

PSALM 51

ave mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
(PSALM 51:1)

STRUCTURE

- v. 1-2** Plea for forgiveness.
- v. 3-6** Confession of sin.
- v. 7-12** Prayer for renewal.
- v. 13-17** Pledge of a forgiven sinner.
- v. 18-19** Prayer for the people.

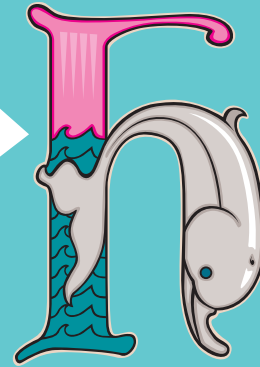


AT A GLANCE

- AUTHOR** The fourth and perhaps most well-known of the seven penitential psalms, which David prayed in the aftermath of his sin with Bathsheba (2 SAM. 11:1-12:13).
- IN A WORD** Verses 1-2 heap up various Hebrew words for "sin" to describe it comprehensively: rebellion, guilt for violation, and missing the mark.
- INWARDLY DIGEST** The emphasis on the depth of sin in the opening verses underlines the plea for forgiveness, cleansing and renewal, grounded in God's promises.
- THE SEVEN PENITENTIAL PSALMS** 6, 32, 38, **51**, 102, 130 and 143.

CHRIST IS HERE

Christ bears and makes payment for all sins, iniquities and transgressions. His sacrificial death grants the forgiveness of sins, becoming the source of renewal, joy and gladness.



PSALM 51

ave mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
(PSALM 51:1)

STRUCTURE

- v. 1-2** Plea for forgiveness.
- v. 3-6** Confession of sin.
- v. 7-12** Prayer for renewal.
- v. 13-17** Pledge of a forgiven sinner.
- v. 18-19** Prayer for the people.



AT A GLANCE

- AUTHOR** The fourth and perhaps most well-known of the seven penitential psalms, which David prayed in the aftermath of his sin with Bathsheba (2 SAM. 11:1-12:13).
- IN A WORD** Verses 1-2 heap up various Hebrew words for "sin" to describe it comprehensively: rebellion, guilt for violation, and missing the mark.
- INWARDLY DIGEST** The emphasis on the depth of sin in the opening verses underlines the plea for forgiveness, cleansing and renewal, grounded in God's promises.
- THE SEVEN PENITENTIAL PSALMS** 6, 32, 38, **51**, 102, 130 and 143.

CHRIST IS HERE

Christ bears and makes payment for all sins, iniquities and transgressions. His sacrificial death grants the forgiveness of sins, becoming the source of renewal, joy and gladness.



This psalm is a model for confession. It offers no caveats or explanations, but outlines a simple admission of sin: not just acts against God, but our condition from birth. This last, most difficult of truths to believe is the true judgment of God, which man cannot speak against. True confession does not trust in itself or its own eloquence or promises of compensation, but is entirely dependent upon God's gracious act of forgiveness, cleansing and renewal, responding to it in thanksgiving. As much as Psalm 51 is a model of true confession, it also beautifully portrays God's abundant forgiveness. The mention of hyssop evokes the use of this plant in the rite of ritual cleansing (NUM. 19:18). Following God's forgiveness, there is not only the offering of thanksgiving, joy and gladness from the forgiven sinner, but also the confession of God's goodness to others, that they too would come to know His ways.



This psalm is a model for confession. It offers no caveats or explanations, but outlines a simple admission of sin: not just acts against God, but our condition from birth. This last, most difficult of truths to believe is the true judgment of God, which man cannot speak against. True confession does not trust in itself or its own eloquence or promises of compensation, but is entirely dependent upon God's gracious act of forgiveness, cleansing and renewal, responding to it in thanksgiving. As much as Psalm 51 is a model of true confession, it also beautifully portrays God's abundant forgiveness. The mention of hyssop evokes the use of this plant in the rite of ritual cleansing (NUM. 19:18). Following God's forgiveness, there is not only the offering of thanksgiving, joy and gladness from the forgiven sinner, but also the confession of God's goodness to others, that they too would come to know His ways.



USE IN THE CHURCH

Antiphon: Monday: v. 1a; Tuesday: v. 1b; Wednesday: v. 4a; Thursday: v. 9a; Friday: v. 17a; Saturday: v. 18a

In the Daily Office: Each day but Sunday at late morning (Lauds); at every office during the Triduum

At the Divine Service: Psalm for Ash Wednesday (ant: v. 17)

One-Year:
Psalm for Exaudi (ant: v. 10) and Trinity 9 (ant: v. 18)

Three-Year:
Introit for Ash Wednesday (ant: v. 17),
Lent 4C (ant: v. 1) and Proper 17B (ant: v. 2)

Liturgy: Divine Service 3 Offertory (v. 10–12); Matins and Vespers opening versicle (v. 15)

Hymn: LSB 704, "Renew Me, O Eternal Light"

USE IN THE CHURCH

Antiphon: Monday: v. 1a; Tuesday: v. 1b; Wednesday: v. 4a; Thursday: v. 9a; Friday: v. 17a; Saturday: v. 18a

In the Daily Office: Each day but Sunday at late morning (Lauds); at every office during the Triduum

At the Divine Service: Psalm for Ash Wednesday (ant: v. 17)

One-Year:
Psalm for Exaudi (ant: v. 10) and Trinity 9 (ant: v. 18)

Three-Year:
Introit for Ash Wednesday (ant: v. 17),
Lent 4C (ant: v. 1) and Proper 17B (ant: v. 2)

Liturgy: Divine Service 3 Offertory (v. 10–12); Matins and Vespers opening versicle (v. 15)

Hymn: LSB 704, "Renew Me, O Eternal Light"

SPIRITUAL CARE

- For instruction in the faith.
- At Confirmation.
- Before Confession and Absolution.
- Repenting from sin and resolving to do better.
- When struggling with guilt.
- While fasting.



SPIRITUAL CARE

- For instruction in the faith.
- At Confirmation.
- Before Confession and Absolution.
- Repenting from sin and resolving to do better.
- When struggling with guilt.
- While fasting.



PSALM PRAYER

O God, the more we hide our sins, the more You bring them to light. You alone bring certainty out of doubt, and truth out of error. Cleanse us with the showers of Your mercy, blot out all our misdeeds, and create in us new hearts by the gift of Your Holy Spirit, that we rejoice in His indwelling, and open our mouths to declare Your praise; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PSALM
51

PSALM PRAYER

O God, the more we hide our sins, the more You bring them to light. You alone bring certainty out of doubt, and truth out of error. Cleanse us with the showers of Your mercy, blot out all our misdeeds, and create in us new hearts by the gift of Your Holy Spirit, that we rejoice in His indwelling, and open our mouths to declare Your praise; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PSALM
51