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Scripture

Psalm 51:1-17

- 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.

Devotional

Could there be a more perfect prayer for the beginning of Lent? After all, what is this season for other than to remember our transgressions, acknowledge our sin, and ask for a clean heart?

It's an odd season in which we find ourselves: a season of self-denial and repentance. At times this season can be daunting in scope and overwhelmingly humbling. We know that in Christ we have already been forgiven of our sin and yet we still live in a broken world as broken people. We know that we have been brought into this world by God and that we will leave this world by God, all the while failing every day. Even so, we are loved by God.

May we all acknowledge our own sin and the sin of our society. May we understand and witness the brokenness of this world. May we also recognize the goodness of Jesus Christ and the blessing of love and forgiveness as we look forward down this long path to Holy Week.

Prayer

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. Be with me this season; give me strength and wisdom as I strive to serve you. Give me humility and create in me a clean heart, O God, through Christ our Lord. Amen.