

4-16-23

Sermon- CPR For The Christian Heart

Scripture- Psalm 51, CTW Psalm 25:1-7

Hymns- 464, 513, 630

INTRO: Today is the first Sunday after Easter and throughout the world, Christians of many branches of Christ's church are waking up from food and family overdoses, and getting back to whatever they call "normal". However, if we make the mistake of not seeing how God attempted to change us in the season of Lent, then we will have gone through it all for nothing. We must never forget that God desires his people to grow, evolve, and change into ever more useful citizens of His kingdom. Much of the answer to these questions can be found in the words of the psalmist, David, and the letters C, P, and R

I. "C" Stands for our need to CONFESS

A. Let's take a quick refresher course on David. David is remembered by all as the greatest king of Israel. It is David who as a small boy slew the Philistine giant, Goliath.

It is David who is the great ancestor of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But David has a problem. It all began one day when his armies were off at war, while he remained home in Jerusalem. It was evening. David went up to the roof of his palace and stood looking out over his magnificent capital city.

He was feeling proud of his accomplishments, but maybe a little bored as well, back here, all alone.

In **2 Samuel, chapter 11**, we find what David did next. As David looked around, there below him in a neighboring building, a movement caught his eye. And as he looked closer, he realized that it was a woman – a naked woman - bathing.

Well, like most men would, he continued looking for a few moments, then politely turned away. But he couldn't get her out of his mind. He went back and watched some more. He began to devise a plan...just a theory at first, but a plan.

He would send her a royal summons, to join him for dinner. Wouldn't that be a nice treat. And maybe after dinner....

And as he watched, and thought, and fantasized, his resistance weakened, and he decided "Why not. After all, I'm the king!"

To make a long story short, he sent for her, he slept with her, and she became pregnant.

This was a problem. Because Bathsheba, which was her name, was married.

Not only was she married, but she was married to Uriah, a soldier in David's army. Who had been away for a long time.

David had Uriah called home from the front to "report on how the war was going." And he invited Uriah to spend a few nights at home.

That way, Uriah might think the baby was his. But Uriah refused to share the joys of the marriage bed while his men were deprived of the same privilege.

When David realized that he could not cover his sin by deception, he sent Uriah back to the battle, and gave this order to his General.

"Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."

And that is exactly what happened. David committed murder, to cover his adultery. He married the widow Bathsheba, convinced that he had gotten away with his sin.

B. It was only a short time later that the Lord sent the prophet Nathan to David, to tell him a story about a crime that had been committed within his kingdom.

In **2 Samuel Chapter 12** we see the interesting way that Nathan approached David:

"There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup, and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him."

"Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

Well, when David heard this story, he was incensed. He raised his kingly voice and pronounced the verdict "This man deserves to die."

Imagine the silence in the courtroom as Nathan looked David in the eye and said, **David, "You are that man."**

In the privacy of his chamber, David wrote these words when confronted with that awful truth. Somehow, by the strength of his character, they were preserved so that generations would know of his sin, but also how he responded to his sin. He turned to the Lord, and prayed in **Psalm 51**:

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

Wash away my iniquity and cleanse me of my sin.

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

David's response, when confronted by his sin, his terrible sin, was to CONFESS...ALL OF IT

C. Why bother to confess? God has known what he has done all along. That's only too apparent. However, now David knows. David sees his actions for what they are. David knows himself for who he is. And the weight of his sin is **unbearable**.

His confession, in part, acts as Catharsis. He needs to get it off his chest, to let loose the flood of guilt, to obtain **release**, to feel **relief**.

His sin also puts him back in right relationship with God, whom he had sinned against.

Do we ever do that? – Do we, by our own actions demonstrate that we think we know better than God?

Do we modify the teachings of scripture to suit our desires?

Do we know what we are about to do is wrong, and go ahead and do it anyway – thinking after all, who will ever know, who could possibly be hurt?

The reality in these kinds of situations is that when we realize our own sin, **we know** who is hurt. **Our Lord is hurt. And we are hurt**, as we feel separated from God by the barrier of our guilt.

That is why the first step to reconciliation is Confession.

II. "P" stands for requesting that God PARDON you.

But David does not stop with confession. In the midst of his confession, he actively seeks after the grace of God. He prays:

"Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow..

Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity."

Sin makes you feel dirty. Especially, so it seems for David, sexual sin.

A. David has the nerve to go to God and ask God to make him clean...PARDON me please!

He speaks of hyssop. It is the same plant that we call Marjoram. At the first Passover, the Israelites used Hyssop and the blood of a lamb to mark their houses as consecrated to the Lord.

It was a branch of hyssop that the soldiers put on a vinegar-soaked sponge to offer to our Lord on the cross.

It is a symbol of the inward cleansing that only God can give. David knows that he cannot atone for his wrongs. Only God can make him pure.

B. Today, we have good news. The good news is that God still offers complete cleansing as we come to him in confession. To know that our pardon is found in the arms of the cross, and the sacrifice of Christ's blood.

The good news is that in the Lord's grace, the scarlet stain of our sin is bleached whiter than snow.

Isn't it amazing that until we recognize the depth of our sin, we cannot realize the height of our salvation.

CONFESSION brings PARDON, and pardon is blessed relief.

III. "R" stands for our need to be REVIVED by God.

David knows that he has still not gone far enough. If we stop here, then the future will simply be a repetition of the past. David continues in his prayer:

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew (revive) a steadfast spirit within me."

A. David is speaking of one of the great truths of faith. The theological term is Sanctification. But a better word in this case is REVIVE.

David, confessing his sin, claiming God's pardon, prays **"REVIVE me. Create in me a pure heart."**

Remember that back that back then It was believed that your heart could betray you and lead you astray...

David wanted to be made pure, with no faults, or hard spots, or pollutants.

He wanted a RENEWED heart which could be used in the present and the future, despite the faults of the past.... when we do a "heart check". Isn't that really what we are looking for?

Renewal is another good "R" word if you would like to visualize it that way...

David is really saying: "cast off the old me, Lord..."

Perhaps that is the problem with so many Christians. We are willing to confess our sin, and we are certainly willing to accept Christ's pardon.

We will pray and call for revival of the world...

But we resist so strongly the process of personal REVIVAL.

We say God, fix this evil world...but as for me, I am good to go!

We want to keep living as we always have.

We want to retain control. The process of starting again as a whole new you involves casting off some of the things you really like to do.

Personal confession is hard...and the personal change that must come with can be even harder!

B. It is frightening, to turn our lives totally over to the hands of God, the master potter, to be molded and shaped.

But how wonderful it is when we do allow the Lord to shape our lives!

For as we CONFESS, and are PARDONED, and are REVIVED, we move from being tough, squat, ugly pots, full of lumps and impurities; to being pots of beauty and grace, which God is proud to use in places of highest honor in the heavenly kingdom.

IV. So do you need C.P.R? Yes, probably!

I have a friend who is a first responder. He is called from time to time to give C.P.R.

Cardio-Pulmonary-Resuscitation. There are a lot of people alive today who would be dead without it...including me!

The formula for eternal life, the formula followed by David is just the same.

Christian C.P.R. requires CONFESSION, PARDON, REVIVAL.

Now that we have gone through the lessons of Easter, we have an opportunity to come clean before our Lord.

As we worship together, let us be honest in confession, rejoice in God's pardon, and open ourselves to revival, and with the famous prayer of King David, jump into new life with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen...Let Us Pray!