

David Asks For Forgiveness

Psalm 51

MEMORY VERSE

PSALM 51:10

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

“Soft” paper (like a paper towel), lemon juice, cotton swabs and a small electric lamp with an exposed light bulb.

Two plastic 16 oz. jars with tight lids, bleach, food coloring and paper towels.

Masking tape and three balloons.

ATTENTION GETTER!

What’s in Our Heart

In today’s lesson, we are going to learn about God’s forgiveness. The Bible teaches us that we are all sinners. Even if we try to clean up the outside, there is still sin in our hearts. Sin needs to be dealt with--recognized and forgiven by the Lord--in order for us to have a relationship with Him. For this activity you will need “soft” paper (like a paper towel), lemon juice, cotton swabs, and a small electric lamp with an exposed light bulb.

Before class, gather your ingredients. Cut a large heart shape out of the paper. Use your cotton swabs to dip into the lemon juice. Write the word “SIN” in large letters on the paper heart with the lemon juice swab. Allow it to dry.

During class, introduce today’s lesson. Ask the children if they can see anything wrong within their heart (once the lemon juice is dry they should not be able to see the word “SIN”). Explain that

we can think that we are right with the Lord, but there remains sin to be dealt within all of our hearts. Let's see what that is...Turn on the light with the exposed bulb. Hold the paper over the warm lamp and the word "SIN" should begin to be exposed. Explain that even though we may try to cover it up, sin is still in each one of our hearts. We need to be forgiven by Jesus.

LESSON TIME!

Reconciliation is a beautiful theme that flows through the Bible from start to finish. God took the first step towards forgiveness and reconciliation for mankind in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed Him. God took it upon Himself to restore them and all mankind back into fellowship with Him again. In fact, the first mention of God's plan to send His Son to take the punishment for man's sin is found in Genesis 3:15.

David often and beautifully expresses his awareness of his own need for forgiveness and reconciliation with God in the psalms. Psalm 51 was written after Nathan the Prophet had come to confront King David with God's judgment because of his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah, her husband (2 Samuel 12:1-23).

How good it is to know that **God is faithful to forgive**. Sorrow and disappointment over our sins may last for a time, but after we have sought and received God's forgiveness, it is as though a heavy weight has been lifted off our shoulders. God desires to repair and restore those with broken and battered hearts, those that have been beaten up by the consequences of their sin.

PSALM 51:1-4

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—

that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.

King David had failed miserably to represent God and his country as both a king and a servant of God. He had given in to his sinful nature to disobey God.

Before David's encounter with Nathan, the prophet, he took action to cover up his sin, hoping no one would find out about it. As he considered his options, he chose to end the life of an innocent man (Bathsheba's husband, Uriah). Sin can be very embarrassing; though one might want to keep it secret, he cannot hide it from God--He sees everything.

When God confronted David through Nathan, he broke. He admitted he was wrong; he had sinned against God. Knowing that God is compassionate and loving, David pleaded for God's grace and mercy. The words of this Psalm are the beautiful expression of a king who had been humbled and, in true repentance, seeks forgiveness and restoration to a right relationship with God.

How foolish it is to seek to hide our sins. The Bible says, “...be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). 1 John 1:9 states, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” What a wonderful promise!

PSALM 51:5-12

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice.

Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

As David expresses his hopeless condition, he acknowledges that he is by nature a sinner. At no time in his life was he ever without sin. But, God desires truth and wisdom in the inward heart.

David desired to be purged (made pure) with hyssop and cleansed and washed “white as snow.” David was referring to the hyssop used at religious ceremonies to sprinkle sacrificial blood on the altar, removing the sins of the people (Hebrews 9:22). This creates a beautiful picture of the sacrifice that Jesus would one day make for our sins (Hebrews 9:22).

David prayed God would create a new heart within him—a heart filled with clean thoughts and right desires. Sin had created a heavy heart in David; he had lost the joy of his salvation. He knew God’s forgiveness and restoration would lift the weight, the burden, and joy would be the result—the joy of being set free!

If we see ourselves in God’s light and are honest with ourselves, we will agree with God that we are born sinners as David. The Bible says that we are all sinners (Romans 3:23). We all fall short of God’s glory. We need to be forgiven by God, washed, cleansed, and restored into fellowship with Him.

How is your heart? Has sin driven a wedge between you and God, making Him seem distant? God wants us to be close to Him and experience His blessings. If we do not confess our sins and ask God’s forgiveness, our hearts will be heavy, burdened, and weighted down. We will experience a feeling of emptiness even though we may not know why we feel the way we do. Like David, we can be set free from sin! For God has made provision for our reconciliation. He has made a way for us to be made clean through our faith in Jesus Christ who took the punishment for our sins at the cross.

Remember, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). *Joy* will be the result of restoration!

Not only has provision been made that we might be forgiven, but that we might be restored, made new. The Bible says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ...(1 Corinthians 5:17,18). Our life will be made different in the “inward” parts as we allow God to cleanse our hearts, work in our lives, and enable us by His Holy Spirit.

Create in Me a Clean Heart!

For this activity, you will need two plastic 16 oz. jars with tight lids, bleach, food coloring, and paper towels. Before class, fill one jar 1/2 full with bleach and the other jar 1/2 full with water. Remember which jar is which for your activity. This activity will demonstrate how sin will “cloud” our hearts, but Jesus will cleanse our hearts when we ask Him to come in.

Talk about sin and how it can cloud and stain our hearts. Use the food coloring to describe some of the sins. Talk about how green represents envy and drop 2 – 3 drops of green food coloring into the jar with water. Talk about how red represents anger or hatred and add a few drops, think of other sins for the remaining colors to represent. Once you have several drops of food coloring in the water it will make a grayish, black color in the water. Explain that this is what sin does in our hearts.

Next, explain that the other jar represents Jesus. He is perfect and sinless. Put a couple of drops of food coloring into the jar with the bleach. The color should immediately disappear. Explain that when we ask Jesus to come into our lives, He will cleanse us of all of our sins. Pour the bleach into the container with the water and food coloring. The bleach should turn the water to clear. (You may want to practice this at home first). Explain to the children that we need Jesus to be cleansed from our sin.

After we have sinned, we may feel God can never use us again. We must be careful—for the enemy would like us to believe that. David teaches us that we can be forgiven of great sin and still be useful for God’s purposes. Romans 8:1 states, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...” In other words, as Christians, we have been forgiven; we have been freed from the punishment we deserved; we have a clean slate and can be used by God. What *great* news! So do we go out and sin because we can just ask forgiveness? No way! We see God’s great love for us and it makes us *want* to serve Him all the more.

PSALM 51:13-19

Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You.

Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; you do not delight in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.

Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem.

Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then they shall offer bulls on Your altar

As David looked forward to God's restoration and reconciliation, he knew he would desire to share with others who needed reconciliation. He planned to teach transgressors God's ways and convert sinners to the Lord. When God works in our life—restoring, renewing--we want to share it with others!

David wanted to offer sacrifice to God, but he knew that God did not desire simply an animal sacrifice. An act of religious ceremony would not bring God pleasure. God desired that David turn from his sins. The only acceptable sacrifice to God was a broken (humble) spirit and a contrite (repentant) heart.

In Psalm 51, David expresses his genuine repentance and desire to be restored into fellowship with God. As God met David, so God will meet us as we come seeking forgiveness, restoration, and renewal. No matter what we have done, or how bad we think we have been, we can never do anything that would go beyond the grace and mercy of God's extends to us through Jesus Christ who took upon himself the penalty for our sins.

Today, if you a not a Christian, God invites you to receive his forgiveness and grace. You can turn from your sins and open the door of your heart and life. Let Jesus be the Lord and Savior of your life and you will find he will create within you a new heart, a clean heart, and impart to you his joy. The Bible says, "For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). **God is faithful to forgive.**

Balloon Blessing Breakout

For this game, you will need masking tape and three balloons. Use the masking tape to make a large circle in the center of the classroom. This will serve as the boundary for the game. Divide the class into two groups. One group will stand on the tape and

make a circle. They must stay in their place on the line and never go off of the line. Their job is to protect and keep the balloons inside the circle.

The second group will have the three balloons. Their job will be to try to throw the balloons outside. When you say, “go” the children on the inside should try to get their balloons out while the other children try to keep the balloons in the circle. Allow play for a couple of minutes and then stop. Switch sides and resume play for a couple of minutes.

Explain that the group on the inside represents our old nature trying to get out to cause us to sin. But the children surrounding the circle represents our new nature in Jesus and the protection He gives us. We need to be in the Word and in prayer every day to help our “new” nature grow and be strong. If we feed our “old” nature, it will get stronger, and we will fall into temptation and sin. We can learn from David that there are consequences to sin; we need to stay far away from it.

PRAYER

Ask the children if there is something in their hearts they need to confess to God and ask for forgiveness. As you pray together, ask the children to silently lift that up to the Lord. Thank God for the mercy He extends through Jesus Christ. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.