

Create in Me a Clean Heart

Psalm 51

June 25, 2016

Today

Anyone who knows anything about gardening – knows a little something about weeds. Your intent is for a beautiful and fruitful garden. You plant carefully and gently. You water, you feed.... Then one day you notice something you had not intended. Weeds. Weeds are aggressive. They are crafty. They are impersonators and impostors. They wrap their roots around your precious plants choking out their life, stealing their water and nutrients. Weeds are bad news. You realize that you must do something drastic. The weeds must be pulled out by their roots. This is no gentle task. If they come out easily, you just have to pull. If they don't, you have to get out your hoe, shovel, pick, snips – whatever tools you'll need for your battle with the weeds. You know before pulling one weed that there may be casualties, the whole garden will suffer, but the weeds MUST GO.

A surgeon tells a man that he has cancer. It's aggressive, invasive and is slowly killing him. If he does nothing he WILL die, but currently the man lives a relatively pain free life.... The doctor recommends surgery. It is equally aggressive and invasive. There will be pain involved – maybe weeks or months of pain. But it must be done to get all the disease. In order to live the man **must agree with the surgeon's diagnosis AND have surgery**. Afraid of the cost, the man goes for a second, third or fourth opinion. He is looking for someone – anyone – to tell him that the surgeon is wrong – he's fine, nothing to worry about. When he finds that person, and he will, the man breathes a sigh of relief. I'm FINE! There's NOTHING WRONG WITH ME!!! He goes home and slowly, but surely grows weaker and weaker – still believing that there's nothing wrong, until one day there he is DEAD.

If you want, you can find people, other Christians even, who will tell you you're just fine. You might even tell them they're just fine, too. Your sin is not all that bad. You certainly don't kill people....

We have had thousands of years to perfect sin. As I said last week, we love the mud. We have become blind to the truth of our condition. We do not take sin seriously. We're used to it. We still look at the devil as the guy in the red pajamas holding a pitchfork.

We really have been seduced into thinking that what we do is not all that bad. We say we've made "mistakes" or "poor choices", and then we add: "but I really am a good person at heart". Rarely, if ever do we admit to ourselves let alone other people that we sin because WE ARE SINNERS.

My True Condition:

- **Genesis 6:5** - Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
- **Isaiah 64:6-7** - For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷ And there is no one who calls on Thy name, who arouses himself to take hold of Thee;
- **Jeremiah 17:9-10** - The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? ¹⁰ "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.
- **Hebrews 3:12-13** - Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," lest anyone of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

The crucial point to recognize is that SIN IS MUCH MORE THAN A SERIES OF UNRELATED ACTIONS. It reflects a state of the heart and mind - Hopeless, helpless with no ability or desire to be any different.

One of the finest examples of the seriousness of sin can be found in **2 Samuel 11 and 12**. It is the story of David and Bathsheba.

- David stays home from the war – he's bored
- David sees Bathsheba and **lusts** after her
- Sends for her and **sleeps** with her
- She becomes pregnant
- David seeks to cover this up by sending for her husband (Uriah – one of David's mighty men) and "**rewarding**" him by telling him go home and be with his wife.
- Uriah doesn't feel right about going home to be with his wife while his men are enduring hardships, so he sleeps at the gate.

Okay, THAT DIDN'T WORK!!!

- Before Uriah heads back up to the front, David writes a letter to the commander instructing him to place Uriah in the heat of the battle and then withdraw the men so that Uriah will be **killed**. David takes a hit out on one of his bravest soldiers in order to cover up his sin.
- Uriah is killed
- After the appropriate time of mourning Bathsheba comes to live in the palace.
- David in his sin-warped mind thought that he had gotten away with it and he may have even forgotten about the whole mess.

But God did not forget.

- God sends the prophet Nathan to have a little conversation with David.
- Nathan tells David a story about a rich man who takes a precious lamb from a poor man to feed an unexpected guest even though the rich man has many sheep and the poor man only has one.
- David is rightly incensed!! He is angry!! This rich man should die and at the very least he should be required to repay the poor man 4x the worth of the lamb.

Can you see the seriousness of sin here?? One sin **LUST** led to another sin **ADULTRY**, which led to another sin, **DECEIT**, which led to another sin **MURDER** and above that, sin had so blinded David that he did not understand that the story Nathan was telling was about him.

That's what sin does! It entangles and wraps itself into our lives until we can no longer see it for what it is – we are blinded regarding our true condition.

Nathan had to actually say to David – The rich man in his story is YOU!! It's YOU who abused your power. It's YOU who stole another man's wife. It's YOU who killed Uriah.

Consequences:

- **2 Samuel 12:7-14** - Nathan then said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ 'I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! ⁹ 'Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. ¹⁰ 'Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' ¹¹ "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes, and give *them* to your companion, and he shall lie with your wives in broad daylight. ¹² 'Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.'" ¹³ Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. ¹⁴ "However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die."
- **2 Samuel 16:20-22** - Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your advice. What shall we do?" ²¹ And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father. The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened." ²² So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

We don't have to read the Bible to understand this in our own lives. When we have sinned against someone or someone has sinned against us there is an **instant barrier**. It is the same with God. When we sin a barrier instantly goes up.

- **Isaiah 59:1-2** - Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

God hasn't gone anywhere (in fact He is the one searching for us), we are the ones hiding and running from Him because we know there is something terribly wrong. If we turn around (meaning of repent) the relationship is restored. It is only when there is **repentance and forgiveness** that the barrier disappears.

- **1 John 1:8-9** - If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If, however we ignore the sense that something is terribly wrong and continue down the same road of sin, our senses eventually become dulled and we no longer see sin for what it really is.

Why is it so important that we turn from our sins? Because sins blinds and builds walls and ultimately destroys and repentance is the only cure – Repentance and is the only way to restore the relationship.

- **Psalm 51:1-17** -*For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.* Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight, so that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, and blameless when Thou dost judge. ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,

and in sin my mother conceived me. ⁶ Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom. ⁷ Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸ Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which Thou hast broken rejoice. ⁹ Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me away from Thy presence, and do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit. ¹³ *Then* I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners will be converted to Thee. ¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; *then* my tongue will joyfully sing of Thy righteousness. ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Thy praise. ¹⁶ For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

TAKE AWAY

Sin is serious business to God and He never intended for us to know anything about it. He told Adam and Eve to stay away from the only place they would acquire such knowledge. **(God not only doesn't want us to drink the kool-aid He doesn't want us to anywhere near the cooler – because He knows what sin does.)** They disobeyed and immediately there were consequences – SHAME, FEAR, BLAME – Broken relationship. The rest of the Bible is the record/history of the depths of human depravity and the lengths God will go to save.

Make no mistake, Satan is your enemy and he hates YOU with every fiber of his being. He wants to destroy you now and for eternity. Why? Because you are so loved by God and Satan hates anything God loves.

- **John 3:16** - For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

God has provided everything we need in our fight against self. We are no longer controlled by the temptations of our past. We are new creatures because of what Jesus did on the cross. And we have been promised that He who has begun a good work in us is faithful to complete that work.

- **Philippians 1:6** - being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Repentance requires:

- That we realize we have disobeyed God and damaged our relationship with Him. God is not concerned with degrees of sin – He is concerned with sin. PERIOD.
- A Godly sorrow. A real regret that what we have done has dishonored God and damaged our relationship with Him.
 - **2 Corinthians 7:9-10** - I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of repentance*; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of God*, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. ¹⁰ For the sorrow that is according to *the will of God* produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.
- A heartfelt request for God's forgiveness and cleansing power and more than that a desire to never do it again.
- A turning away from the behavior, the attitude, or the habit that is destroying our relationship with God.
- That we cultivate a hatred for sin. This only comes when we take seriously that God hates sin. He does not hate it as a preference – like some hate Coke, but love Pepsi. **God hates sin at his very core because it destroys us!** If the cross tells us nothing else, it tells us how much He hates sin. And when we realize how much he hates sin and how nonchalantly we engage in it, we suddenly become aware of how unlike Christ we really are! We become saddened, not because we are busted or for fear of punishment. But because we see the price heaven paid for us – for YOU!!

When we come to God with open hands, broken just as David was broken, sorry that we have damaged our relationship with God - when we realize how small we really are, and admit the truth of our condition, He promises to heal us and restore us and change us.

The immensity of grace suddenly becomes very real to us and gratitude and love become our primary motivators for a holy life. We want the best – to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Today I am pointing you to the Surgeon. He has the cure. What will you do?