

Seeking God's Mercy

Psalm 51

What does "no harm, no foul" mean?

We shouldn't punish things that bring little harm

John 8:44

God doesn't express disapproval of every wrong

Sin always harms more than just the sinner

Biblical vision of marriage

1 man + 1 woman, until death, in perfect faithfulness to each other, honoring and loving the other above oneself

Divorce only in narrow circumstances (adultery)

Singleness is beautiful too, and sometimes better

There is no marriage in heaven

Context of Old Testament: accepted polygamy, divorce, and imposed marriage, including as political tools

King David

2 Samuel 11-12

Psalm 51

1-2: David cries out for God's mercy

It took a year and a very bold prophet!

No self justification

No argument that he deserves mercy

3 words for going against God's ways

Miss the mark. Bent/twisted. Cross the line.

3 words seeking forgiveness

"Blot out"=obliterate from memory

David knows mercy is completely undeserved

Seeking God's mercy based on what God said about Himself to Moses > Exodus 34:6-7

3-6: David accepts personal responsibility for his sin

Did David fully grasp his offenses? Certainly not!

Yet he was not taking it lightly

Perhaps "Against you, you supremely, have I sinned"

To ruin the prized art of an artist is to attack the artist

The offense against God increases the weight of harming other people, rather than reducing it

David accepts whatever punishment God chooses

A moral person from conception

We sin because we are sinners > Ephesians 2:1-3

In contrast to truth and wisdom that is God's delight

7-12: David seeks cleansing, restoration, and renewal

Asks for God's cleansing: only God can do it

Asks for God's blessing: joy & gladness

Asks for God's transforming work: create

Same word as Genesis 1

Bringing order and light into chaos and darkness

"Do not cast..."="Do not fling me away!"

Seeking the work and presence of God's Spirit

13-17: David commits to worship and serve in humility

King had responsibility for moral leadership

David violated it & asks that it be restored
David's failure & restoration itself can teach others

Forgiveness of David's extreme actions gives hope for people whose actions are not as extreme > 1 Timothy 1:15-16
Still had significant consequences: death of son, ongoing conflict in his family

Righteousness without grace condemns
Righteousness with grace brings joy
Essential quality: purged of self-righteousness
Contrite = broken (like bones)

18-19: David seeks God's restored blessing on God's people

Sin of the king brought harm to the nation
David prayed for God's restoration of the people
Especially the joy of worship

The Big Idea

**God recreates what people have broken by sin
by His mercy through the work of Christ
through broken, contrite hearts
for His glory, our joy, and blessing to others
Once for all
AND
Over and over again**

Sin = "the deliberate act of steering off the road that God wants us to travel"

Sin injures...
our thinking
our emotions and relationships
our bodies

Sin always increases chaos
Sin always harms life
Sin hides itself through lies and deception

Sin is an attack against...

Ourselves
Others
It is contagious
It harms more than the sinner
The community (local and global)
God

A biblical understanding of people

Every human being is made in the image of God
With inherent worth and goodness
Every human being is tainted by sin in every part of us
No action or attitude or expression of ours is as good as it should be or as good as God is
And sometimes, they are shockingly bad!

Application

Be broken over sin

It brings chaos and destroys life
Even when it seems "fine"
Sin deceives us, so we are blind to most of our sin
Perhaps like high blood pressure: "the silent killer"
It is right to be angry at sin
It is right to grieve over sin

It is right to plead with people not to sin
The only real solution is to go to Jesus Christ
 Forgiveness through Jesus' death in our place
 Restoration through the resurrection of Jesus from death
 Transformation by the Spirit of God in us

Seek God's work of recreation

"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

2 Corinthians 5:16-17

"I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent." Luke 15:7

Expect a journey of brokenness & mercy

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can bear." John 16:12

 We learn more and more about the glory of God

 We see more and more clearly our own sin

 Sin blinds us to our own sin, so growth in holiness leads us to see more of our sin

We walk deeper and deeper into the Gospel!

Participate in the recreating work of God

"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Colossians 3:13

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." Matthew 6:14-15

Over and over and over...

Conclusion

Have you experienced this recreating work of God?

Where is God helping you see more clearly your sin?

"Let the bones you have crushed rejoice!"

Reflection Questions

1. Which sins, either in yourself or in others, makes you most angry? Why?
2. Which sins, either in yourself or in others, brings you the most grief? Why?
3. "Tis grace that taught my heart to fear." Our understanding of our own sinfulness changes over time. In what ways has God helped you see your sin more clearly over time? For example, sometimes we were proud of something that later on we came to understand as shameful.
4. What makes it hard to genuinely receive the forgiveness of God for yourself?
5. What makes it hard to genuinely forgive others? How have you seen or experienced the beauty of genuine forgiveness?