

“FILTHY”

Pastor Mike Corwin

ASH WEDNESDAY

TEXT: PSALM 51:1-12

I – CORRECT CLEANSER:

If you look through the soap aisle at the grocery store, as well as in your cabinets at home, you soon figure out that when it comes to cleaning things, one size does not fit all. There is a different cleanser for different dirt.

If you're washing your hands from some household dirt then a good bar of ivory will do the trick, but if you're covered in oily dirt from the garage you probably need to grab the bar of lye soap because serious dirt requires better soap. Same thing with doing the laundry. If it's normal everyday dirt you just put in some tide, but if it has a grease stain from that drippy pizza you need some bleach too. If it's really serious you may need to spray it with some stain remover and soak it overnight. And now we have all the different cleaners and disinfectants for Covid to consider.

II – SOUL DIRT:

This same action is needed when we cover our souls with dirt too. If it's a minor slight against someone then a mild cleanser is needed. We can apologize, the words "I'm sorry" will usually wipe away the stain on the relationship between you and the other person.

But when it's a sin against God, then a bigger cleanser is needed. When you sin against God...and all sin is really against God...it may affect others but ultimately it is against God, then saying I'm sorry isn't enough. You have to ask for forgiveness too. You have to confess your sin and ask God to forgive it.

III – DAVID:

Let me tell you about an Old Testament hero who learned this lesson. His name was David. At the age of 12 he already loved God so much that when he went to the battlefield to take food to his brothers he heard a giant named Goliath yelling taunts and obscenities against the God of Israel, the God he loved. The adults were terrified but David was so outraged he rushed out with a slingshot, hit the giant in the head with a stone and then cut his head off when he fell down. Not only did he love God, but God loved him too and had the prophet Nathaniel go and anoint him as the next king of Israel.

David did grow up and become the king and he was the best king that Israel ever had. He was so good and loved God so much that God promised him the Savior of the world would be from his family tree when the time came. He ruled the people well and carried out God's plans and wishes swiftly and completely. No finer man of God could be found.

But one day David was up on the roof of the palace when he looked down on the roof of a house and saw a young lady named Bathsheba taking a bath. He was immediately in lust. Her beauty was striking and he had to have her. He sent for her, had her brought to the palace, and then slept with her. He was already married and so was she, but he did it anyhow. Then she came and told him that she was pregnant so he had to do something. He was the king, he couldn't have this kind of scandal going on, so he sent her husband to the front lines of a battle the country was fighting and ordered the other soldiers to pull back so he was alone and he was killed. He now has adultery and murder on his hands!

Not only was his soul dirty...it was filthy! It was covered in sin and he knew it long before the prophet Nathaniel came and told him how displeased God was by his actions.

IV – PSALM 51:

It was his filthy condition before God that caused him to write these words:

Psalm 51:1-12 (NLT)

¹Have mercy on me, O God,
because of your unfailing love.

Because of your great compassion,
blot out the stain of my sins.

²Wash me clean from my guilt.
Purify me from my sin.

³For I recognize my rebellion;
it haunts me day and night.

⁴Against you, and you alone, have I sinned;

I have done what is evil in your sight.
You will be proved right in what you say,
and your judgment against me is just.
⁵For I was born a sinner—
yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.
⁶But you desire honesty from the womb,
teaching me wisdom even there.
⁷Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
⁸Oh, give me back my joy again;
you have broken me—
now let me rejoice.
⁹Don't keep looking at my sins.
Remove the stain of my guilt.
¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.
¹¹Do not banish me from your presence,
and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.
¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.

David was overcome with the grief that he had let God down. He starts out asking for mercy and calling on the unfailing love and compassion of God. He doesn't just say he's sorry, he begs for forgiveness. He confesses his sins and asks God to forgive him. He asks God to wash away his guilt, to wash away his sins, to wash him until his soul is whiter than snow.

He called out "O God I'm filthy and only you can make me clean!"

V – OUR FILTH:

This night acts like God's prophet Nathaniel to tell us we are filthy in God's sight. We are sinners and our souls are covered in filth. Ash Wednesday starts the season of lent by telling us we need a bath!

Like David we need to confess our sins and ask God for compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. We need to admit our human failures and sins and call out to God asking him to wash us clean, to take away our sins, to remove the stains of our guilt, to wash us and make us whiter than snow.

And as we go through lent...as we travel closer and closer to the cross, then we know that God has indeed provided the cleanser powerful enough to remove such stain, he has provided the

blood of his only Son, Jesus the Christ. It is that blood, poured out for us on a cross that removed the filth of sin from the souls of anyone who stands beneath the cross and allows that blood to wash over them.

Start your bath tonight by recognizing your sinfulness and asking God's forgiveness through the Lordship of Jesus.

AMEN