**Psalm 51**

**Create In Me a Pure Heart, O God**

We will be starting a series on emotionally healthy spirituality for our Bible groups, and I will be giving some more “topical” sermons related to our spiritual and our related emotional health, as a family and individually.

Our theme this year is “Coming Home.” Home needs to be an emotionally safe place. Home needs to be a place where you feel accepted, even with your flaws. Home is a place where you will hear the truth from those who love you, but it will come in an overall atmosphere of love, loyalty and acceptance.

I wanted to do the Parable of the Lost Son…

Instead, we will be in Psalm 51.

Create in me a clean/pure heart O God!

The key to an emotionally healthy relationship is forgiveness and mercy.

The background:

In my Bible, there is a footnote. “In Hebrew, Psalm 51:1-19 is numbered Psalm 51:3-21. Why? Because this is part of the text:

A Psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheeba.

This is the background to our sermon text today.

Let’s go to 2 Samuel 11-12

2 Samuel 11:1-5

David had had a lot of success. He decided, “For once, I am going to sit back and simply enjoy my success. Let my underlings do the work of campaigning. I am going to enjoy myself.”

Rest, Sabbath, emotional refueling: Great!

Indulging self and dropping out of the battle. Not being in contact with spiritual advisers, Disaster!

David was quarantined at home, with nothing to do, and with a lot more opportunity to sin.

He was trolling the internet, and he accidentally came upon a pornography website. He spent hours and hours in multi-player video games, hanging out with worldly people.

He was feeling lonely. Scrolling through social media or hours. Searching for connection elsewhere. Looking for emotional comfort, finding a man. Looking in the wrong places.

David was alone. He was out of touch with his spiritual mentors like Nathan. David was disconnected from his spiritual family.

David was up late at night. Bad things happen when we are up late at night. Yes???

v. 2 He saw a beautiful woman.

He felt lonely, disconnected. His spiritual buddies were in the spiritual fight, but he was on a spiritual vacation.

v. 4 Then David sent messengers to get her.

James 1:14 “Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

v. 4 “Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.” Rabbi Wolpe tells us that this is a coded way of saying what happened in this encounter.

David almost certainly raped Bathsheba.

This explains what happened in 2 Sam 11:6-25

David sends for Uriah to come from the battlefield, hoping he will have relations with Bathsheeba.

Uriah is so loyal to David, the he refuses to leave the battle, even for lawful relations with his wife.

In his desperation to cover up his crime, David tells Joab to put him in the front lines and see that he is killed in the battle.

2 Sam 11:26 Having caused the death of Uriah and covered up his crime of rape, David compounded the sin by forcing Bathsheeba to marry him. He “had her brought to his house.”

Wow!

2 Samuel 12. David’s spiritual mentor confronts David.

2 Samuel 12:1-4 Nathan tells a parable about a very selfish wealthy man.

2 Samuel 12:7-10 Nathan to David: You are the man.

David was a deeply, deeply flawed man!

But I have some good news for those of us wounded souls.

I have good news for those of us who have been living in our lonely caves.

I have good news for those of us who have done things we are ashamed to admit.

David was able to repent. Nathan finally got through to him.

In fact, David was a man after God’s own heart. (1 Sam 13:14)

Psalms 51

Read all of Psalm 51. Listen to the pathos in this Psalm.

Psalm 51:1-5 David’s anguish.

What is David feeling? He feels that he has undone all the good God has done through him.

He is feeling that it is over for him. Why keep up the façade?

“Against you only have I sinned.”

BTW, this is technically not true. This is David pouring out his heart, not describing correct biblical doctrine! There are the sin offering for offenses against God and the guilt offering for offenses against our fellow-human. The second requires restitution to the offended person before making the offering.

“I was sinful at birth—sinful from my mother’s womb.”

Again, this is not true. It would agree with the doctrine of Original Sin.

But that is not the point.

David: I am an utter wretch. I no longer deserve your mercy, O God. I am a failure. David is depressed. David is suffering from trauma over the death of his child—dead because of David’s sin!

He is not spiritually or emotionally healthy at this point!

David 51:6-12 Here we see why David is a person “after God’s own heart.” (1 Samuel 13:14)

David, the unfaithful king? David the one who took Bathsheba and engaged in adultery with her, most likely even raping her? This David is a man after God’s heart? Surely not!!!

Oh, but he is. And this is the miracle.

David knows his God. v. 6 He has wisdom in that secret place. He knows that God is a merciful and loving God, wanting all people to come to repentance. Not wanting anyone to perish.

Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is the one whose sins are covered—whose sins the Lord does not count against them.

v. 7 So David boldly asks God,

“Cleanse me with hyssop.”

Aside: Hyssop was the herb used in the Red Heiffer sacrifice. It has an antibacterial compound Thymol in it, and is a powerful antibiotic. It literally makes things clean.

But in the Red Heiffer sacrifice it is used to make unclean things ceremonially clean.

David to God: I am in deep anguish. I am a guilty man. My bones are crushed. (Psalms 51:8) Have you ever felt that way? God, please cleanse me of my guilt and restore me to you.

The only solution for his anguish: “Hide your face from my sins.”

“Blot out all my iniquity.”

Ps 51:10 THIS IS AN AMAZING VERSE!!!

God, create in me a clean heart. God, give me a new start—a new beginning.

v. 11 Do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Do not take me from the lamb’s book of life.

v. 12 Restore the joy of life to me.

Folks, God will do this!!! If we listen to our spiritual mentors—to our Nathans, and if we let ourselves be broken, our sins can be blotted out and joy/spiritual and emotional health can be restored to us.

The result:

51:12b-19

v. 12b A renewed willing spirit.

Some of us have had a good heart, but have lost our “willing spirit” to give our all to God. We have been traumatized. We have stopped fully trusting God. I get it. I understand it. God is not mad at you. God hopes you will follow the example of David.

v. 13 I will teach sinners. And people will be baptized.

Then we will get back in the mission—the mission to call sinners to repentance.

v. 14 I will sing of your righteousness. I will begin using my gifts to serve you again. David was gifted in singing and songwriting.

v. 15 Then I will get back to writing poetry for you, O God.

It is like Ephesians 2:9-10 We are saved by grace, not by works, but God created us to do good works. David recommitted to using his gifts to serve God.

I will serve again. I will teach again. I will create websites for you….

v. 15 David began singing the praises of God once again.

v. 16-17 Then you will return to healthy, godly motivation. No longer just going through the motions.

Because God is not interested in religion.

No, God is interested in broken and contrite hearts.

What is a broken heart like? It is a heart which is no longer fighting with the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

But it is not easy or light if you are not broken—if you do not have a heart like that of David. Some of us have not been “broken.” Some of us are still “looking for love in all the wrong places. Not ready yet.

Look to David and have your hope renewed.

Psalms 51:18-19 The final result.

Then the same worship which was not fulfilling you.

Then the form of Christianity which was no longer giving you joy will begin again to give you great satisfaction and joy.

Then the BCOC will be a city on a hill. We will be a thriving outpost of the kingdom of God.