

PSALM 51

JUNE 12, 2022



INTRODUCTION

Have you ever broken a bone? What happened?

Sometimes doctors have to rebreak a broken bone for the bone to heal correctly. If your bone heals by itself, it can cause problems. Even when you think your bone has fully healed, you might not be able to move as freely as before. But when a doctor rebreaks a bone, even though it can be painful, the bone is aligned correctly so it will heal the right way and you can move as you should.

We understand broken bones, but what does it mean to be spiritually broken?

Some people will tell you, "As long as you're not hurting anyone, your sin isn't that bad. Life is short. You might as well be happy. Live how you want." But the Bible tells us there's a spiritual brokenness that isn't harmful, but actually works kind of like resetting a bone. There is some pain and discomfort, but what you get in the end is the joy and freedom you were looking for all along. The Bible calls it "repentance."

DISCUSSION

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 51:1-19.

Have you ever gone a long time doing a certain thing, knowing you needed to stop and change directions, but kept going anyway? How do we prevent that from happening?

When has guilt over sin stolen your joy in life? How did you get it back?

David had sinned by committing adultery and then killing a man. He wrote this broken prayer of repentance when he finally turned back to God. What do you learn from David's prayer about what it means to repent?

Is repentance mostly an outward thing you do or an inward activity of God (see vv. 10-12)?

What was David's role in repentance?

What positive thing do you find in verse 17 about having a broken and repentant heart?

When was the last time you remember feeling broken over sin—either your own or someone else's?

Why do you think a broken heart is something God desires?

GOING DEEPER

Read the following verses to decide if brokenness is a good thing or a bad thing: Psalm 147:3; Isaiah 57:15; Matthew 5:3-5; James 5:16.

Is there sin in your life you haven't been broken over? What's holding you back?

APPLICATION

A humble and broken heart is one that doesn't hide sin. Why is our first instinct often to hide or ignore our sins before God? From people? What's dangerous about failing to deal with our sins?

Would you say you are authentic and vulnerable in your relationship with the Lord? With other Christians? What's hard about that?

As a group, how well do we admit how we've gone off track with the Lord and seek encouragement to get back on track? How can we grow in that area?

PRAYER

Thank God for loving you so much that He sent Jesus to die on the cross for your sins. Ask Him to help you remember that His love doesn't end at the moment of your salvation, but continues even as you struggle with sin. Invite Him to show you what it means to live authentically and vulnerably before Him, in brokenness over your sins, so that He might reset your life toward spiritual health.

COMMENTARY

PSALM 51

This Psalm was written by David just after he had seen Bathsheba bathing on her roof, laid with her and impregnated her, and sent her husband Uriah to the front lines of war to die to cover up his sin. David is described by God as a man after His own heart, yet we see his sin in full display. It is an encouragement to believers to know that when sin is forgiven it is truly forgotten and our intimate relationship with Him may be restored! Read 2 Samuel 10-12 to get the details of David and Bathsheba's story.

51:1-6. After realizing the error of his sin, David appealed first to the mercy of God, even before he mentions his sin. No matter the monstrosity of sin, God has infinite amounts of mercy to lavish upon those with repentant hearts. He asks God to blot out his transgressions - this word in the original language is a judicial word. David realizes that he is guilty. He asks that his sin be wiped away and no record would appear against him, which is only possible through the mercy and grace of God. David was deeply sorrowful for his sin and committed to turn from it.

51:7-15. David asked God to clean him with hyssop, which was traditionally sprinkled into the water of purification and directly relates to the sprinkling of blood of Jesus in Hebrews 12:24. David asks God to not look upon his sin and to not remove the Holy Spirit from him. David knew that he had grieved the Holy Spirit by his sin, which had caused him to withdraw.

51:16-19. David recognizes that he cannot make satisfaction for sin, but that men despise what is broken but God does not. David knows that God alone can renew his spirit and redeem him through the forgiveness of his sin.