still had his position. People could still see King David on the outside, but something was terribly wrong on the inside. Then God sent Nathan to confront him. When David finally saw his sin clearly, he stopped hiding, stopped pretending, and stopped defending himself. He came before God as a broken man. David’s greatest prayer was not, **“Lord, protect my reputation,”** or, **“Lord, remove all the consequences.”** His prayer becomes Psalm 51:10: **“God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”** Church, this is a prayer we all need. Sometimes we want God to fix the problem while God wants to deal with our heart. Sometimes we want God to change another person while God wants first to work in us. **Sometimes the greatest answer to prayer is not God changing what is around me, but God changing what is inside me. And the One who can truly change the heart is Jesus**

Christ. Today David takes us through four movements of true repentance: **Mercy → Confession → Cleansing → Restoration.**

I. Have Mercy on Me — Psalm 51:1–2

David begins, **“Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithful love; according to Your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion. Completely wash away my guilt and cleanse me from my sin.”** Notice how David begins. He does not say, “God, look at all the good things I have done.” David could have reminded God about Goliath, his service, his worship, or the Psalms he had written. But David does not bring his achievements before God. He appeals to **God’s mercy.** David understands something every one of us needs to understand: **when we come before God with our sin, our hope is not our goodness; our hope is God’s mercy.** We cannot balance our sin with our good works and say, “Lord, I have done enough good things, so please overlook my sin.” David knows he is guilty. Therefore, he does not ask God to give him what he deserves. He asks God for mercy.

Notice what David bases his prayer upon: **“Your faithful love”** and **“Your abundant compassion.”** David’s confidence is in God’s character. Sometimes after we sin, shame tells us to run away from God. We think, “How can I pray now? How can I come to God after what I have done?” But true repentance does exactly the opposite. Repentance says, **“Because I have sinned, I desperately need to run toward God and ask for mercy.”** David says, **“Blot out my rebellion...wash away my guilt...cleanse me from my sin.”** Notice those words: **blot out, wash, cleanse.** David understands that sin has created a stain he cannot remove himself. This is where repentance begins—not with excuses, not with blaming, not with comparing ourselves to someone worse, but with saying, **“Lord, have mercy on me.”**

And Church, this is where David’s prayer begins pointing us toward Jesus. David needed mercy, and we need the same mercy. Romans 3:23 says, **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** None of us stands before God because we are good enough. Our hope is Jesus Christ. At the cross, Jesus took upon Himself the judgment our sin deserved. God does not simply pretend that our sin never happened. Our sin is serious, but God’s mercy is greater. Jesus paid the price for sinners. So when we cry, **“Lord, have mercy on me,”** we do not come trusting our own goodness. We come trusting what Jesus has done for us. Church, before we can experience cleansing, we must first recognize that we need cleansing. Our first prayer today is simple: **“Lord, have mercy on me.”**

II. I Have Sinned Against You — Psalm 51:3–6

Now David moves from mercy to confession. Verse 3 says, **“For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me.”** David is no longer hiding. There is a difference between being sorry because we were caught and being broken because we

sinned against God. Sometimes people are sorry because their sin created consequences. They are sorry because their reputation was damaged, because someone discovered what they did, or because they lost something. But genuine repentance goes deeper. David says in verse 4, **“Against You—You alone—I have sinned and done this evil in Your sight.”**

We need to understand this correctly. Did David sin only against God? No. David clearly sinned against Bathsheba. He sinned terribly against Uriah. He sinned against his family and against the people he led. So why does David say, **“Against You—You alone—I have sinned”**? Because David understands that every sin is ultimately rebellion against God. When we hurt another person, we should seek forgiveness and make things right wherever possible. But behind every sin against another person stands an even greater reality: **we have sinned against the holy God who created us.** Joseph understood this when Potiphar’s wife tempted him. In Genesis 39:9 he said, **“How then could I do this immense evil, and how could I sin against God?”**

David does not say, “Nathan made me do it.” He does not blame Bathsheba. He does not say, “You don’t understand the pressure I was under as king.” David says, **“I have sinned.”** Church, those may be some of the hardest words for us to say honestly: **“I was wrong. I sinned. Lord, forgive me.”** We are very good at explaining ourselves. We say, “Yes, I did it, but...” “Yes, I said that, but you don’t know what they did to me.” Real confession removes the word “but.” Real confession says, **“Lord, this is my sin. I take responsibility for it.”** First John 1:9 says, **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** Confession does not tell God something He did not already know. Confession means that we agree with God about our sin. We stop hiding and bring it into His light.

And when we look at the cross, we understand even more clearly how serious sin is. If sin were a small problem, Jesus would not have needed to die for us. **At the cross we see two things at the same time: the seriousness of our sin and the greatness of God’s love.** Jesus did not die because we were already clean. He died for sinners. Romans 5:8 says, **“But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** So when God exposes sin in our lives, we do not need to hide from Him. We can confess it and run to Christ. David first says, **“Have mercy on me.”** Then he says, **“I have sinned against You.”** But David does not stop with forgiveness. Now his prayer goes even deeper.

III. Create a Clean Heart in Me — Psalm 51:7–12

Now we come to the heart of the sermon. David says, **“Purify me...and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.”** Then we come to our priority verse, Psalm 51:10: **“God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”** Notice that David does not merely say, “Lord, forgive what I did.” He is saying, **“Lord, change**

who I am inside.” That is deeper repentance. David understands that his greatest problem is not only the sinful action that came out of his life; there is a heart problem underneath the action. Jesus teaches the same truth in Mark 7 when He explains that sinful things come from within, from the human heart. So David does not merely ask God to clean up his behavior. He asks, **“Create a clean heart in me.”**

That word **“create”** is very important. David is asking God to do something David cannot accomplish by himself. He is not simply saying, “Lord, help me try harder.” He is saying, **“Lord, I need You to do something inside me that I cannot do for myself.”** Church, Christianity is not simply behavior modification. Jesus did not come merely to make bad people behave a little better. He came to save us and make us new. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, **“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!”** What we cannot produce through our own strength, God can do in us through Christ.

We can change our clothes. We can change our language around Christian people. We can change our public behavior. We can learn how to look spiritual. But only God can truly transform the heart. So David prays, **“Create a clean heart in me.”** Church, that should become our prayer: “Lord, change my desires. Change my thinking. Change my attitude. Remove my pride. Remove bitterness. Remove jealousy. Remove anything in me that does not please You. Make my heart love what You love.” It is easy to pray, “Lord, change my husband. Lord, change my wife. Lord, change my children. Lord, change my church. Lord, change my circumstances.” But Psalm 51 puts a mirror in front of us and teaches us to pray: **“LORD, CHANGE ME.”**

Then David says, **“Renew a steadfast spirit within me.”** David does not only need forgiveness for yesterday; he needs strength for tomorrow. He is saying, “Lord, give me a heart that will remain faithful to You.” And then verse 12 says, **“Restore the joy of Your salvation to me, and sustain me by giving me a willing spirit.”** Sin had stolen David’s joy. David still had his throne, his wealth, and his position, but none of those things could replace the joy of fellowship with God. Sin may promise pleasure, but eventually it steals joy. David cries, **“Lord, restore my joy.”**

Maybe someone understands that today. You still come to church. You still sing the songs. You still know Bible verses. On the outside everything may look fine, but inside the joy has become weak. David teaches us where restoration begins: come honestly before God, confess your sin, ask Him to cleanse you, and ask Him to renew your heart. And here is the good news: **Jesus can do what we cannot do for ourselves.** He does not only forgive our past; He gives us new life. He does not only clean the outside; He changes us from within. So when we pray, **“God, create a clean heart in me,”** we are admitting, “Jesus, I need You. Do in me what I cannot do for myself.” Church, remember this: **Sometimes the greatest answer to prayer is not God changing what is around me, but God changing what is inside me. And the One who can truly change the heart is Jesus Christ.**

IV. Restore Me and Use Me Again — Psalm 51:12–17

Now something beautiful happens. David has asked for mercy. He has confessed his sin. He has asked for cleansing. Now David begins talking about serving God again. Verse 13 says, **“Then I will teach the rebellious Your ways, and sinners will return to You.”** Think about that. David does not say, “Because I failed, God can never use me again.” David understands that God’s grace can restore a broken person. This does not mean sin has no consequences. David experienced serious and painful consequences because of his choices. Forgiveness does not mean that every earthly consequence disappears. But failure did not have to become the final chapter of David’s relationship with God. **Grace can write another chapter.**

David is saying, “Lord, restore me, and then use my restored life to help other people return to You.” The man who needed mercy can tell others about mercy. The man who needed forgiveness can tell others about forgiveness. The man who needed restoration can help other broken people find their way back to God. Church, God does not waste a truly repentant life. Then David says in verse 17, **“The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God.”** David could bring sacrifices. David could sing songs. David could stand before people as king. But God wanted **David’s heart**. A broken and humbled heart does not come proudly, make excuses, or pretend. It simply says, **“Lord, I need You.”**

And when we come into the New Testament, Peter gives us a beautiful picture of restoration through Jesus. Peter loved Jesus, but Peter failed terribly. He denied Jesus three times. Imagine the shame Peter must have carried. But after Jesus rose from the dead, He did not throw Peter away. In John 21, Jesus restored Peter and told him, **“Feed My sheep.”** Peter’s failure was real, but **Jesus’ grace was greater than Peter’s failure.** Jesus did not say that Peter’s sin was unimportant. Jesus restored him and called him again to follow and serve. Church, maybe you have failed. Maybe you look at something in your past and think, “God can never use me again.” Do not minimize your sin, but do not minimize the grace of Jesus either. Bring your sin honestly to Christ. Repent. Receive His forgiveness. Walk in obedience. **Your failure does not have to be the final chapter.** **Jesus is able to restore broken people and use restored people for His glory.**

Conclusion

Church, look at David’s journey: **Mercy → Confession → Cleansing → Restoration.** David begins, **“Have mercy on me.”** Then, **“I have sinned against You.”** Then, **“Create a clean heart in me.”** Finally, **“Restore me and use me again.”** But Psalm 51 ultimately points us toward something David desperately needed and something every one of us needs: a **Savior**. David could confess his sin. David could cry. David could ask to be washed. But David could not pay the full price for his own sin, and neither can we. That is why our

hope ultimately leads us to **Jesus Christ**.

Jesus lived the righteous life we could never live. Jesus went to the cross carrying our sin. First John 1:7 says, **“The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”** David prayed, **“Wash me,”** and the Gospel tells us where our true cleansing is found: **in Jesus Christ**. We are not forgiven because we cried enough. We are not forgiven because we promised never to fail again. We are not forgiven because we became good enough. We are forgiven because **Jesus paid for our sin at the cross and rose again**, and everyone who turns to Him in repentance and faith receives forgiveness and new life.

So today, before we ask, “Lord, change my circumstances,” maybe we need to ask, **“Lord, search my heart. Show me what needs to change. Forgive me. Cleanse me. Restore me.”** And above everything, let Psalm 51:10 become our prayer: **“GOD, CREATE A CLEAN HEART IN ME AND RENEW A STEADFAST SPIRIT WITHIN ME.”**

When you recognize sin in your life—**CALL**.

When you have failed—**CALL**.

When you have been hiding—**CALL**.

When your heart has moved away from God—**CALL**.

Do not run away from God. **Run to His mercy through Jesus Christ.**

At the cross we find **mercy for the guilty**. In Jesus we find **forgiveness for our sin**. Through Christ we receive **cleansing for our hearts**. And by His grace we can experience **restoration and new life**. So Church, our prayer today is not only, “Lord, change my situation.” Our deeper prayer is: **“Lord, change me.”** Mercy → Confession → Cleansing → Restoration. And through it all, our hope is not in ourselves. Our hope is Jesus Christ. Amen.

