

## Lent Devotional February 25, 2026

### 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.*

## **Devotion**

### **The Rev. Emily Miller '07**

Every year, at the beginning of Lent, I think of the title of a song made famous by popular singer Justin Timberlake. It's odd that I would think of JT during Lent, but hear me out.

One of JT's most memorable songs was called "I'm bringing sexy back." It's a fun song, to be sure, but as a society, we really don't need more "sexy" coming back. If I could change the song title to be more appropriate for Lent, I'd call it "I'm bringing humble back" or, if you like, "I'm bringing humility back." We need humility far more than we need sexy.

Psalm 51 is one of the foundational scriptures for Lent. We typically bring it out on Ash Wednesday as we remind ourselves that "we are dust and to dust we shall return." It is a very humbling psalm.

We recall that it was written by King David after he was confronted with his adulterous sin by the prophet Nathan. The first line is a plea to God for help: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love." But the true humble confession comes in verse three, where David admits, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." Only a humble person understands in their heart that we all sin, especially when we elevate ourselves above others.

Just imagine with me for a moment: what if the leaders of our churches, our corporations, and our government understood this humility? Imagine if senior pastors realized that it is not *them* who the people come to see, but people come to be with the Lord. Imagine if corporate executives understood that their true duty is to the people who purchase their product or service, and to the earth that supports their business. Imagine if our leaders in Harrisburg or Washington comprehended that their power is given only for a moment in time and that afterward, they will be back in the populace like everyone else.

This Lent, let's make the number one hit in our lives "We're bringing humble back," as we accept our role as disciples of Christ and servants of His people.

## **Prayer**

Gracious God, make us more humble, we pray. May we seek You this Lent, to expose our selfish ways and point us to the cross with humility. Help us to see ourselves as no better than others, but as participants in the push to bring Your kingdom to this world. In Christ we pray, amen.