

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 4-1-12 PM NOTES
"PSALMS" (PART 2)
#21 in Series, "The Glory of God in the Old Testament"

Alamoth (Psalm 46)—Female voices or a stringed instrument.

Gittith (Psalm 8, 81, 84)—Probably a musical instrument from Gath.

Neginoth (Psalm 4, 5, 54, 55, 61, 67, 76)—A stringed instrument.

Selah (used throughout many Psalms)—A musical interlude which means to pause for meditation.

Shiggayon (Psalm 7)—Wandering or irregular music.

- I. Prophetic Psalms
- II. Prayer Psalms

- III. Penitence Psalms

There are seven penitence Psalms: Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NKJV) "For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."

A. Genuine Repentance Offers No Excuses (51:1-3)

B. Genuine Repentance Acknowledges the Seriousness of Sin (51:4)

"But what about our conservative, evangelical churches? Has the idea of sin all but disappeared from us also? No, it has not disappeared, but it has, in many instances, been *deflected* to those outside our circles who commit flagrant sins such as abortion, homosexuality, and murder, or the notorious white-collar crimes of high-level corporate executives. It's easy for us to condemn those obvious sins while virtually ignoring our own sins of gossip, pride, envy, bitterness, and lust, or even our lack of those gracious qualities that Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit."
—Jerry Bridges

Acts 20:21 (NKJV) "testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, **repentance toward God** and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

"To hate sin because it caused the brow of Christ to be girt with the thorn crown, and the face of Christ to be dishonored with the spittle, and the hands of Christ to be pierced with the nail—this is repentance—not because I am afraid of hell, not because sin brings pain and penalties with it, but because it made Jesus Christ to suffer for me such pangs unutterable."
—Charles Spurgeon

C. Genuine Repentance Traces Sin to Its Root (51:5)

- IV. Precept Psalms

A. What Is the Bible?

1. The Law of the Lord

Psalms 119:1 (NKJV) "Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord!"

2. Precepts

Psalms 119:4 (NKJV) "You have commanded *us* to keep Your precepts diligently."

3. Statutes

Psalms 119:5 (NKJV) "Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!"

4. Judgments

Psalms 119:7 (NKJV) "I will praise You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments."

5. Word
Psalms 119:89 (NKJV) “Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.”
6. Commandments
Psalms 119:151 (NKJV) “You *are* near, O Lord, and all Your commandments *are* truth.”
7. Testimonies
Psalms 119:14 (NKJV) “I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as *much as* in all riches.”
8. Word
Psalms 119:58 (NKJV) “I entreated Your favor with *my* whole heart; be merciful to me according to Your word.”

B. What Does the Bible Do?

1. The Word Cleanses Our Way
Psalms 119:9 (NKJV) “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.”
2. The Word Keeps Us From Sin
Psalms 119:11 (NKJV) “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You
3. The Word Delights and Counsels Us
Psalms 119:24 (NKJV) “Your testimonies also *are* my delight *and* my counselors.”
4. The Word Revives Us
Psalms 119:107 (NKJV) “I am afflicted very much; revive me, O Lord, according to Your word.”
5. The Word Strengthens Us
Psalms 119:28 (NKJV) “My soul melts from heaviness; strengthen me according to Your word.”
6. The Word Gives Us Answers for Those Who Reproach Us
Psalms 119:42 (NKJV) “So shall I have an answer for him who reproaches me, for I trust in Your word.”
7. The Word Sets Us Free
Psalms 119:45 (NKJV) “And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts.
8. The Word Gives Us Hope
Psalms 119:49 (NKJV) “Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope.”
9. The Word Gives Us Comfort in Our Affliction
Psalms 119:50 (NKJV) “This *is* my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life.”
10. The Word Gives Purpose to Our Affliction
Psalms 119:71 (NKJV) “*It is* good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.”

C. What Is My Response to the Bible?

1. Walk in the Word
Psalms 119:1 (NKJV) “Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord!”
2. Diligently Obey the Word
Psalms 119:4 (NKJV) “You have commanded *us* to keep Your precepts diligently.”
3. Hide the Word in Your Heart
Psalms 119:11 (NKJV) “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!”
4. Meditate on the Word
Psalms 119:15 (NKJV) “I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways.”
5. Delight in the Word
Psalms 119:16 (NKJV) “I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.”
6. Cling to the Word
Psalms 119:31 (NKJV) “I cling to Your testimonies; O Lord, do not put me to shame!”
7. Turn Your Eyes From Worthless Things to the Word of God
Psalms 119:37 (NKJV) “Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, *and* revive me in Your way.”
8. Trust in the Word
Psalms 119:42 (NKJV) “So shall I have an answer for him who reproaches me, for I trust in Your word.”

V. Praise Psalms

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“PSALMS” (PART 2)
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The book of Psalms is divided into five books. Most Bibles have headings that say “Book One”, “Book Two”, etc. Really, the book of Psalms is five books compiled into one. The individual Psalms were written over a period of about a thousand years with the earliest Psalm attributed to Moses to some that were well after the exile into Babylon. Many of the Psalms have headings that give some circumstances which surround the Psalm that follows. Some examples would be Psalm 3, 7, 34. While these headings were not a part of the inspired text, Old Testament scholars believe that most of them are accurate. Other Psalms have instructions as to how they are to be sung in worship. There are lots of strange sounding words used that mostly refer to styles, instruments, or musical notations. Here are some examples:

- Alamoth (Psalm 46) – Female voices or a stringed instrument.
- Gittith (Psalm 8, 81, 84) – Probably a musical instrument from Gath.
- Neginoth (Psalm 4, 5, 54, 55, 61, 67, 76) – A stringed instrument.
- Selah (used throughout many Psalms) – A musical interlude which means to pause for meditation.
- Shiggayon (Psalm 7) – Wandering or irregular music.

A good survey of the Psalms is almost impossible to do in two 40 minute messages. The approach we have taken is to look at a representative Psalm from each of five kinds of Psalms. Last week we looked at Prophetic Psalms that are also called Messianic Psalms. They tell about the coming Messiah and His ministry and death and resurrection. Our representative Psalm was Psalm 22. We also examined last week Prayer Psalms. Prayer Psalms are Psalms addressed to God as prayers. We saw several examples of prayer Psalms in the last message. In this message, we will examine Penitence Psalms, Precept Psalms, and Praise Psalms.

III. Penitence Psalms

The word penitence refers to expressing or feeling regret or sorrow for having committed sins. Seven Psalms have been classified as Penitent Psalms – Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143. The most familiar penitential Psalms are Psalm 32 and 51. Both of these Psalms of David were written after David had committed the sin of adultery with Bathsheba and then arranged for her husband to be killed in battle. Psalm 51 was likely written within hours of David being confronted with this sin by the prophet Nathan. Psalm 32 was written some time later as David looked back and recorded how this sin had affected him.

The Psalm we will focus in on to represent this type of Psalm is Psalm 51 and we will make application as to how penitence (regret and sorrow for sin) must lead to Biblical repentance of sin. Because this Psalm is so rich, we will focus on just the first five verses.

The New Testament makes it very clear that all sorrow over sin (penitence) is not genuine repentance. **2 Corinthians 7:10 (NKJV)** “For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” In other words, there is a Godly penitence and a worldly penitence. What are the characteristics of genuine repentance born out of a penitent heart?

A. Genuine Repentance Offers No Excuses (51:1-3)

Search all you want and you will not find any excuses for his behavior. There is no plea to look at the whole of his life and see how out of character this episode was. There was no blaming of Bathsheba. We see his confession of guilt without excuses when we see what he is asking God to do. First, he asks for mercy in verse one. That means that he knows that he is guilty. He doesn't ask for justice; he is guilty and pleads for mercy. Second, he asks to have his sins blotted out. He understands that his sin has created a debt that he could never repay. He realizes that in spite of all his kingly wealth, he is spiritually bankrupt before a holy God. The words “blot out” pictures an entry of sin in God's books that he pleads for its blotting out, its erasure. The third thing David asks for is for cleansing in verse 2. David realizes that his sin has stained and defiled him and wants to be declared clean. The Hebrew word used here of the ceremonial cleansing of a leper. He is saying, “Take away the leprosy of my soul”.

In verse three, we see the heaviness of David's sin upon him. He says that it is ever before him. He could never get it out of his mind. All he could do was to come before God and acknowledge his sins. That word "acknowledge" means to know and to understand his sin. There were no excuses! One of the certain indications that a person's confession is not genuine repentance is that it is offered with an excuse. It usually starts out like this, "I know what I did was wrong, but..." What always comes after that "but" is an excuse. "He didn't understand me and the other man did." "She always puts me down and criticizes me and the other woman treated me with respect and appreciated me." "I know that I broke the law, but they never paid me for how much I did for the company". Then there is the whole issue of addiction. I am not trying to be unkind, but as long as a person excuses sinful behavior by blaming it on addiction or calling it a sickness, they have not truly repented of their sin. If there is an excuse, it is not genuine repentance! It is only when we truly repent without excuses that we can confidently look to His "lovingkindness" and "the multitude of His tender mercies." That word "lovingkindness" means His faithful and steadfast love. It is a combination of the love and grace of God. We can't experience that until there is repentance. He describes God's mercy as being plentiful and tender, but we cannot really experience it until there is repentance. Someone said, "The sight of mercy is good for eyes that are sore from penitential weeping".

B. Genuine Repentance Acknowledges the Seriousness of Sin (V4)

In our generation we have lost a sense of the seriousness of sin. There are several evidences that what I just said is true. One piece of evidence is how we continually rename sin. We call sin, bad choices, harmful decisions, sickness, and self-destructive behavior. I realize that not everybody who uses those words is rationalizing sin, but most are. Let me give you a subtle way that even conservative, Bible centered churches are minimizing the seriousness of sin. Listen to this quote from Jerry Bridges: "But what about our conservative, evangelical churches? Has the idea of sin all but disappeared from us also? No, it has not disappeared, but it has, in many instances, been *deflected* to those outside our circles who commit flagrant sins such as abortion, homosexuality, and murder, or the notorious white-collar crimes of high-level corporate executives. It's easy for us to condemn those obvious sins while virtually ignoring our own sins of gossip, pride, envy, bitterness, and lust, or even our lack of those gracious qualities that Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit" [Jerry Bridges, "Respectable Sins", Page 19]. Ouch!

Let's go deeper and get to the root of why sin is so serious. It is serious because it is against God [re-read verse 4]. That is basic, but a lot of people have never "gotten" this. We often say, "Wait David. What about Bathsheba? What about Uriah? What about Joab whom you caused to compromise his integrity by putting Uriah in a situation where he would be killed? What about the nation? Surely your sin was against them also." David would not have denied this, but he would say, "Yes, it is true I sinned against all these, but that pales in comparison to the fact that it was first and foremost against God." This is the primary difference between worldly sorrow and genuine Biblical repentance. Remorse alone (worldly sorrow) is being sorry for how our actions hurt others and brought consequences on ourselves, but it leaves out the fact that it is against God. Let me distinguish here between the repentance of a lost and a saved person. Genuine repentance that leads to salvation is when a sinner's eyes are opened and he sees that He was created to glorify God and honor Him and realizes that His life of fleshly sins or self righteousness has brought reproach on the God he was created to glorify. He realizes that He has sinned against God. That's why Paul describes salvation in **Acts 20:21 (NKJV)** "testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." When saved people sin, repentance comes when they realize that they have sinned against such love that has been lavished upon them that they are broken and contrite before God. They realize that their sin is against Him alone. Until David's eyes were opened in his confrontation with the prophet Nathan, his chief concern had been how to cover his tracks. Now his heart is breaking for his insult of such a loving God.

Because he realizes that his sin is against God, he acknowledges that God is just and right in whatever He says about David and whatever judgment He pours out. There is no justifying what he has done. Spurgeon put it this way: "To hate sin because it caused the brow of Christ to be girt with the thorn crown, and the face of Christ to be dishonored with the spittle, and the hands of Christ to be pierced with the nail – this is repentance – not because I am afraid of hell, not because sin brings pain and penalties with it, but because it made Jesus Christ to suffer for me such pangs unutterable" [Spurgeon Quotations, page 174].

C. Genuine Repentance Traces Sin to Its Root (51:5)

Don't hear this as David giving an excuse for his sin. This is simply the completion of his confession. He is saying that the root of his sin is not in his surroundings, but his spirit. The act of sin was the stream, but the fountain, the source was his sinful nature. He is saying that from the moment that he was conceived in his Mother's womb he had a twisted and perverted nature – the nature of Adam, the nature of Satan, the desire to be his own God. In other words David is not blaming his circumstances or Bathsheba or anything that was going on around him. The problem is who he is inside – His very nature. Repentance unto salvation involves our recognition that we are poor in spirit and realizing that we have no righteousness and no merit because we are sinners down at the core of our being and that we deserve hell. Then, we mourn over our hopeless condition and only then are we ready for true salvation. How different that is to today's evangelism of telling people what Jesus can do for them and how He can enhance their life if they will glibly quote a little prayer.

How about repentance when a believer sins? We know that on this side of the cross the old us in Adam has been crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20) and we have become a new creation. However the programming of the old sinful man is still there (the flesh) and a power called sin is still resident in our members. A part of genuine repentance is to confess that we sinned because we walked after the desires of the flesh instead of walking in the power of the Spirit; we chose to yield to that power of sin even though we are no longer its slave, and the root of our sinful action is inside us and not in our surroundings and circumstances. Repentance recognizes the rottenness of our flesh and that is why David begins this Psalm with the words, "Have mercy upon me, O God..."

IV. Precept Psalms

The word "precept" means instruction or principle that guides someone's behavior. The best known precept Psalm is the longest Psalm – Psalm 119. While it is impossible to do a verse by verse study of 176 verses, I do want to share some of the precepts, the instruction of this Psalm. In all but five of the 176 verses there is some precept about the believer's relationship with the Word of God. Psalm 119 is an acrostic Psalm – probably to aid in memorization. It is divided into 22 stanzas, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Hebrew, each stanza has eight lines with each line beginning with a word beginning with the same letter of the alphabet.

Here is the approach we are going to take to survey this longest chapter of the Bible. We are going to ask three questions and then answer them from this Psalm. First, "What is the Bible?" Second, "What does the Bible do?" Third, "What is my response to the Bible?" We will be doing little more than reading the answers to those questions out of Psalm 119.

A. What Is the Bible?

In these 176 verses we see 8 synonyms for the Word of God and each gives us insight to the character of God's Word.

1. The Law of the Lord

Psalms 119:1 (NKJV) "Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord!" This is the word "Torah". It means instruction, doctrine, direction, and teaching. Probably the best translation would be "teaching of the Lord". The Bible is the law of the Lord, the Lord's teaching that shows His purpose, His plans and His ways.

2. Precepts

Psalms 119:4 (NKJV) "You have commanded *us* to keep Your precepts diligently." This Hebrew word is used 20 times in Psalm 119. It means God's mandates, God's commands.

3. Statutes

Psalms 119:5 (NKJV) "Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!" This word means regulations, decrees, and rules to be obeyed. It is used 19 times in this Psalm.

4. Judgments

Psalms 119:7 (NKJV) "I will praise You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments." The word translated "judgments" means a verdict that is pronounced, a formal decree. The Bible gives us God's decrees, His governing principles. God's judgments are not voted on. God doesn't operate under a democracy but under a dictatorship. God issues judgments not opinions.

5. Word

Psalms 119:89 (NKJV) “Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.” This is a very broad Hebrew word translated by 38 different English words. It includes the concept of promises, commandment, and prophetic revelations.

6. Commandments

Psalms 119:151 (NKJV) “You *are* near, O Lord, and all Your commandments *are* truth.” The Hebrew word means the same as the English. It refers to clear directives.

7. Testimonies

Psalms 119:14 (NKJV) “I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as *much as* in all riches.” The word means witness – something, someone who testifies.

8. Word

This is from a different Hebrew word than #5 above. **Psalms 119:58 (NKJV)** “I entreated Your favor with *my* whole heart; be merciful to me according to Your word.” The word means an utterance of God. This book is the utterance of God.

What is the Bible? It is the instruction of God, the teaching of God, the mandates of God, the commands of God, the orders of God, the decrees of God, the rules of God, the verdicts of God, the promises of God, the testimony of God; it is the very utterance of God!

B. What Does the Bible Do?

Let me just list 10 things that this chapter tells us that the Bible does.

1. The Word cleanses our way

Psalms 119:9 (NKJV) “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.” The word “cleanse” means to make pure. When we heed the Word of God we are cleansed and purified.

2. The Word keeps us from sin

Psalms 119:11 (NKJV) “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!” When we hide His Word in our heart, we become sensitive to sin. Dwight L. Moody said of the Bible, “This book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this book.”

3. The Word delights and counsels us

Psalms 119:24 (NKJV) “Your testimonies also *are* my delight *and* my counselors.” God’s Word is not burdensome. When you really dig into it and begin to apply it, it becomes a source of joy and pleasure and it becomes our counselor. It would be good if we developed the habit of going to the word for counsel before seeking human counsel.

4. The Word revives us

Psalms 119:107 (NKJV) “I am afflicted very much; revive me, O Lord, according to Your word.” The word “revive” means to live anew, to refresh, to rebuild. When you sense a deadness in your life, when you need refreshing, when your life is falling apart, and needs rebuilding, go to God’s Word. It revives us!

5. The Word strengthens us

Psalms 119:28 (NKJV) “My soul melts from heaviness; strengthen me according to Your word.” When you are overwhelmed with weakness, you will find strength in His Word.

6. The Word gives us answers for those who reproach us

Psalms 119:42 (NKJV) “So shall I have an answer for him who reproaches me, for I trust in Your word.” To reproach means to defy, to come against, to taunt. The Word gives us the answer to that.

7. The Word sets us free

Psalms 119:45 (NKJV) “And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts.”

8. The Word gives us Hope

Psalms 119:49 (NKJV) “Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope.”

9. The Word gives us comfort in our affliction

Psalms 119:50 (NKJV) “This *is* my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life.”

10. The Word gives purpose to our affliction

Psalms 119:71 (NKJV) “*It is* good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.” When seen in the light of God’s Word, our afflictions are never wasted.

C. What Is My Response to the Bible?

This Psalm tells us how we are to respond to the Word of God in light of all it is and all that it does.

1. Walk in the Word

- Psalms 119:1 (NKJV)** “Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord!”
2. Diligently obey the Word
Psalms 119:4 (NKJV) “You have commanded *us* to keep Your precepts diligently.”
 3. Hide the Word in your heart
Psalms 119:11 (NKJV) “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!”
 4. Meditate on the Word of God
Psalms 119:15 (NKJV) “I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways.”
 5. Delight in the Word
Psalms 119:16 (NKJV) “I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.”
 6. Cling to the Word
Psalms 119:31 (NKJV) “I cling to Your testimonies; O Lord, do not put me to shame!”
 7. Turn away our eyes from worthless things to the Word
Psalms 119:37 (NKJV) “Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, *and* revive me in Your way.
 8. Trust in the Word
Psalms 119:42 (NKJV) “So shall I have an answer for him who reproaches me, for I trust in Your word.”
I have only scratched the surface of this precept Psalm!

V. Praise Psalms

Each of the five divisions or books of the Psalms ends with a song of praise, but the last book ends with five Psalms of praise. Psalm 150 is the final doxology for the whole book of Psalms. It is like the Hallelujah Chorus of the Psalms. I want to close out this survey of the book of Psalms by just reading this glorious Psalm [Read Psalm 150] (3387)