

How the Backslidden are Restored

Psalm 51: 1-19

This is a Psalm of David commonly known as his Psalm of repentance. David penned these words at a very low point in his life. He had sinned with Bathsheba and had even ordered the murder of Uriah her husband in an attempt to cover his sin. David may have thought that he had gotten by, but the Lord had witnessed it all. After God sent Nathan, the prophet, to confront him regarding his sin, David's heart was pricked and he desired repentance.

I want to remind you that David was a man after God's own heart. [Acts 13:22b – I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.](#) He was a man who had been handpicked of the Lord to reign upon the throne of Israel. He was well favored of God and yet he was susceptible to sin. This Psalm in no way advocates that we can sin and get by with it, but there is comfort found in these verses. David was a man who walked with God and yet he missed the mark, but his failure was not final. There is hope for forgiveness and restoration for those who seek it.

By the help of the Lord I want to preach on the thought: [How the Backslidden are Restored](#). No doubt there are those here today who are following at a distance, backslidden on God. It has been well said that if there was ever a time in your life that you were closer to God than you are right now, then you are backslidden. This passage reveals the process of restoration for those who are not where they need to be with God.

I. The Awareness of the Backslidden (1-2) – Before the backslidden can ever be restored there must be an awareness of their backslidden condition. Until we realize that we have fallen short of where God would have us, we will never seek restoration. This awareness is twofold. Notice first of all:

A. His Dependence (1) – David knew that he had sinned and he knew that God was aware of his sin. God alone had the power to forgive sin and provide restoration. David knew that he was literally at the mercy of God and his only hope was to receive that mercy. He pled with the Lord to offer mercy instead of the judgment he rightly deserved.

- Those who are backslidden must come to this realization. We are already aware of our sin, but we must also realize that our only hope is found in the mercy of God. Would He not be just and right to condemn us and leave us in our sin? I'm glad that we serve a God of mercy!

B. His Desire (2) – Now that David's sin was out in the open, he truly desired to be forgiven and cleansed of that sin. He was tired of bearing the burden that his sin had caused. No doubt there had been many miserable days for a man who was after God's own heart.

- There is a great truth revealed in the text, until we get tired of our sin and desire things to change, there will be no restoration. We must get to the place that we want to rid our lives of the burden of our sin. Sadly for many like David, that time doesn't come until sin is made public.

I. The Awareness of the Backslidden (1-2)

II. The Acknowledgment of the Backslidden (3-4) – Simply being aware of sin isn't enough. We must acknowledge that sin and seek restoration. A genuine acknowledgment of sin is often difficult. Consider:

A. The Despair of Sin (3) – This verse reveals a miserable man. He had confessed his sin before the Lord as well as the fact that his sin was constantly on his mind. It made no difference what David did or where he went, his sin was always there. He never found any rest or peace because of his sin. Day after day his misery and guilt remained.

- Many today are in a miserable condition. Their sin may not have been discovered as of yet, but it is ever before them. The guilt and despair of sin never goes away. It is there as a constant reminder to the child of God that they are apart from the Lord and His fellowship. There may be pleasure in sin for a moment, but the Christian is never happy dwelling in sin.

B. The Discernment of Sin (4) – No doubt David felt the guilt of the consequences of his sin. He had committed adultery, devastated a home, and was even responsible for the death of an innocent man, but he knew that his sin went much deeper than the devastation to those who were directly involved. David came to the realization that He had sinned against God. He was so overwhelmed with this that he declared that he had sinned against God and God alone. He was devastated that he had sinned against the One who had shown such favor and mercy.

- Many Christians become defensive and bitter when they are engaged in a life of sin. They know that their sin is wrong, but they are adamant that it is their life to live. The real misery in sin is not the physical or emotional effects, but the awareness that they have sinned against the Lord. When we consider all that Jesus endured for us and the love that was shown by the Godhead for undeserving sinners, it brings grief to our hearts.

- The believer has no right to live as he pleases. We are no longer our own; we have been bought with a price. We never sin in a vacuum. Our sin is always committed against our Lord regardless of what it is! Can you imagine the heartbreak that the sin of believers brings to our Lord?

III. The Appeal of the Backslidden (7-15) – Here we find David's earnest appeal unto the Lord concerning his sin. Once we become aware of our sin and acknowledge it, then we must deal with it according to God's plan. Notice what David desired of the Lord.

A. Removal of Sin (7, 9) – David desired that his sin be removed and that his life be cleansed of iniquity. He was tired of the filth and despair of sin and desired for it to be removed from his life. He knew that God was able to forgive his sin and blot it out.

- I'm sure that we've all been there at some point in life. We have allowed sin to come in and we feel dirty before the Lord because of it. God won't use a dirty vessel and we need to confess our sin so that we can be cleansed.

- Isn't it good to know that we serve a merciful Savior who is willing to forgive and forget our sins? They are removed as far as the east is from the west, buried in the sea of God's forgetfulness.

B. Restoration of Joy (8, 12) – David was no doubt filled with misery during this season in life. He no longer experienced the joy of the Lord within his heart. He lacked fellowship with the Lord. He couldn't pray; he couldn't worship; he couldn't enjoy life at all because of his sin. As his sin was revealed, it appears that is brought a sense of relief to David's heart. He wanted the sin removed so that his joy might be restored.

- Life for the believer cannot experience joy apart from the Lord. When sin is allowed to remain in our lives, fellowship with the Lord is broken. Like David we won't be able to worship, pray, or enjoy life. The Christian is never happy when sin is in his life. We may pretend that all is well, but deep down we are miserable because we lack joy.

C. Renewal of Spirit (10, 11) – David longed for the day when he would once again experience the presence of God in his life. He longed for the fellowship that they had prior to his sin. He wanted to have a heart filled with the presence and power of God rather than one filled with the guilt and despair of sin.

- If you've been saved very long I'm sure you too have experienced this burden within your spirit. The believer is never happy and content when he is apart from God. We may seek to avoid the Lord and press on in our sin, but deep down we long to have our spirit renewed so that we might have fellowship with the Lord again.

D. Return to Service (13-15) – Apparently it had been some time since David had a word for the Lord. His lips had been silent concerning God since his sin. He was no longer a testimony to others. He was no longer being used of God. He desired to return to the field of service.

- Once a Christian experiences serving the Lord, nothing else will satisfy. There is something about being of service to the King that nothing else will satisfy. Sin hinders our service and our witness. Jesus deserves our faithful devotion in service and that is only possible through a clean life.

In closing I want to say a word about **The Advancement of the Backslidden**. Notice v.4 again. God stands ready to forgive, but we must confess our sin and return to Him. Rom.5:20 – Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 1 Jn.1:9 – If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If you are at a distance, the Lord desires to restore you. Why not come as He leads? You don't have to remain away from Him.