

The SONGS OF ZION

DISCUSSION

"IN THIS PENITENTIAL INDIVIDUAL LAMENT PSALM, DAVID CONFESSED THE SINS HE COMMITTED AGAINST BATHSHEBA AND URIA. IT IS A MODEL OF CONFESSION THAT HAS BECOME POPULAR WITH GOD'S PEOPLE. SINCE WE ALL SIN SO OFTEN AND NEED TO CONFESS FREQUENTLY, THIS PSALM IS A HELP AND COMFORT TO US ALL. WE SHOULD READ IT ESPECIALLY WHEN WE FEEL GUILTY OR HAVE SINNED." - DR. THOMAS CONSTABLE

1. What is the point (or theme) of this psalm?

2. One commentator states that verse 1 shows David asking "*God (Elohim) to cleanse him because of His loyal love and compassion. This is the first of David's psalms in which he addressed the Lord as Elohim, possibly reflecting the distance he felt from God as Yahweh. [David] knew he did not deserve the Lord's forgiveness nor could he earn it.*"

David does not refer to God by His covenantal name in this psalm, probably because of his shame; Consider what it must have felt like to be David in this moment. What emotions and feelings would be present at the revelation of sin? What do David's words express regarding the posture of his heart, his sin, and his relationship with God?

3. Now consider your own life. What sin in your life has made you cry out for God's forgiveness and cleansing? Is there something in this moment that you would like to confess to God? Spend a moment praying as a group for the confession and forgiveness of sin.

4. David's prayer included asking for God's forgiveness, a renewal of joy, and full restoration. What does God's forgiveness look like? How have you experienced the renewal of joy in your life? What does it mean to be restored to God?

5. Is there anything else that stands out to you in this psalm that you would like to discuss?

PSALM 51 {ESV}

1 HAVE MERCY ON ME, 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 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.