

## Repentance and Forgiveness

### Introduction:

From time to time all of us fail God and fail one another. The Bible says that *all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*

What do we do when this happens? Under what circumstances will we be forgiven by family and friends and especially by God?

King David ruled in about 1000BC. Under God, he was the political head of Israel and he was also their spiritual leader, a bit like their Archbishop. We read in 2 Samuel Chapters 11 and 12 of David's sin of adultery and murder.

When Nathan the Prophet came at God's direction and confronted David with his sin, he turned to God in repentance. God has seen to it that his prayer on that occasion has been included in our Bibles!

As we look at Psalm 51, let's not think of it as mere history. Let's see it as part of God's Word to help us deal with **our** sins which might include things like greed, dishonesty, gossip, jealousy, pride, selfish ambition, lust and anger. Forgiveness is possible! The Psalm divides into five sections:

### A PLEA FOR MERCY: (Verses 1-2)

Based on God's unfailing love, David seeks God's mercy rather than justice. Justice would be deadly.

He asks God to blot out his sins and treat him as though they were never there. He wants the ugly stain of sin washed away.

God's mercy is such a wonderful provision in times of shame and distress on account of our sin.

### THE CONFESSION OF SIN: (Verses 3-5)

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David didn't try to hide his sin. What would be the point when God knows everything about us?! He openly confesses his sin.

Like all sin, David's was a terrible offence, injury and insult against God, and against victims and God's people.

People sometimes speak of 'victimless crime' but there's no such thing. God is always affected by our sin. He's always injured by our failures.

Like all of us, David saw that he has a bias towards sin. Anyone who knows anything about the game of bowls knows that the bowl is weighted and has a bias. Unless bowled very quickly, it turns in a particular direction. We have such a bias towards sin. Our tendency is to go the wrong way.

David's confession of sin made it possible for the sin-barrier which exists between God and people, to be removed forever.

Since we live this side of the death of Jesus, we know that Jesus carried our sins upon Himself, making it possible for our sins to be forgiven.

### **PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS AND RENEWAL: (Verses 6-12)**

David knew that he had to say more than 'sorry' for his sin. He needed God's help not to fall into sin again.

Does that sound familiar? Sin can become habitual. As simple bad habits such as nail biting need to be broken so habitual sin needs to be broken. David asked God for seven things which would assist him in living God's way: truth, purity, joy, removal of sin, a new heart, God's presence and restoration with God. Maybe we can ask God for these things too.

### **COMMITMENT TO WITNESS: (Verses 13-17)**

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David had a burning desire to tell others what God had done for him by forgiving him. He asked God to help him to tell others.

Do we have such a burning desire to tell others what God has done for us in Christ?

Verses 16-17 help us see that God longs for true loyalty and commitment to Him more than anything. Such a loyalty will compel us to speak for God.

PRAYER FOR INJURED PARTIES: (Verses 18-19)

David's sin could affect the whole nation. He was their King and spiritual leader! So he prays that God's people will not be affected by his sin.

What a great prayer for us too. More often than not, when we sin, others are affected. How often do we pray for those affected by our sin?

### Conclusion:

All of us sin and in so doing we offend, hurt and insult God.

Here we have a prayer which was prayed by King David after the notable sins of adultery and murder.

We know from Bible history that God did forgive him and restored him in his relationship with God.

No sin is beyond God's forgiveness except the sin of attributing the work of Jesus to the work of the devil. So we should not hesitate seeking God's forgiveness.

God loves us and longs for us to repent and enjoy His friendship.

God longs to help us through His Holy Spirit to be free of sin and guilt and to live wholesome lives which honour Him and commend Him to others.

May each of us here today know God's forgiveness and the joy of sins forgiven and success in our struggles with sin.