



SOJOURNER PSALMS

“Repentance”

Psalm 51

Sunday, March 17, 2019

1. Sunday Summary: This morning we began a new sermon series for Lent that we’re calling *Sojourner Psalms*. Why a series on the Psalms? Because the Psalms train us well in two essential Lenten practices: prayer and repentance. This morning we examined Psalm 51 and the practice of repentance. Repentance is the fuse that detonates the goodness of the gospel in lives. As Martin Luther tells us in the first of his 95 Theses, repentance is intended to be the entire life of the believer. It’s how we grow deeply in our faith. But according to Scripture there are two kinds of repentance – one that leads to salvation and life, and one that brings only death (2 Corinthians 7:10). The kind that leads to death is a repentance where we feel sorry for the consequences of our sin – that our sins have broken a relationship we value, or because we have a sense of guilt. We’ll then try to show just how sorry we are, and make it up to the person we harmed in some way... or even to God. This is what Judas did. The kind of repentance that leads to life, recognizes that there is nothing we can do to atone for our sin, and the only place we can turn is to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what Peter did. This kind of repentance leads to freedom, and joy. Why freedom and joy? Because when we’re honest about our sins, and own up to them before God, we no longer have to hide or defend ourselves. But how do we get there? 3 Things:

- a) Stop dealing with behaviours and get to the heart of the matter – deal with the sin under the sin. That sin is always idolatry; something in our lives that is more important than God, and that something is usually our own desires and ego. If we don’t start to look at that we’ll always be stuck in sin, because we’re not getting to the root of the problem
- b) Recognize that our sins are chiefly against the Lord – it’s not that we don’t sin against others, but we’d never sin against others if we didn’t first break the first commandment – to have no other gods before the Lord.
- c) Understand the depth of the mercy and love of the Lord – we won’t truly be honest with God, and turn to him in repentance, and experience the joy and freedom that comes until we see the great depth of his Love for us. And where do we see that most clearly? In Jesus Christ, who lived the life we should have lived, and died the death we should have died. He took our place. To know that melts our hearts, and deepens our friendship with him.

2. Connecting Questions: (Interactive, life sharing, thought & feeling type stuff)

- Martin Luther’s first of his 95 Theses was, “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said “Repent,” he intended that the entire life of believers should be repentance.” What do you think about that statement? Does it seem bleak to you that all of life should be repentance? Why or why not?

- How often do you spend time truly being honest with God? What keeps you from repenting?
- Which way of repenting is most natural for you – Judas’ way or Peter’s?
- What insights from today’s message were most helpful for you?

3. Truth Questions: (What does the Bible say?)

- Think together about some other passages that deal with the topic of repentance. Can you think of any? What might they add to the conversation?
- Read 1 John 1:8-9 together as a group. What does John mean that, “he is faithful and *just* and will forgive our sins.” What does God’s forgiveness have to do with his justice?
- Read Psalm 32: 1-5. What might this passage add to the conversation about repentance? What do you think the Psalmist means by “you forgave the guilt of my sin?” Isn’t “guilt of my sin” sort of redundant? Discuss.

4. Formation Questions: (Taking it further, How does the Truth change the way I live?)

- What concrete steps can you make to sink the gospel truth that we dealt with today deeper into your life throughout this week? What will you do about the message you heard today?
- How can you help repentance become a joy in your life that becomes a daily practice, rather than something you do grudgingly and only when you’re feeling particularly guilty?

5. Resources for Further Study:

1. Peterson, Eugene. *Answering God: The Psalms As Tools For Prayer*. (Harper One: New York, NY. 1989).
2. Brueggemann, Walter. *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*. (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, MN. 1995).