

Summer in Psalms – 2026 – Week 7 – Psalm 51

Psalm 51:1-13: *Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.*
² *Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.*
³ *For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.*
⁴ *Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.*
⁵ *Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*
⁶ *Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.*
⁷ *Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*
⁸ *Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.*
⁹ *Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.*
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.*
¹³ *Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.*

INTRO to series “Summer in Psalms” – The Hebrew Psalms in our Bible are filled with ancient prayers, poems, laments, hymns, and spiritual songs written by God’s people throughout many generations. As the Holy Spirit spoke through them, their words of praise and faith were collected into five books with 150 different psalms.

Our Summer series will survey several of the Psalms which proclaim God’s faithfulness in all generations. They also call on us to trust the Lord in our own generation, seeking His best purposes in our homes, our church, and the world in which we live. A special part of this summer series will be the incorporation of music and singing led by our worship teams based on the Psalms we study.

INTRO to **Psalm 51**: Like **Psalm 32**, this psalm is attributed to David and expresses his journey to confession and repentance regarding his sins towards Bathsheba, her

husband Uriah, and others. Not limited to one occasion in the past, this is a timeless psalm about confession and repentance and commitment being met with God's mercy, forgiveness, and salvation.

I. God's mercy is great in light of the depth of our sin. (vs. 1-5)

-It's impossible to appreciate the greatness of God's mercy unless we truly contemplate the depth of our sin.

-The phrases David uses to describe the Lord including His "*mercy, unfailing love, and great compassion*" come from God's own description of Himself: "*The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin...*" (**Exodus 34:6-7**)

-Just like we saw in Psalm 32, here David uses three different words to describe his offense against God – transgression, sin, and iniquity. Here, David doesn't ask for his sin to be taken away but rather that he be spiritually cleansed.

-Sin is deeply harmful on many levels. Though David certainly sinned against others – Bathsheba, Uriah, David's own family, and the people of Israel who called him king – His sin was first and foremost against God (**vs. 4**). The core of sin is rebellion against God. Sin is anything that displeases God.

-Moreover, sins against other people are always sins against God, because every person is made in God's image.

II. God's loving forgiveness is bound to His perfect righteousness. (vs. 6-10)

-God desires faithfulness from us from the inception of our lives, and He cares deeply about truthfulness both in the view of others and behind closed doors.

-David's prayer for forgiveness is also a plea for God's spiritual cleansing as if through hyssop. (**vs. 7**)

-Hyssop was a small, common plant that could be used like a brush. The Hebrew priests used hyssop to brush or sprinkle blood or water over a sacrifice or offering, and sometimes to sprinkle blood on people as a cleansing ceremony.

-David wanted to be free of the weight of his sin and disobedience so that he could feel joy and gladness again.

-**vs. 10** is the central verse of **Psalm 51**, and a clear picture of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ: *Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.* (see also **1 John 1:5-9** below).

III. True repentance is accompanied by obedient actions. (vs. 11-13)

-David seemed to feel unable to worship the Lord openly and even unwelcomed into God's presence.

-David's desire was not only to receive God's forgiveness, but that he might experience the true joy of salvation and an obedient, faithful spirit within him once again.

-David took on the responsibility of turning his repentance into obedient actions by committing to the Lord: *Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you. (vs. 13)*

-God's Word teaches us more than just what we are *not* to do, God gives us clear directions on what we *are* to do as we walk in His ways (see **Isaiah 1:16-20** below).

IV. God delights in hearts filled with true worship: offering our genuine love and devotion to Him. (vs. 14-19)

-**vs. 14-19:** *Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.*

¹⁵ *Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.*

¹⁶ *You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.*

¹⁷ *My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.*

¹⁸ *May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.*

¹⁹ *Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

-When we turn to God from our sin in repentance and experience his forgiveness, the inner person is transformed so that the outer person can also be changed.

-It's impossible to appreciate the greatness of God's mercy unless we truly contemplate the depth of our sin!

Other Scriptures Referenced:

1 John 1:5-9: *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Isaiah 1:16-20: *Wash and make yourselves clean.*

*Take your evil deeds out of my sight;
stop doing wrong.*

¹⁷ Learn to do right; seek justice.

Defend the oppressed.

*Take up the cause of the fatherless;
plead the case of the widow.*

*¹⁸ "Come now, let us settle the matter,"
says the Lord.*

*"Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.*

*¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient,
you will eat the good things of the land;*

*²⁰ but if you resist and rebel,
you will be devoured by the sword."*

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Colossians 2:13-15: *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

Other Quotes/Resources:

-The key question of life is—"Who's in charge here?" –Glenn Plum

-“David sinned big and repented big, and thus he is remembered as a ‘man after God’s own heart.’” –Nancy De Claissé-Walford