

Lenten Devotional March 24, 2021

Scripture

Psalm 51

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. 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. 14 Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance. 15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. 16 For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. 17 The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. 18 Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, 19 then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Devotional

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Franklin '09

“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” When I was in high school, we had a visiting missionary from the Philippines stay with our church for a few months. It was one of those mild winters, with very little snow. The day before our guest was scheduled to leave, we were hit with a blizzard, a total white out. In Northeast Ohio, this isn’t anything new. But for our visitor from the Philippines it was an astonishing thing to experience. After seeing snow for the very first time, she said with tears in her eyes, “I finally understand what it means when the Bible tells me that I’ve been washed whiter than snow.”

Lent is a journey that teaches us about the incredible grace of a God, who hears our prayers of confession and washes us clean. We are constantly reminded of the sin that entangles humanity—not just the world around us but the heart within us. As we look forward to the day of resurrection, may we rejoice in the assurance of our salvation. May we journey with joy because God shows us mercy according to God’s steadfast love. May we be filled with tears of joy, like my friend from the Philippines, because we have been made clean, washed whiter than snow.

Prayer

With the psalmist, let us pray, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, . . .” Forgive what my lips tremble to name, that I may forever dwell in the house of the Lord. Amen.