

The Confessing Man

Jesus in the Psalms

Psalm 51

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I. Historical Setting (2 Samuel 11-12)

Psalm 50 closes with God's warning to the wicked that they repent lest God *tear them in pieces and there be none to deliver* (22). So what would such repentance look like? Like Psalm 51. God inspired David to write this psalm *to teach sinners God's ways* and model what true contrition looks like.

II. The Confessing Man

A. Prologue: Plea for Forgiveness (1-2)

When we have sinned, there is no hope other than in God's _____. There was no hope for David *in the law* or *in the sacrificial system*. Why? Because David was guilty of _____ (willful rebellion against God and His law), _____ (departure from holy character), and _____ (missing the mark as defined by God's law). David asks that God in His mercy:

- *Blot out my transgressions –*
- *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity –*
- *Cleanse me from my sin –*

B. Confession of Sin (3-6)

1. Sinful Actions (3-4)
2. Sinful Nature (5-6)

David doesn't use his *sinfulness* to excuse his *sin*; he confesses his *sinfulness* in order to take full ownership of his *sin*. He *sins because he is a sinner*; he is *not a sinner because he sins*.

C. Petition for Forgiveness and Moral Renewal (7-12)

1. Forgiveness (7-9)
2. Moral Renewal (10-12)

D. Vow to spread the good news of God's forgiving grace (13-17)

E. Epilogue: Build Zion's Walls (18-19)

David teaches a very important lesson: *nothing makes a people more vulnerable to destruction than _____ sin*. It is only when sin is dealt with faithfully that a nation can be sturdy, strong, and protected. Furthermore, unconfessed sin *undermines effective _____*. Only when sin is dealt with faithfully can true worship be offered to the Lord.

III. Dealing Faithfully with Our Sin

A. **Cry** out for God's mercy in Christ (1 John 1:9; 2:1b)

B. **Label** your sin biblically (1 John 1:8, 10)

The Apostle John warns: *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us... If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us"* (1 Jn 1:8,10). We deny our sin and our sinfulness by using *circumstances to excuse ourselves* or *euphemisms to sanitize what we've done*.

C. **Entreat** God for forgiveness and renewal (1 John 1:9)

Third, David's *petition* teaches us to *entreat God for forgiveness and renewal*. Remember John's promise: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness"* (1:9). So what does it look like to confess our sins? On the one hand, you have _____, and you need *forgiveness*. On the other hand, you are a _____ and you need to be *renewed* in heart and spirit.

D. **Adore** God publicly for His mercy (1 John 2:2)

Fourth, David's *vow* teaches us to *adore God publicly for His mercy*. The one who has been forgiven much, loves much. An awareness of the magnitude of God's forgiveness, should move us to praise God for His grace and to assist others to come to a knowledge of God's forgiving grace.

E. **Never neglect** Zion's safety (cf. Prov 28:13)

Finally, David's *epilogue* teaches us to *never neglect Zion's safety*. You are not an island; your unconfessed sin has repercussions for others. *Nothing makes a people more vulnerable to destruction than unconfessed sin*. So confess your sins to God and confess to those you have wronged. *"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy"* (Prov 28:13).

IV. Conclusion (2 Cor 5:20)

When Jesus sang this song, He did not sing it to confess His own personal sins. After all, He was *"like us in all respects, apart from sin"* (Definition of Chalcedon cf. Heb 4:15). Yet this song too is *the Word of Christ* (cf. Col 3:16). So why did He sing it? He sang it to confess our sins as His own. Remember Paul's words to the Corinthians, *"God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"* (2 Cor 5:20).