

Subject: *Change My Heart, O God*

Scripture: *Psalms 51:1-19*

Lord, send a revival and let it begin in me. Leonard Ravenhill wrote a book entitled, *Why Revival Tarries*. Here's why...because we are not willing to do what it takes to have revival, and what it takes is personal soul-searching, prayer, confession, and repentance. We are going to take David as an example of real revival. If you notice the subtitle of Psalm 51: "A psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba." The story of David's sin of adultery, the attempt to cover it up, and Nathan's message to him about a year later are found in 2 Samuel 11-12.

If you have ever sinned, this message is for you. If you have ever disappointed God and the people you care about, this message is for you. If you know that you're not as close to God as you used to be and not as close to God as you want to be, this message is for you. If you want real personal revival, this is how to do it. Let's look at David's prayer and apply it right now.

A PRAYER FOR COMPASSION (vs. 1)

David asked for God's compassion, mercy, and loving kindness. David knew that he didn't deserve God's forgiveness, and so he cried out for God's mercy. David's sin of adultery and the murder were not sins of ignorance, but presumptuous sins, and there was no provision in the law for these sins to be forgiven. David knew that he deserved the death penalty. His only hope was the mercy of God.

A PRAYER FOR CLEANSING (vs. 2, 7)

David asked God to do what only He can do, and that is to clean him up from sin. What dirt is to the body, sin is to the soul, but there is a difference. I can wash my body with soap and get the dirt off. I can't wash my soul and get the sin out. Only God can wash away my sin. Sin leaves a stain on the soul that only God can get out. In verse 7, David prays: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." In Leviticus 14, hyssop was a shrub that the priests dipped in blood and sprinkled seven times on a leper to make him clean. Sin is a filthy and foul disease that only God can cleanse.

A PRAYER OF CONFESSION (vs. 3-6)

David called sin by its name. He didn't pull any punches. David called it transgression because he stepped over the line and was way out of bounds. He called it iniquity because it was perverted and crooked. He called it sin because he missed the mark and the standard God set. David said that he had sinned against God. He sinned against Bathsheba, against her husband Uriah, against the nation, but what was even worse, he sinned against God. Sin is offensive to God. He didn't try to justify himself or blame someone else. His main concern was that God be justified. ***Proverbs 28:13*** *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* To confess is to agree with God and to say the same thing that He says about sin. ***1 John 1:9*** *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

In verse 5, David is not excusing his sin; he is explaining his sin. He knew the problem was down deep in his own heart. The heart of the problem was the problem of his heart. God looks for truth in the inward parts, but David had been deceptive. God gives wisdom, but

David had been foolish. By nature we are all deceptive and foolish. **Jeremiah 17:9** *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

A PRAYER FOR CHANGE (vs. 8-12)

This is the heart of David's prayer. He not only wanted for God to forgive him, but he pleaded for God to change him. He wasn't looking for a get out of jail free card. He wanted God to make him a new man on the inside.

A PRAYER OF COMMITMENT (vs. 13-15)

David made a promise to obey God. At one time David was known as the sweet singer of Israel, but now his songs were silent. He had nothing to sing about. His joy was gone. He was crushed by guilt and shame. He lost the joy of his salvation. But David promised that if God would cleanse and restore him, he would teach God's ways and sing God's praise. This he did (for example, Psalm 32 and other psalms).

A PRAYER OF CONTRITION (vs. 16-17)

The word contrition means brokenness. David knew that going through the motions of worship and giving animal sacrifices is not enough. He knew that God is looking for humility and brokenness. David was truly a broken man, but that's not bad, that's good because God will bless a broken heart. **Isaiah 57:15** *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* **Psalms 138:6** *Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.* Do you know what stops revival? One word...pride.

A PRAYER OF CONFIDENCE (vs. 18-19)

David is confident that God will make things right again. He knows that his sin has not only hurt him, but it has hurt the nation, but he is confident that God will bless the nation again. He is confident that God will be pleased with their worship again. When we sin, our sin not only affects and hurts us, but it hurts everyone around us. It hurts our family and our church. Years ago a newspaper editor asked his readers to submit their opinions to this question: "What's wrong with the world?" One honest response came from a Christian writer: "Dear Editor, you ask what's wrong with the world? I am. Faithfully Yours, G. K. Chesterton."

Our invitation song is *Come Just As You Are*, and that song is good news, but remember this. We come to God as we are, but He doesn't leave us as we are. He changes us and cleanses us and makes us what we ought to be.