

The Heart of God

a four-week devotional



METRO
COMMUNITY CHURCH

The Heart of God

WEEK ONE

The Heart That Welcomes

MATTHEW 11:28-30

“Come to me...”

Matthew 11:28 (CSB)

READ

Have you ever watched other people doing something and wanted to join in, but held back because you weren't sure if you were really welcome? Even when someone invited you, you still hesitated, wondering if they were just being polite. Yet once you finally stepped in, you often discovered that what you were afraid of wasn't true at all.

In these three words, Jesus is inviting us to join him. He desires us to join him where He is and in what He is doing. It should be one of the most exciting invitations we could ever hope to get. Yet we work to convince ourselves it couldn't be true. We give ourselves reasons why that invitation isn't really for us — but it is.

We are God's most prized creation. He desires an ongoing daily relationship where we join in where He is. Will we accept His invitation? We need to remove the obstacles we've placed between us and Jesus. They aren't from Him. He desires us to come to him.

REFLECT

What does this passage reveal about God’s heart?

Does this passage reveal anything about my own heart?

What is one practical step I can take today?

PRAY

Use these prompts and today’s passage in your conversation with God.

God, I praise you for...

God, forgive me for...

God, help me...

God, I will trust you...

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11:28 (CSB)

READ

While the invitation of Jesus is to all, there is a certain group that is singled out in His statement here. It is those who are “weary and burdened”. This word “weary” carries the idea of doing work that feels exhausting with no real purpose. So, you are working very hard, but it feels like it’s effort given for nothing. Being “burdened” is almost the opposite side of the coin in its meaning of having a list of rules and regulations to have to follow to the point that it feels heavy and overwhelming.

Have you ever had a job or a task at a job that felt this way? You felt like you were trying to run a marathon only to feel like it was all on a treadmill, and you didn’t really even go anywhere. You were willing to consistently show up, put in your time, do the work, give real effort, but it just felt futile and hopeless. Jesus is inviting those of us that feel this. He is inviting us to join Him where the effort and work will not be “weary and burdened” but will actually “give rest”. We will address what this rest looks like another day, but today, spend some time reflecting on the effort you are putting forth in your life.

Do you feel as though you are working very hard, putting in the hours, but it just feels like it lacks purpose and meaning? Maybe, you need to accept Jesus’

invitation and go to Him. Spend time seeking what He desires out of life. What is His will? What does it look like to do things His way? What meaning can He bring into the effort you’re willing to give?

What about the flip side? Do you feel like you just have an endless list of rules to follow? Are you constantly stressing yourself over doing everything exactly how “it’s supposed to be done”? Yes, Scripture says numerous times that God desires obedience, but are you burdening yourself with a bunch of rules and checklists rather than a relationship with the one inviting you to be with Him?

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Does this passage reveal anything about my own heart?

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God, I praise you for...

God, forgive me for...

God, help me...

God, I will trust you...

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30 (CSB)

READ

Let’s just acknowledge three things about Jesus: He made it clear that He expects obedience to God; He had anything but an easy life; and He perfectly lived His life in the rest and peace that only God can provide.

There is a “yoke” to the life that Christ invites us into. He is tethering us to Himself. That should bring comfort and rest, not anxiety and stress. God perfects His power in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). He doesn’t invite us into a task that is on us to carry the load. He invites us into a life that He has provided; works He has prepared for us; and fruit He desires to produce in us (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:10; Gal. 5:22-23). All we need to do is walk side by side with Him through the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:25). Make no mistake that this doesn’t just happen or come easily. It takes work, but it isn’t meaningless or purposeless work. Jesus’ life wasn’t easy, but it gave the world the greatest purpose - an eternal relationship with our Creator.

In our day to day lives, there is a great deal of wisdom in finding a mentor to help you navigate whatever path we have chosen for our career, family, marriage, etc. Wouldn’t it be just as wise to go to the One who lived this life, but did it in perfection. Jesus perfectly balanced walking with the Father, experiencing all the brokenness the world can bring and doing it in complete rest and peace.

If we desire that out of our lives, wouldn't we want to go to the One who knows how to do that? Here's the amazing thing, Jesus invites us to learn from Him. He desires to teach us how to navigate our Christian life in obedience to Him while casting all of our anxiety on Him (1 Pet. 5:7). We can learn from Him through the biblical accounts found in the Gospels. He will use His Word to teach us how to live the life He desires for us. Will we accept this invitation He has given us? He wants us to walk with Him and learn from Him.

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“Because I am lowly and humble in heart...”

Matthew 11:29b (CSB)

READ

How we are invited to participate in an activity with someone, has a lot to do with whether we would be willing to accept or not. The disposition of the invite could make all the difference in whether we will accept it. If the invitee carries a disposition of insincerity, pride, control or obligation, we may be less likely to want to participate.

As Jesus invites us into His rest and to learn from Him, we should take some time to reflect on the disposition He has within that invitation. He lets us know that his invitation is through the lens of His heart. The core qualities of His heart within His invitation are, lowly and humble. His invitation doesn't come through the lens of self-assertiveness or pride stating that He's the greatest and we should want to learn from Him. No, it comes through the lens of meekness and humility.

The Greek word for lowly carries the idea of being meek, gentle and the disposition of mildness. It even has a level of understanding that this doesn't come from the person themselves, but it is almost divine in nature. Jesus' disposition isn't one of pointing a finger or shaking a fist, it is more of the idea of opening a hand to take. Anyone that has ever had to move some furniture or carry a heavy object can understand this. You may not be looking forward to figuring out how to carry it all on your own.

Then, you look up and see someone asking if you need some help moving the item. They have invited themselves to be a part of helping carry the load you need to endure. Jesus is doing a very similar thing here. His invitation is sitting gently and in humility. Are we willing to trust him with the burden we are carrying? If we are weary, burdened and looking for some rest, we will find a very gently hand opened asking if we would like some help. We have to be willing to hand it over and release control and learn from the One that already knows the road ahead.

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There are different kinds of rests that a person could desire. A new mother could be desiring a full night of sleep that has been hindered for days as a result of a newborn. Multiple double shifts leading to overtime could be met with a strong desire just to have a day off. Someone might just want a short reprieve from being the caretaker for a family member that can no longer fully care for themselves. All of these desires for rest are understandable, but this is not the rest that is described within this passage.

We’ve already looked at the truth that God isn’t inviting us into a life of ease. There is real work and purpose to what He is welcoming us into. The people that desire to accept this invite are definitely weary and burdened from the work they have been tasked with. However, this rest is not absent from works to be done. It is something different.

This rest is an invitation into finding a calm for your soul in the midst of everything that is still happening in your life. That child may still not go to sleep. That next day may still have more shifts. Your family member may still need you to care for them. BUT, Jesus is right there present in the midst of all of it. We find a dwelling place, a home, in the middle of the very things that are causing the weariness and burden.

He invites us into His presence. It doesn't matter what chaos might be around the corner in our lives; we can find calm in the midst of the storm, because Jesus is in it with us. His presence is in us, because He is in us through the Holy Spirit. Will we accept the invitation to rest in His presence? His presence gives rest to the weary. We may still be navigating the storms, but within it, we can say,

“It is well with my soul.”

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The Heart of God

WEEK TWO

The Heart That Purifies

ISAIAH 6:1-8

1 PETER 1:14-16

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphim were standing above him; they each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another: Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Armies; his glory fills the whole earth.”

Isaiah 6:1-3 (CSB)

READ

There are two aspects to God's holiness: his uniqueness (Is. 1:3) and his purity or goodness (James 1:13; Job 34:12). The Hebrew word “holy” means “marked off” or “withdrawn from ordinary use”. Literally the idea is to be “set apart”. When you combine these two aspects you get the understanding that God is set apart from all impurity. He is unstained from sin and wickedness. He is pure. He is perfect. Many have suggested that this could be the most important single attribute of God. His holiness is what makes His love perfect. His holiness is what makes His justice perfect. His holiness is what makes His truth perfect. There is no stain, imperfection or impurity in God because He is holy.

We see here that the seraphim are declaring the holiness of God. In Hebrew, repeating a word signifies great importance. From the reading, there is also an understanding that this phrase is being repeated more than just stating it one time. Within the throne room of God, there is an exclamation of God's holiness over and over again. All of heaven takes great effort to reveal and proclaim the separated, unstained, exalted, and power of God's holiness.

As His glory extends from His throne room into all the earth. His holiness stretches with it. All morality stems from the holiness of God. He is pure and whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and commendable is from Him (Phil. 4:8). His moral law is extended from His presence in heaven to his presence on earth. While the seraphim declare His glory and purity within the throne room, the universe declares His glory through the expanse of the universe (Ps. 19:1).

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“Then I said: Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Armies.”

Isaiah 6:5 (CSB)

READ

The holiness of God should reveal one core truth about each and every one of us – we are a sinful people. Later on in the book of Isaiah (64:6), he even compares our righteous acts to God’s. He lets us know that all of our righteous acts can, at best, be polluted garments. While God is completely unstained, we cannot help but be stained by sin, and in turn, everything we do from ourselves will have the stain of sin attached to it.

We see Isaiah having this realization as he is in the presence of a holy God. He uses the Hebrew word “oy” here. That might even be a sound that we would use in the same instance. It is a cry of grief and despair. “Ruined” here carries the idea of being “cut off” or “to perish”. The holiness of God isn’t causing him to work harder or try harder not to sin; Isaiah is understanding how utterly separated he is from who God is. He understands in this encounter with God that there is literally nothing he can do to make himself clean enough. His shepherding heart for the people of Israel includes them into this statement. He and everyone he shepherds are desperately unclean in comparison to God’s holiness.

Let’s understand that Isaiah is a prophet of God. He is a spiritual leader of the people of Israel. Most would look at him as someone to mirror as he would live out God’s standard. Within that understanding, as Isaiah sees the purity of God, it causes his lips to speak of the impurity of himself and the people he leads. Initially, the holiness of God doesn’t cause us to be comforted, it should humble us into confession. It should cause our lips to speak the truth of ourselves and our actions.

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Isaiah 6:1-4 (CSB)

READ

When we encounter the holiness of God, it should reveal our sinfulness; however, we need to recognize something critically important in this moment. Isaiah was allowed into God’s presence before his sin was made clean. It is a simple truth that can easily be overlooked because of the awesomeness of this encounter. God has always desired us to be in His presence. He desires a relationship with us. Yes, that relationship must be founded on the understanding that He is God and we are not, but He does desire it all the same.

It would have made sense that a holy God would separate himself from the sinful people of Israel. It would have made sense that God just acted within His justice and wrath, but instead, he gives Isaiah eyes to see Him in all of his holiness and purity. God desires for us to know Him and to have a relationship with Him. He reveals Himself to us as we are, but with the desire to take us to someplace new (2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 1:17-19). He wants us to experience His holiness, glory and Kingship to give us the proper eyes to express through our lips who He is. He desires us to live out His righteousness, but we cannot do that if we have not come in contact with His holiness. Allowing us to see who He is should cause us to experience a moment that will change us now, but continue to change us into eternity.

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“Then one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a glowing coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said: Now that this has touched your lips, your iniquity is removed and your sin is atoned for.”

Isaiah 6:6-8 (CSB)

READ

When we realize the purity of God’s holiness and the depths of our sin, it should reveal how utterly hopeless it is for us to even consider being holy ourselves. God doesn’t leave us in a hopeless state like that though. He is the God who makes a way, and He has a way for us. In this passage, we see the seraph touch the lips of Isaiah. This action is God’s visible way of revealing that Isaiah’s sins have been atoned for. Atonement is simply the idea that the wrong has been made right. There has been a restoration in a relationship or making amends. The literally idea is that of “covering”. Notice that Isaiah did nothing to cause this. He realized his sin, and God provided the means for the relationship to be restored. It was out of God’s grace that He provided atonement and restoration. The guilt of Isaiah’s sin would no longer be a barrier to a relationship with God.

The picture of Jesus Christ as atonement for sin should be clear through this Old Testament encounter with God. If you want an amazing parallel of righteousness, sin, and atonement, Romans 3:23-25 provides an amazing compliment to what we see in Isaiah. All have sinned and fall short of God’s glory; Jesus redeems us through His grace; and He provides His own blood on the Cross as the atonement to restore our relationship with God. He does all of this so that we would be seen by God the Father as justified – “declared innocent”. Our guilt of sin is ultimately atoned through the shed blood of Jesus and our faith in Him as Savior and Lord. He paved the way for us to have a relationship and a friendship with God. He is completely holy and pure, but we are welcomed into His presence through the sacrifice of His Son.

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“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.”

1 Peter 1:14-16 (CSB)

READ

It would be easy to end our week on the idea that God has provided a way of atonement for our sins; so that we can have a relationship with Him, but that wouldn't take us to action in our relationship with Jesus. What do we do with this righteousness that God has given to us? We obey as His children.

We all had a former way of living. We lived in ignorance and gave ourselves over to gratification of any desire we longed to pursue. That is no longer what we are called to do. Now, we pursue holiness in all of our conduct. Just as God is set apart in purity and uniqueness, He desires us to live in holiness through the life He has given us. We allow God to begin to transform us into His likeness by the renewing of our minds (Phil. 3:21; Rom. 12:1-2).

Let's be clear, we all struggle with any number of sins, and we will struggle with sin to some degree until the day we enter into the presence of our Savior. That being said, we should pursue holiness even within this life we've been given. We will never be completely unstained by sin in our lifetime, but we can pursue the righteousness of God every day. He cleansed us from all unrighteousness through the blood He shed on the Cross (1 Jn. 1:9). Our response should be to walk in that righteousness that He provided. Is our pursuit moving towards our newness and holiness found in Jesus, or do we find ourselves continuing to desire to gratify the fleshly desires as we did in our former ignorance (Rom. 13:14)?

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The Heart of God

WEEK THREE

The Heart That Corrects

HEBREWS 12:1-13

“Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, so that you won’t grow weary and give up. In struggling against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”

Hebrews 12:2-4

READ

Let’s be honest about the Christian life. It is not a life of ease. It can be a difficult life. It is a life that pursues after holiness and purity rather than the pleasures of this world. Jesus understood the weight of sin. He hostility from sinners. He endured the shame that came with hanging on the Cross. He endured throughout His life to maintain sinlessness. He resisted against the temptation of sin all the way until He shed His blood for the sins of the world.

As we face the struggles, trials and temptations of this world, where do we look? Where is our focus? Is it on the pain we are enduring? Is it on the pleasure we desire? Is it on pleasing people rather than God? Is it focused and fixed on Jesus Christ?

As we run the race of our life, our focus should be fixed on the One who already ran the race perfectly. Jesus is the One who will mature us as we endure within the struggle. When we remember all that Jesus endured for our sake, it should cause us to avoid growing weary and giving up. We might face some criticism or cynicism from others, but we will not all have to endure to the point of shedding blood as Christ did. However, as we endure through the perfecting of our faith, we must ask ourselves if we are willing to deny ourselves and take up our Cross (Luke 9:23).

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God, I praise you for...

God, forgive me for...

God, help me...

God, I will trust you...

“And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons: My son, do not take the Lord’s discipline lightly or lose heart when you are reproved by him, for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and punishes every son he receives. Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline?”

Hebrews 12:5-7

READ

Notice that the word “discipline” is italicized in the above passage. The Greek word, “paideia”, carries the idea of “child training”. It is the idea of developing the physical, mental and moral training of a child into an adult. The author of Hebrews is desiring to reveal the son to father relationship between us and God, and how He interacts with us to develop us into the likeness of His only begotten Son, Jesus (Phil. 1:6).

When God the Father steps in to train us, He does so as a good, loving Father who desires to see His heirs become all that they were meant to be. He corrects us, because He loves us.

Oftentimes, we can lose heart or grow discouraged when we know that God has reproved (found fault) us. I think that happens normally within the parent and child relationship. However, we must understand that any correction, training or punishment is coming as a result of His love for His child to become mature and ready to do good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

One thought in all of this might be that God couldn’t want to actually punish, correct or train His children. He is too loving for that. We need to remember how He interacted with His Son, Jesus. Earlier in Hebrews (5:7-8), we see that Jesus learned obedience from what He suffered. As Jesus was enduring towards the Cross, the Father was still training Him into full maturity. In that perfecting, Jesus became the source of salvation for those that would obey Him. Are we willing to endure suffering, training and correction that in our perfecting and maturing others might find salvation?

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“But if you are without discipline — which all receive — then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had human fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn’t we submit even more to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but he does it for our benefit, so that we can share his holiness.”

Hebrews 12:8-10

READ

If you met the greatest father that was on planet earth, you would still feel his tension in the discipline, training and punishment of his children. He would be balancing the fear of how he’s perceived by others; doing it with the focus of the child’s benefit; always stepping in justly with completely accurate information; and so on and so on. The balancing act for a good father is real for one who desires to raise his children to be moral members of society; let alone, godly children of God.

God the Father doesn’t feel this tension. He has only one aim in any discipline, training and punishment moments - sharing in His holiness. We’ve already looked at the perfect purity of God, and our vast shortcomings in regards to it. At the point of salvation, we are made into a new creature. We are born again. He then works to conform us into the image of His Son. As we walk open-handed with the Father in this sanctification process (the theological term for the process of being made holy), we should begin to understand that all of the shaping and molding causes us to look more like Him every single day. As we begin to look more and more like Him, others will begin to see the transformation in our lives. It will no longer be words that we speak, but a life that is easily seen.

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“No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Hebrews 12:11

READ

The word “discipline” here has the same meaning as before. It carries the idea of “child training”. It takes a special kind of person to enjoy the practice of an activity. We all enjoy being great at any activity we choose to endeavor, but becoming great at it is another thing entirely. To be great at anything generally requires time and experience to become a leader within it. Within school, we generally don’t remember the teachers that were apathetic about schoolwork and work ethic, we generally remember the teachers that pushed and stretched us to be more than what we even thought we could be. We still might even refer to that class as the hardest class we ever had, but it caused us to grow and learn about ourselves just as much as the topic at hand.

Within a given sport, we might have had a coach that expected perfection within a play design. She may have demanded maximum effort every single day. He might have pushed us to be in the absolute best shape of our life. It would have been grueling to push and develop our bodies into the level of performance that was demanded. We might have considered quitting on multiple occasions as the same play was run again and again to get it perfect. However, as we began to win games and find success in the games, we would have felt the fruit of accomplishment and achievement.

The same is true in our walk with God. He is going to train us and mature us to accomplish the good works He has for us (Eph. 2:10; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

There will definitely be days in our journey where we feel the pain of that training and development. God does it with the end result in mind of producing peaceful fruit of righteousness. Right living (righteousness) brings peace with God and others as it produces spiritual fruit in our life. Are we willing to walk through the training necessary to have the relationship with God and others that is produced as a result?

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“Therefore, strengthen your tired hands and weakened knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated but healed instead.”

Hebrews 12:12-13

READ

We started off this whole week with the understanding that Jesus endured difficulties in His life, and we should expect the same as people who follow Him and run our race with our eyes fixed on Him. Over time, even the most enduring Christian can have hands that have grown weary in helping; knees that have grown weak in praying; paths that have felt difficult to navigate with certainty; and legs that have grown feeble in walking. It could be church hurt, persecution, apathy, cynicism, loss, worry and the like. Any given thing can cause these seasons in our walk with God. What do we do when these moments show up?

Honestly, this is where we need others running alongside of us, because, the answer lies within our interactions with others. This phrasing is most likely pulled from Isaiah 35. In remembering our salvation and reminding others of theirs, we will encourage the exhausted and strengthen the feeble. As we strive for holiness and righteousness in cooperation with God to look more like Jesus, we will speak to those who are worrisome and anxious to take courage and fear not. Those whose legs have grown weak will find strength again to rejoice. Voices that have had no words will find words of hope and purpose. There will be provided a clear highway of holiness to travel where the righteous will find joy and gladness. Will we be willing to strive for holiness even when it is hard? Do we have others around us that can strengthen us when we grow weary? As we run our race, we need to lay aside sin, allow correction in training, endure through the training, remember that Jesus endured through it all, and find others to run with us.

REFLECT

What does this passage reveal about God’s heart?

Does this passage reveal anything about my own heart?

What is one practical step I can take today?

PRAY

Use these prompts and today’s passage in your conversation with God.

God, I praise you for...

God, forgive me for...

God, help me...

God, I will trust you...

The Heart of God

WEEK FOUR

The Heart That Restores

2 SAMUEL 12:5-9, 13

PSALM 51:1-4

PSALM 51:7-19

“David was infuriated with the man and said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! Because he has done this thing and shown no pity, he must pay four lambs for that lamb.” Nathan replied to David, “You are the man! This is what the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from Saul. I gave your master’s house to you and your master’s wives into your arms, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not enough, I would have given you even more. Why then have you despised the LORD’s command by doing what I consider evil? You struck down Uriah the Hethite with the sword and took his wife as your own wife—you murdered him with the Ammonite’s sword. David responded to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Then Nathan replied to David, “And the LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die.”

2 Samuel 12:5-9, 13

READ

Last week, we learned that God corrects those that He loves. We see this week that restoration starts in a place where loving confrontation takes place. God loved David enough to expose the private sin in his life. God loved David and gave him so much blessing. David used that blessing to sin against God and others. There were going to be consequences to the sin that David had committed, but God desired to restore David back to a right relationship in the midst of all of that.

Where might God be confronting us with sin in our life? It could be visible and public for everyone to see, and it might be something that we think is private and not really hurting anyone. Either way, God desires to restore us to a right relationship with Himself that is in pursuit of holiness. Is He using others in our lives to expose this sin? Is He using His Word? Even the best of us will fall into temptation, and we need to understand that, in His love, He will always work to restore us.

THE HEART THAT RESTORES · DAY 1
RESTORATION BEGINS WITH LOVING CONFRONTATION

REFLECT

What does this passage reveal about God's heart?

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“Be gracious to me, God, according to your faithful love; according to your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion. Completely wash away my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me. Against you —you alone—I have sinned and done this evil in your sight. So you are right when you pass sentence; you are blameless when you judge.”

Psalm 51:1-4

READ

If you go all the way back to the Garden of Eden, the first reaction to God confronting sin was met with blameshifting. Eve blamed the serpent and Adam blamed the woman and God. Sin creates a natural reaction within us to avoid taking ownership for the decisions we’ve made. There are always consequences to sin, but how we react to the confrontation of our sin will reveal our hearts in the midst of the restoration and navigating the consequences.

Here, David, owns his sin. He acknowledges that it is his rebellion specifically against God. He accepts the consequences and calls God just, or right, in placing them on him. David takes as much ownership as you can take in admitting the sin you’ve committed. He owns the sin, accepts the consequences, and even calls the Judge just in the judgment. How many of us are willing to do all of that rather than walk in entitlement, blame shifting and defensiveness?

David moves further though and requests grace from God. Not because he deserves it. No, grace can only be given to those who don’t deserve it. He requests that God remove this sin and in a few verses; he requests that God basically start over new and fresh with him. God will follow through with us as He did with David, but we need to start in a place of owning where we diverted from God’s holiness.

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“Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Turn your face away from my sins and blot out all my guilt. God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore the joy of your salvation to me, and sustain me by giving me a willing spirit.”

Psalms 51:7-12

READ

If you want an interesting Bible word study to pursue, check out the word “hyssop”. We don’t have the space to deep dive in it here, but it is fascinating how often it shows up in the idea of being cleansed and washed clean. We even see it in the Cross narrative where Jesus is taking away the sin of the world. Here, David is using it within this same mindset.

As he is cleansed, he feels the weight of his sin being removed, and this creates a change within his body and spirit - he has joy and gladness within himself again; his spirit is renewed; his bones rejoice; his heart is cleansed; the presence of the Holy Spirit is realized; the joy of salvation is restored; and he has new spirit of willingness to obey.

As we confess our sins to God and own them, He is faithful to forgive us and restore us (1 Jn 1:9). The sin is removed. Live in the restoration from God and pursue His holiness once again. Do not shrink back from a God with a welcoming heart. Lean back into the arms of the God who restores.

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God, I will trust you...

“Then I will teach the rebellious your ways, and sinners will return to you.”

Psalm 51:13

READ

As we are willing to share our life stories with one another, it doesn't take long to realize that every single person has had some difficult seasons. Our difficult seasons might be of diagnosis, loss and grief, interpersonal relationships, and sin. Clearly, the one focused within this passage is sin.

We should find it absolutely amazing that we have a God that doesn't even waste our rebellion. He uses it. He allows it to be part of our story with a God that welcomes, purifies, corrects and restores. We have faith in a God that doesn't try to hide the moments in our lives where we were rebellious to him and His holiness. We have One who welcomes us to talk about it and share it with others. What could cause shame, fear, anxiety, stress and separation becomes the very tool that tells others about a God who sees our sin; loves us enough to tell us where we're sinning; and then provided the way of restoration through His Son, Jesus. That's the gospel! That's the good news!

Revisit your story with Jesus. Remind yourself of who you were and what you've become with Jesus. What has He saved you from? What has He transformed within you? This is the power within your testimony. You are giving witness to what God has done in you. You may have left a part of your story in the past as dead, and a part of your life wasted. Don't let it stay there. God is willing to bring it to life and use it for His glory as you share how He redeemed and restored you. This gives us a voice to talk about our Savior and King with others who do not know Him yet.

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“Save me from the guilt of bloodshed, God — God of my salvation — and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; you are not pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God. In your good pleasure, cause Zion to prosper; build the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Psalm 51:14-19

READ

Yesterday, you were challenged to revisit your past and remind yourself of what you have become in pursuing holiness with God. Today, we should spend some time in specific praise, worship and celebration. The realization of the fact that God saved us from our sin should cause us to explode in gratitude and praise. David’s praise filled response caused him to begin singing. That seems to be an appropriate response for a man who was a musician and song writer. Ours may not be the exact same.

You might express it in another manner. It could be anything from listening to music to writing your praise out and anything in between. Ultimately, what shows others of our praise, worship and celebration of what God has done is how we live our lives. We will give him the bull of our praise (Hosea 14:2). The righteous sacrifice that we offer now is no longer a bull on the altar, but ourselves as a living sacrifice willing to surrender our bodies in service to the One who gave us everything (Rom. 12:1-2). Is your worship revealing the heart of a person restored by God from the sin we once pursued?

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