

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

The Psalms

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

Psalm 51

1. Introduction

Adultery is as popular these days as in ancient times. Daily we read or witness the same sad story of broken vows, broken hearts, broken homes and illegitimate children - all because of **adultery!** Probably the most famous case of adultery in the annals of human history is that committed by ancient Israel's king **David** with **Bath-sheba**, a woman of surpassing beauty. Briefly here is the story.

2 Samuel 11: 1: *"And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that **David** sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.*
2: *And it came to pass in an evening tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and **the woman was very beautiful to look upon.***
3: *And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this **Bath-sheba**, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?*
4: *And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her."*

The result of this illicit sexual affair was, as is in every case of adultery, catastrophic! In king David's case it led to **deception, murder, rape** and **civil war**; problems which plagued the household of David's family and his kingdom for centuries. But this Sabbath our sermon is not about adultery or any other sin. It is about **repentance, confession, mercy, joy** and **testimony**.

2. Repentance

Repentance is a rare word. You'll not hear it very often these days. But the fact is that repentance is the very **first step** to eternal life in the Kingdom of God. It matters not whether your particular sin is **adultery, idolatry, blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, murder, theft, deceit** or **covetousness**; if there is no repentance in your heart, (mind) you remain guilty of that particular sin. King David repented before God. It was repentance of such a kind that all Israel came to hear about it the words of this Psalm. Moreover, tens of millions of believers down through the ages have read of David's affair and this **Psalm of Repentance**. Let us study it this Sabbath.

Psalm 51: 1: *"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

2: **Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.**
3: **For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.**
4: **Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest...**
7: **Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow...**
9: **Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities."**

There is no doubt that king David, when challenged by the prophet Gad, didn't try to cover up his sin. He openly confessed it before all Israel as an **'evil thing'** and desperately wanted forgiveness. **'Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow ...blot out all mine iniquities.'** This is the language of true **Repentance**. Notice that sin, any sin, is committed primarily against the Almighty. He is the One that suffers the most and He (the LORD) is Satan's primary target when any human being sins. **'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.'** Because of this fact, a sinner - every sinner - who wants forgiveness must confess that sin to God. **Not to a priest - but to God!**

3. Confession to God ... or Priest?

The practice of confessing sins to a priest was adopted from Paganism! Concerning this practice Alexander Hyslop in his masterful book **The Two Babylons** says this:

On pages 9-10 "This was the pretence; that the grand object in requiring the candidates for initiation to make confession to the priest of all their secret faults and shortcomings and sins, was just to put them entirely in the power of those to whom the inmost feelings of their souls and their most important secrets were confided. Now, in exactly the same way, and for the very same purpose, has Rome erected the **confessional**.

Instead of requiring priests and people alike, as Scripture does, to **"confess their faults one to another,"** (James 5: 16) when either have offended the other, it (Rome) commands all, **on pain of perdition, to confess to the priest, whether they have transgressed against him or no, while the priest is under no obligation to confess to the people at all. Without such confession, in the Church of Rome, there can be no admission to the Sacraments, any more than in the days of Paganism there could be admission without confession to the benefit of the Mysteries.**

Now this confession is made by every individual, in secrecy and in solitude, to the priest sitting in the name and clothed with the authority of God, invested with the power to examine the conscience, to judge the life, to absolve or condemn according to his mere arbitrary will and pleasure. **This is the grand pivot on which the whole "Mystery of iniquity," as embodied in the Papacy, is made to turn;** and wherever it is submitted to, admirably does it serve the design of binding men in abject subjection to the priesthood." (emphasis mine)

4. Yahweh's Mercy

Was king David forgiven? Bear in mind that he had just committed several extremely grievous sins, **deceit, adultery** and **murder!** He had taken **Uriah the Hittite's** wife. Uriah was a foreigner who had joined the army of Israel and was at that time risking his life in the battlefield. David slept with Uriah's wife and when he found out that she was pregnant he had Uriah murdered! It was a ghastly affair which he couldn't hide and God was very angry.

David truly repented, before God and all Israel, as those verses tell. But still God was extremely angry and probably hurt beyond measure. Could He forgive? Would He forgive? Should He forgive? If its one divine trait we humans should never forget it's **Yahweh's Mercy**. The LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel is a merciful Being; and His mercy endures for all eternity.

Yes king David was forgiven. His deep repentance and cry for mercy stirred the heart of the Almighty and

David was forgiven. But though he was forgiven, the **repercussions of his evil deeds continued**:

- Bath-sheba's child died. (2 Samuel 12-19)
- David's son Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar, who was Absalom's full sister. (2 Samuel 13)
- Later Absalom, another of David's sons, slew Amnon his half-brother. (2 Samuel 13)
- Finally Absalom revolted against his father, seized the throne and publicly insulted his father David. (2 Samuel 16)
- Civil war broke out in Israel and in a battle that ensued between David's and Absalom's troops, Absalom was killed. (2 Samuel 18)

All these terrible events happened in direct fulfilment of the prophet Gad's words in (2 Samuel 12: 10)

“Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.”
(2 Samuel 12: 10)

‘But,’ someone will ask **‘how can we say that David’s sin was forgiven if all these terrible things happened as a consequence of that sin?’** The answer is: The **main consequence** of David's blatant sin was **eternal death!** When David repented, that sentence of **eternal death** was quashed, annulled and forgiven. But the **repercussions**, the **here-and-now results** of David's sin still occurred. Like an ugly **scar** which remains long after a deep wound has healed, those repercussions continued. What lessons can we learn from these events? We learn these:

- **That God punishes blatant sin.** It matters not whether one is a king or a commoner. Blatant sin is always punished by God; and its effects often run to three or four generations! (Exodus 20:5)
- **The LORD God of Israel is an extremely merciful Being.** Mercy is one of His best-known traits. Not only is He merciful; but **His mercy is everlasting. It endureth forever!** Open your Bible at (Psalm 136) and note that everyone of its 26 verses ends with the words: **‘for his mercy endureth for ever.’**
- **Sin’s repercussions reach down through time** unto the *third and fourth generation!*

There is a great truth here. A truth every sinner would do well to remember. That truth is this; if a sinner repents - truly repents like king David did - then the Almighty God of Israel will surely forgive. See **Lesson 3** for more information concerning **Forgiveness**.

5. The Joy of Salvation

Real joy is a Fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is a divine product. Nothing on earth can produce **‘real joy.’** It comes to us from the Father above. To be sure we humans can become excited and deliriously happy with many different things; but this excitement and pleasure is short-lived. **Real joy** is not physical excitement, thrill or surface happiness; neither is it short-lived. It is the deep down flow of true satisfaction and peace in knowing that all is well with your soul; that your name is in the **Book of Life**. Real joy is a by-product of God's Mercy. It is everlasting and is sometimes referred to as the **Joy of Salvation!** When king David sinned, he lost that **inner Peace** and **Joy**. After he repented he prayed desperately for God to restore it to his heart. Here are his words:

Psalm 51: 8: **“Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice...
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.”**

Ponder those keywords: **‘joy,’ ‘rejoicing in the bones,’ ‘gladness,’ ‘a clean heart,’ ‘a right spirit,’ ‘the Joy of salvation’** and **‘Thy free Spirit.’** Can you see that these all go together? In other words, it is not possible to have only some of these things. You either have them all or you have none. It is an absolute fact that those who have been forgiven their sins will experience the **Joy of Salvation**. The opposite is also true: those who continue in sin and refuse to repent will not experience the **Joy of Salvation**. These go through life experiencing silent frustration and inner misery; even though on the surface they may sometimes appear to be bubbling with pleasure.

6. Testimony

When a person is converted and begins to experience the **Joy of Salvation**, he/she is like a lighted candle. People around begin to notice a difference in their lives. As the Saviour so aptly described it:

- Matthew 5: 14: **“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.**
15: *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*
16: **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”**
- Psalms 51: 13: **“Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.”**

7. Spiritual Sacrifices

- Psalms 51: 15: **“O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.**
16: *For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.*
17: *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a **broken and a contrite heart**, O God, thou wilt not despise.*
18: *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*
19: **Then** shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.”

May the Almighty grant that we all will repent of our sins, confess them to him, then experience the **Joy of Salvation**. Finally we should:

**Praise Him for His great love
and for His mercy which endureth forever!**

AMEN!

**In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.
Elder: Max W. Mader**

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