

Purge Me With Hyssop

by George Warnock

The sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and dealing with sin in our hearts, and the need for cleansing and purging through the work of the Cross.

Scripture: Exodus 33:13, Psalm 51:1-17, Micah 6:8, John 4:24, Romans 6:6, 2 Timothy 2:25

Topics: "True Repentance", "Spiritual Cleansing"

Description

George Warnock preaches on the importance of true repentance and seeking cleansing from God, using Psalm 51 as a guide. He emphasizes the need for acknowledging our sins, seeking inner transformation, and desiring a clean heart and renewed spirit. Warnock delves into the significance of God's cleansing work through various Old Testament offerings, highlighting the importance of a broken and contrite heart that God values above sacrifices. He encourages believers to walk humbly with God, allowing Him to work in their lives and lead them into true ministry and fellowship with one another.

Transcript

(Psalm 51)

"Have mercy upon me, O God, According to thy loving-kindness:

According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies

Blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin."

David was a man after God's own heart. Not because he was sinless... but because his heart was set on God, and he was desirous of going God's way. When David was confronted with his sin by the word of the prophet--he was caught unawares by the parable that Nathan had told him. A certain rich man with many flocks and herds, when he wanted to make a feast went and stole the one little lamb that a poor man owned, and slew it. David was angry. Nathan turned to him and said, "Thou art the man!" David replied, "I have sinned against the Lord." Quick came God's reply: "The Lord hath also put away thy sin."

This seems to be about the extent of modern day Gospel preaching... and it is good as far as it goes. God puts away the sin of the repentant one, and God looks upon such a one as totally righteous because of the Blood of Christ.

But the man after God's heart will begin to search his heart, and cry unto God for "cleansing." What's wrong? There's something within that's not right! Here I am... having known God all these years... and suddenly a temptation comes and I fall. I need cleansing! "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." The man after God's own heart is concerned that his mind be renewed and his heart changed until he is able to think as God thinks, and feel as God feels.

"For I acknowledge my transgressions:

And my sin is ever before me."

But David did you forget? Do you not remember that Nathan said, "The Lord hath also put away thy sin?" Yes, he knew God had done that; but it was still there in his conscience. Forgiveness without cleansing still leaves the conscience defiled, and God has made ample provision for the cleansing of the conscience just as He has for the taking away of the sin itself. There were five particular offerings that God ordained for Israel in the Old Testament, all speaking of the work of the Cross, but each of some particular aspect of that work. (See Leviticus, Chapters 1 to 5.) All the offerings speak of Christ, and all speak of Christ in union with His people; but as we know, God's truth is manifold in its beauty, and therefore many types and symbols are required to adequately portray the whole Truth. And even then they are but types and shadows of the real. And so the Burnt Offering would speak of Christ in total obedience unto the Father's will, which eventuates in the sufferings of the Cross, and which ascend unto God as a sweet-smelling savor. Jesus delighted to do the Father's will; and God's total delight was in Him. Then there was the Meal Offering, Christ the Bread of God. And now in union with His people, we are One Bread, and One Body: milled exceeding fine in the mills of God, anointed and mingled with the fresh oil of His Spirit, baked in the ovens of testing and trial, and only then coming forth as the living bread. The Peace Offering is Christ again--but He who not only proclaimed Peace, and who made Peace, but who actually BECAME our Peace. When God broke down the walls of partition that once separated the nations from the covenants of promise, He there and then became the Peace of God to all who would receive Him. The nations continue in their enmity against God and against one another, because they have refused the Peace that God made. But intermingled among the nations are the true people of God who have received of that PEACE. They belong to another Kingdom, that is not of this world. They are men of PEACE. Therefore they use no sword in defence of their Master, but the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Finally, we come to the Sin Offering and the Trespass Offering. These fully deal with our sin as an offence against God and man, and they fully cleanse and purge the guilty conscience as it relates to ourselves.

David said his sin was ever before him, even though God said He had put it away. Was it a simple case of David trying to believe what God said? No, he needed cleansing. Most of us do not find it too difficult to believe and know that Christ died for our sins. Our problems arise when we look within and discover that we are inherently wrong at heart, and find ourselves helpless to do anything about it.

Now if it were just a simple matter of knowing what God said, and determining we were going to believe it, the matter could quickly be settled. For Paul does tell us to "reckon" ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God. But how many of us have "reckoned" and "reckoned" again, only to discover that the problem still remains.

No wonder the apostle Paul, having declared these truths of "reckoning" as God "reckons" in Romans 6 goes on into Chapter 7, with loud crying and groaning for deliverance, For it is not by the carnal mind that you can determine to find the victory of the Cross... but only as you take up that Cross and bear it. It takes

a Divine operation. It takes a working of the Spirit in our lives who, in spite of our knowledge of what God has done, nevertheless continue to labour under the weight of a sin-burdened conscience. It takes a deep work of repentance; yet we must know and realize that this too is a work of God.

"For I acknowledge my transgressions;

And my sin is ever before me,

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,

And done this evil in thy sight:

That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest,

And be clear when thou judgest."

This is the first step we must take if we would enjoy full restoration unto God, and know the joy of His salvation. Acknowledge that God is right, and we are wrong! This seems so difficult, but we will get nowhere until we put away all our excuses. I inherited this bad temper, this evil nature. I got this wrong spirit from my family background. My father had this problem, and my grandfather had it. And there are many sincere ministers, seeking to help the one burdened down with his load of guilt, who go along with the excuses, if by any means he might somehow get to the real root of the problem. We all know and understand that this is so, and even David recognized it.

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity;

And in sin did my mother conceive me."

My mother sinned... and my father sinned... and my grandfathers sinned... but now it's my problem. Adam's transgression has become mine; but the Last Adam fully dealt with Adam's transgression on the Cross, and what we need now is that operation of the Spirit of God in our lives that will break the ancestral link that we once had with the Old Adam, and become joined unto the Last Adam. Now what purpose is there in trying to trace our ancestral problems back one, two, or three generations... when there is in reality an unbroken link of problems all the way back to Adam? God broke that link at the Cross. The Holy Spirit has absorbed into His Being the wondrous efficacy of the Blood; and we know and experience that cleansing as we learn God's ways and walk in that Spirit.

True it was Adam's fault. But now it's my fault. I cannot blame Adam, or my forefathers, or my parents... it's now my fault.

The sooner we leave our excuses aside, and take the responsibility, the sooner will we know the joy of His salvation. We must simply face the facts, and **ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRUTH**.

Paul says, "If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Timothy 2:25, 26).

So then we can't really blame the Devil either. O how human nature would like to put the blame somewhere else--anywhere--as long as we can excuse ourselves. My father had this problem. I have this bad habit because of my grandfather. The Devil made me do it .

We must face up to the Truth. Acknowledge the Truth. I'M WRONG. GOD, YOU ARE RIGHT! The "hyssop" is right there at our feet... but we must stoop low and pluck it up... dip it in the water of cleansing, and apply it to the heart.

"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts:

And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Men have devised many "patterns" for the cleansing of God's people... legalistic patterns that never really accomplish the desire of God's heart. We need to pray one for another in their problems. We need to take one another's burdens and bear them, as king-priests, into the Holiest of All... interceding on their behalf. There are times when we need to confess our faults one to another, as God by His Spirit would show us His will in the matter, and direct us to someone who in a merciful and priest-like manner will take our burden "outside the camp," and in "a clean place." Remember, God deals with sin in a "clean place." God doesn't want his priests to expose the erring one in all his nakedness to the unsanctified gaze of a lot of carnal people. When Moses washed Aaron and his sons it was at the Laver, in the outer court of the Tabernacle--at the doorway of the Holy Place. No one but priest and Levite was permitted in that area. And that area was exposed only to Heaven above. Surrounding the Court was a high linen covered fence, five cubits tall--higher than any man in all Israel. The "water of separation" was prepared in a clean place "outside the camp." And in spite of the hatred and the scoffing that was heaped upon Jesus, God was doing something in "a clean place" and in God's eyes Calvary was the holiest place on earth when Jesus hung there on the cross. God would not let Him die within the walls of Jerusalem. It had to be "without the camp" and "in a clean place." And should God in His grace ever permit you and I to share the guilt of sin that hangs heavy upon a brother or sister, remember we are dealing in holy things. That sin, confessed and borne before the throne of Grace no longer belongs to that individual. Henceforth it belongs to Christ! You must forget it!

It is not really a delightful thing to hear the sins of an erring one being poured out in your ears... but it is a blessed experience to see the humble and the contrite heart broken before Him. The distressing part is that somehow it seems so difficult to actually forget what God has forgotten. O for a pure heart... that would cause us to forget what He has forgotten! I shall never forget the testimony of a precious brother who was ministering to a group of sin-burdened souls in some European country. They came with broken hearts and unloaded their sins and their problems one by one, as he bore them up before the throne of Grace. Then he confessed how dirty he felt, with his mind cluttered up with the sins of God's people. Then he prayed, "Lord take away the memory of all this filth..." A few moments later he looked about the room... and to his surprise he could not remember one sin that had been confessed. God had completely obliterated it from his mind.

What had happened? There was such a flowing of the Spirit of God in their midst, that God had washed away the very memory of sins forgiven, and cleansed, and FORGOTTEN! God had forgotten, and had even caused the priest of the Lord to forget!

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

We all know it's in the Blood; it's not really in the hyssop. But O how God would emphasize to you and me that grace and forgiveness and cleansing are growing there at our feet. Salvation is there within our grasp, if we would but acknowledge the Truth instead of trying to excuse ourselves and deceive ourselves.

Through painful experience David was able to identify with the Truth, and to cast himself upon the mercy of God for needed grace. He learned that he could not trust in his own heart, that his innermost being was wrong... that he had to be changed.

"Make me to hear joy and gladness;

That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Hide thy face from my sins,

And blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God;

And renew a right spirit within me."

Happy is that one who has been graced of the Lord to trace all his troubles right down to the depths of his own heart. Then he has no more words to say about anyone else... no one to condemn... no one to point his finger at. All the trouble is on the inside. No one can harm you from without. The man who has discovered the true source of his own wretchedness is left speechless. And then the clean heart and the renewed spirit bring forth a new kind of worship: a worship that is in Spirit and in Truth.

"O Lord, open thou my lips;

And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it:

Thou delightest not in burnt offering."

We hear much in the religious world today about sacrifice, and how God delights in it. Sacrifice until it hurts... give what you have to God, and He will prosper you. But God says there is something better than sacrifice, and it is "obedience." "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice..." God says there is really only one kind of sacrifice that is acceptable. If this one kind of sacrifice is there, then the others will be acceptable in their time and place. But this one kind is all important:

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

In closing I would like to emphasize a few things by way of further encouraging God's people in the ways of the Lord. Your heart bears witness to what we are saying and cries out for reality. You wonder what you might do to hasten on the good work that you know God has begun. God would have us to know that there are no short-cuts for the people of the Way. In fact, He generally leads them the "long" way around. In our impatience to hasten on the work of the Lord we might very well hinder the coming forth of the precious

fruit God so desires to bring forth in your life and mine, We have to know and understand that it is God's work and not ours. But He does require that we simply submit ourselves to His dealings, and to make His Lordship the uttermost pursuit of our lives. The conflict arises from our inability to give Him that Lordship by mere human endeavour. The God who purposed and planned must also be the God who brings into being that which He has desired.

Very often we think we walk alone and in darkness; but His presence is very near even when we know not. The disciples who walked on the road to Emmaus thought for sure that Jesus was dead; yet all the while Jesus was walking by their side, comforting their hearts, and assuring them that nothing had happened that was contrary to the Scriptures and to God's plan and purpose. Why did He not there and then make Himself known and reveal Himself clearly? Because He was waiting for the moment of the "breaking of the bread." Then were their eyes opened, and they KNEW HIM! Are we willing, then, to become that broken bread in His hands that the Light of His glory might shine forth?

I recall as a younger man how earnestly I had been seeking the Lord for the gift and the ministry that I felt assured He had for me. But on this particular occasion the only Word I could get... and it would come to me over and over again in various ways... was this passage from Micah 6:8,

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;

And what doth the LORD require of thee,

But to do justly,

And to love mercy,

And to walk humbly with thy God?"

At the time I remember how clear it was; and I knew He was speaking to me. But somehow I wasn't quite able to accept that as the total answer to my seeking. I really wanted to know about the gift and the calling of God that I felt had rested upon my life from my earliest recollections of childhood.

And so for years and years I was waiting for that opportune moment when I thought God would send me forth into ministry. I did not realize that ministry was NOT something that you went into or went out of, but something that God wanted you to become. Now I think I understand a little better. Now I realize that there can be no higher calling for any man, woman, boy or girl than the calling and ministry that flows from a life that simply walks in humility before God. For one cannot walk with God and not partake of His nature and character, and come to know Him as He really is. Therefore Moses prayed:

"Show me now THY WAY,

That I may KNOW THEE..."

(Exodus 33:13).

I do not speak as one who has attained in any measure beyond others... but as one in fellowship with others... that we might go on with God together. Caleb and Joshua cannot settle down in their inheritance until they bring the people of God into theirs. The priests of the Lord must stand still in the bottom of the Jordan, while the people of God march across the river on dry land... and they actually enter into the land before the priests do. The purpose and end of true ministry is to make and bring forth a true priestly

ministry in others.

Therefore we greatly desire the fellowship of God's people. (By that we do not mean we earnestly look forward to rallies and get-togethers that have for their objective a lot of good music and good lively singing, and a nice happy time together.) By fellowship we mean what John meant: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP one with another..." How we anticipate and long for such fellowship! Gathering together unto Him, and pursuing with one accord the Vision of God: That we might worship Him in Spirit and in Truth, that we might be a people "to the praise of His glory," that we might be conformed to the image of His Son, that we might become the Bread of God in His Hands: Blessed only that we might become a blessing unto others... Broken, that He might make Himself known.

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