

## **Have mercy on me, O God**

### **Psalm 51**

This is the superlative prayer of repentance in the whole Bible, written by a man who had just been confronted by a prophet about his adultery with a married woman and murder of her husband: if you have time, read 2 Samuel 11:1-12:10.

#### **A personal plea**

##### **Read Psalm 51:1-6**

David does not simply acknowledge his sin, he “knows” it (v3). He cannot and will not deny it any longer.

What does David appeal to in asking for mercy (v1)? )?

What does David bring to this request (v2)?

Who is sin always, ultimately, against (v4)? Think back to what David had done. Why is verse 4 a remarkable, and revealing, truth?

#### **APPLY**

What do these first six verses teach us about sin? Is there anything here that surprises you or changes your thinking?

What do we learn here about genuine repentance? How does this need to shape your own response to sinning?

#### **A clean heart**

##### **Read Psalm 51:7-12**

What is God able to do (v7)? Why is this wonderful for sinners to know?

Branches of hyssop were used by priests to sprinkle water on individuals for ritual cleansing. On the Day of Atonement, similar branches would be used by the high priest to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the atonement cover within the Most Holy Place –the place where God dwelled among His people–to secure forgiveness for God’s people.

## **TIME OUT**

**Read John 19 v 25-30**

How is verse 29 an amazing sign of what is going on as Jesus dies?

How does Psalm 51:7 point us to Jesus?

What do people who know they are forgiven by God experience ( v8, 10, 12 )?

## **What God desires**

**Read Psalm 51:13-19**

David understands that God's grace is transformational. It causes us to point fellow sinners to the forgiveness on offer if they repent (v13); it prompts us to sing of what God has done for us (v14-15); it frees us to admit and accept our own brokenness and yet offer ourselves, broken as we are, to God (v16-17).

## **PRAY**

In the coming week, why not make time at the end of each day to make Psalm 51 your own prayer of confession, repentance, praise and recommitment?