

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 51:1-12

[Worship]

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy 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 you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. 5 Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. 6 You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. 9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Consider:

Peter B. Price

Deep within the human psyche throughout the ages there has been an almost cosmic cry for help. Psalm 51 reflects that cry. It reveals a despair informed by guilt and a sense of personal responsibility for the way things are, but nevertheless longs for a new beginning.

[Words]

Jeremiah recognizes this longing among those who have experienced the bitterness of dislocation, persecution, and exile, a longing for a new contract with God for life. But Jeremiah makes clear that the desire for freedom from guilt and oppression is energized not by humanity, but by God. So concerned is God for a fresh start that he offers an agreement, or covenant, making a new ethic to be inscribed on the heart of humanity (Jeremiah 31:33).



Hebrews reminds us of the cost of bringing in this new order: Jesus "learned obedience, son though he was, through his sufferings" (5:7-8). Although there is something profoundly mystical about the fact that Jesus had to learn obedience, it is a deeply comforting thought for those of us who recognize just how hard it is to "hate our life in [the systems of] this world" (John 12:25).

Jesus indicates that the "wheat grain that falls into the ground" (John 12:24) is not in fact a single seed, but more like a sieve full of seed to make a harvest. Jesus says his death will be followed by many others and will bear fruit. The witness of martyrs always bears fruit. One is reminded of Oscar Romero saying, "If I die, I shall rise again in the Salvadoran people." What is required of us is holding on to hope, and an integrity of praying that pleads, "Create in me a clean heart, renew within me a resolute spirit" (Psalm 51:10).

[Scripture]

Hebrews 5:5-10

5 So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; 6 as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." 7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; 9 and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, 10 having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Also read, **John 12:20-33**