

THE PRAYER OF A MURDERER (CONTINUED)

Psalm 51

III. The Prayer For Power. Psalm 51:12-19.

1. David prayed for the restoration of joy.

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." A careful study of this penitential Psalm will reveal the past experience of its author. In it two types of experience are wonderfully blended--that of a conscience-stricken transgressor, and that of a believer rejoicing in divine mercy. Nothing can be more mournful than David's profound self-abasement and piercing cry for pardon. Nothing can be more calm, hopeful and restful than his trust in God's forgiving and restoring grace. He is like a person emerging from a gloomy cavern, where no ray of light shone, who does not yet stand in the sunlight, but sees it shining at the mouth of the cave, and knows that a few more steps will bring him into full sunshine. He asks for full restoration to the happy consciousness of God's favor. He had done a great wrong. He was full of shame, regret and remorse. He prayed, "Cause to return unto me the joy of thy salvation."

This prayer for the restoration of joy implies three truths:

(1) There is joy in salvation.

- a. Joy in the retrospect of the past, for salvation is a past blessing. It is something that has taken place already.
- b. Joy of present possession, for salvation is a present blessing. Deliverance from the pollution of sin is a present and continuous thing.
- c. Joy of future prospect, for salvation is a future blessing.

One cannot accept Christ and become a child of God without being made happy. Joy is the natural result of an experience of salvation.

(2) The joy of salvation may be lost.

David had known the joy which arises from being saved, but he had lost that joy for a while. His own prayer is a confession of that fact. Peter also lost the joy of his salvation. Many others have lost the joy of their salvation. This is not an uncommon experience. The loss of this joy may be caused by:

- a. The neglect of known duties.
 - (a) Prayer.
 - (b) Bible study.
 - (c) Public worship.When prayer, Bible study, sermons, and fellowship with God's people are not what they once were to you, it is because you have lost the joy of your salvation.
- b. The lack of faith. People often blame circumstances, when it is their own doubts that is shutting out the light and depriving them of joy. Confidence is the root of joy. No one can rejoice who does not trust.
- c. Worldliness. In proportion as one gives more time, attention and energy to secular interests, he gives less and less to the service of God.
- d. Indolence. The laziest man is the most miserable and the most easily tempted. The most faithful Christians are always the most joyful ones. Work imparts joy and strength.
- e. Indulgence in sin. Sin grieves God, and causes Him to hide His face. Sin also blinds our eyes to the promises and to the power of God. Sin makes the conscience

smart and throb. The most unhappy person is one who has backslidden and has a hardened heart and tearless eyes. It was through indulgence in sin that David forfeited his joy.

(3) The joy of salvation may be restored.

a. This restoration of joy is desirable.

It was for this that David hungered and prayed. This earnest prayer, as recorded in Psalm fifty-one, is a yearning after lost joy. It breathes a real sense of loss. David lacked two things, namely, peace of conscience and the sense of the divine favor. He had lost what the world could not give, and that for which the entire world could not compensate. Of this you may be sure, that one who has once tasted of this joy, who has truly experienced its power and sweetness, will never be content to live long without it.

b. This restoration of joy is possible.

David did not pray for an impossibility. His faith was convinced of God's willingness to forgive and of His power to restore. Joy may be restored entirely and immediately, but not until the rubbish that caused the loss of it is removed, and the filth that stained the joy is taken away. Joy is found in obedience, but never in rebellion. It is found in fellowship, but never in discord. David wanted to have his joy restored, and then to be kept in such a state of mind that he could spontaneously and promptly obey God.

2. David prayed that he might be consistent.

"And uphold me with thy free spirit." It was his sincere desire to maintain a worthy character in order that he might have an effective testimony. A joyful salvation has power to attract. Does your face recommend Christ's salvation? Would anybody looking at you or listening to you suspect that you are a child of God? Why not be a radiant Christian? This radiance comes from the joy of the Lord in the heart.

3. David promised to be useful.

"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." It is interesting to observe his promise.

(1) To teach others.

(2) To teach the worst men--transgressors or rebels against God.

(3) To teach the worst people the best truths--"thy ways." He was convinced that such teaching would reach sinners, that they would see the evil of their ways, that they would be convinced that mercy was available, that they would be moved to action, and that their conversion would be genuine. David was persuaded that he would be able to reach sinners and influence them in the right direction.