

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE Create in me a Pure Heart

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE Psalm 51

SYNOPSIS Sometimes we need a total makeover, and only God can do that.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Create in me a Pure Heart

Psalms 51:10-12

10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

At the beginning of the chapter: *A psalm of David, regarding the time Nathan the prophet came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.*

We are actually looking at the chapter from the beginning. Here, David is confessing his sin and asking God for restoration. As he asks for mercy and cleansing, he begins by focusing on God's character. He appeals to God's love and compassion. (v.1)

God's love is unfailing = some translations say lovingkindness; it speaks of God's favor and his interest in the needs of his people. It also speaks of his faithfulness. His love is dependable, reliable, trustworthy, and constant. You may fail in your walk with God, but his love just keeps on for you. 2 Timothy 2:13 says, "if we are faithless, he will remain faithful."

Now, God's love for us does not mean that he approves of everything we do. That's why David is asking for mercy and restoration. God's love means he wants what is best for us, and sometimes that includes discipline. This is obvious in family relationships... you love your kids, so occasionally you discipline them.

God's compassion is great = abundant mercy or tender love; depending on the context, the word used here is sometimes translated as womb. The womb speaks of nurture, protection and lifegiving.

God has great compassion for his people. Similar to his love, his compassion wants what is best for us, to nurture and develop us. Think of a pregnant young woman, looking forward to the birth of her child. That pregnancy stirs all kinds of emotions, right? The mom-to-be takes on all sorts of discomfort, in order for that child to develop. But it's all worth it because there's a child on the way. God has that kind of compassion for us. He will endure patiently while we develop.

After appealing to God's loving, compassionate character, then David deals directly with his own sin. He owns it and does not try to deny or minimize it. In verse 3 he says, "my sin is always before me." In other words, he's well aware of it. The NLT says, "it haunts me day and night." We are starting to see the heart of David – a heart after God's own heart. He sinned; he knew it; and he's struggling with guilt and shame. In verse 8, he describes his feelings as "bone crushing." Our society wants to do away with all guilt and shame, but God designed those feelings to motivate us to turn back to him. And David knows this about God. In verse 17, he talks about the sacrifice that really pleases God even more than a burnt offering, is a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart.

--Charles Spurgeon... If you and I have a broken spirit, all idea of our own importance is gone.



--Matthew Poole... "This is opposed to that hard or stony heart, which signifies a heart (which is) stubborn and rebellious against God..."

We used to sing a song called Soften My Heart. That's the idea here. **God loves a tender heart.** There are numerous scriptures that indicate God is not a fan of a hardened heart. Sin and pride lead to a hardened heart, which in turn causes us to turn away from God and stubbornly refuse to repent.

David says, "against you only have I sinned." (v. 4) Now, technically, that is not true. He sinned against Bathsheba's husband, too. But this statement reveals David's heart yet again. He is most concerned about his relationship with the Lord. Even if our sin doesn't affect anyone else, it goes against God, and that's enough to need repentance. He goes on to acknowledge that God is always right, and...

☞ **if God calls it sin, then it is sin. Your opinion is irrelevant.**

David uses several words to describe his behavior. He calls it transgressions, iniquity, sin, and evil.

Transgression = trespass (going too far; where you're not supposed to go); rebellion (open resistance to God); a defect (shortcoming; imperfection) Anyone here guilty of these?

Iniquity = perversion (distortion or corruption of what was intended); depravity (corruption; deviance; wickedness)

Are you seeing that David is not watering this down at all? He is coloring it the way it really is.

Sin = an offence and the guilt associated with it; to miss the mark (anything less than a bullseye in archery) We all have missed the mark. Cf. Romans 3:23

Evil = profoundly immoral and wicked; wrong; ungodly; degenerate... We don't like to think of ourselves this way, but I'm afraid it is sometimes accurate of our thoughts and behavior.

All of these tendencies come very naturally to us all. In verse 5, David describes the human condition... "I was sinful at birth, from the time my mother conceived me." We are all born with a sin nature. That's why I often say that just because something comes naturally, does not make it right.

I've talked with people who like to think that people are basically good, but that is not true according to scripture. As well, it's evident in babies and toddlers. Do babies care that you're not getting enough sleep? No! They're hungry, so, "feed me now!" Do toddlers have to be taught to be naughty? No! They ☞ have to learn to be good; learn to share; learn to give. **Sin is built in and needs to be dealt with!**

Next, David asks God to blot it out, wash it away, cleanse it.

☞ **God has the ability to wipe the slate clean.** He can rinse and sanitize us in a way that nothing else can. Sometimes, we try to clean ourselves up; we try to filter out our sinful tendencies, but our filters don't do a complete job. In contrast, when God does the cleaning we are really clean. (v. 7). All the



contaminants are removed and we are made pure. That's a miracle – no filter can do that. David describes it as “whiter than snow.”

According to Hebrews 9:13-14 God's cleansing can actually restore our consciences. Those negative thoughts and emotions associated with our sin can be removed by the blood of Christ. That's way more than just cancelling the punishment that is due. You can not only get let off the hook, you can be free from the condemning feelings. Doesn't that sound good?

When we just try to “do better,” it's like saying, “I won't walk in the mud anymore.” Great, but you're still muddy from before. But when God does the cleaning, it's like a hot shower with soap and a scrub brush that gets rid of all the junk. That's what David is asking for – “God, you make me clean, because I can't do it on my own.”

☞ That takes me back to one of my favorite concepts: we need to **just keep running back to God**.

Then we get the main text for today (verses 10-12). “Create in me a pure heart.” This is even more than the scrubbing we talked about. This is starting all over. This creation is the same as found in Genesis 1:1 – to make something out of nothing. It's another miracle.

David asks for a **pure heart**. He wants to be completely uncontaminated, not watered down at all. And he says, “**renew a steadfast spirit within me.**” Here, David is sort of doubling down. He already asked for a new creation in his heart. Now, he's saying the same thing another way. He wants a brand-new thing. He wants a **steadfast (faithful) spirit**. David wants to be clean and new, and, he wants to stay that way for the long term.

☞ **Spirit** = ruach; breath of life... David is **asking for a total makeover**, from the inside out. He doesn't just want to “do better,” or control his bad behavior - he wants to be made completely new, with a heart fully committed to God.

“**Do not cast me from your presence.**” This takes us back to the attitude in verse 4. David is concerned primarily about his relationship with the Lord.

☞ He wants **be up close and personal with God**. We see this same attitude in Psalms 27:4: “One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.”

“**Don't take your Holy Spirit from me.**” In other words, “Don't give up on me; don't discard me.” *In the New Testament the Spirit does not leave believers; at the moment of salvation He indwells them (cf. John 14:16; Romans 8:9). But a Christian may be cast aside from service because of sin (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:27).* I don't want God to ever just put on the sidelines because I haven't been faithful to him. How about you?

“**Restore to me the joy of your salvation.**” This time David is asking for something to be returned to him. Because of his sinful behavior, his joy had faded away. That's one of the things we don't always think about. Guilt and shame can cause us to fall into darkness and the joy is gone. David even seems to imply



in verses 14 and 15 that he hadn't really sang and declared God's praises in a while. When you've got the joy of the Lord, it tends to inspire praise.

Joy = gladness; rejoicing; abounding delight... this is more than just happiness which tends to depend on circumstances. The joy of the Lord is an inner peace and delight that can withstand all kinds of situations. Here, it says, "the joy **of your salvation.**" Church, **when we really stop to think about what God has done for us in salvation, there should always be joy.** You were completely lost and doomed in your sins, but having come to Christ, you have been saved and there is a glorious eternity ahead for you. That's something to be joyful about.

☞ --Billy Sunday... *"If you have no joy, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere."*

That's really pretty accurate. Listen to Psalms 16:11... *In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.* So, if you are right with God, living in proximity to the Lord, there should be joy. If not, something is not quite right – there's a leak. In David's case, and perhaps yours, the leak was sin. In verse 8, when talking about God's cleansing, David wants to hear joy and gladness again. He wants to rejoice, but his sin has blocked that in him. Do you need **to recapture your joy?**

☞ **Run back to God and remember His gift of salvation.** That should stir something in your heart.

Nehemiah 8:10 says, "**the joy of the Lord is your strength.**" When you are down in the dumps for whatever reason – sin or something else – stop to remember the salvation you have received in Christ and let your joy be renewed. In fact, I think that we all experience times when we are feeling down, but intentionally remembering our salvation can always have a way of picking our spirits back up. The joy of the Lord is our strength.

Then David wraps it up with, "**grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.**" He's saying, "help me to always be inclined to do your will." "I don't want my obedience to be just some form of obligation; **I want to want to obey you.**" When you genuinely want to do something, it's much easier to do, even if it is hard work. And here again, we see that God is the source of all these things: the willing and steadfast spirit, the pure heart. These are things we often try to achieve, but we can't in our own ability.

☞ We need to **rely on God**, so, pray and ask him for those things!

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Have you lost your joy? Have you allowed sin or just simple neglect to affect your relationship with God? Do you need God to do a new work in you?

☞ **(click now to start background music)** **Run back** to God. He is compassionate and loves a tender heart. **Remember** his gift of salvation, expressing gratitude for his work in your heart. **Rely** on God, asking him to restore and make you new. Don't just try harder. Turn to God! Altar time.