

“A Healthy Heart”

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Introduction:

[Play video called “Polished Outside, Messy Inside” and is 1:06 in length]

One of the foundational aspects to worship of the Living God is the fact that it must be from the heart. God is interested in your heart. Not the outside. While that might impress humanity, it is not what God is ultimately looking at.

- **He sees your sincerity** or your insincerity.
- **He knows if you** are focused upon Him or thinking about everything else but Him.
- **He knows if you** are harboring secret sin or you are walking in the light before Him.

In our text today we find a man who looked good on the outside but his heart was not right with God. Spiritually, he had an unhealthy heart.

Important: While we were created to worship God and give Him glory and while giving God praise is simply the overflow of the hope of Jesus in us, if **you have an unhealthy heart you will be hindered in your worship.**

King David was experiencing this reality. He was a man who was passionate in his praise and worship of the Living God. He wrote so many of these Psalms. But he had sinned with another man’s wife. And a year later the prophet Nathan confronted David about his sin (2 Samuel 12:1). David confessed and his son died a week later. Major consequence for his sin. But even deeper was the fact that he could not worship God with an unhealthy heart.

This Psalm has brought hope to millions of people who want a healthy spiritual heart before God.

Key Text: Psalm 51:1-15

Many Christians know that singing praise to God is a dynamic part of the Christian life. Unfortunately, the hearts of many believers are not healthy. And an unhealthy heart will not sing praise to God. When our hearts are healthy, meaning our lives are right with God, then abundant praise will overflow from our hearts, lips, and lives.

God's Word teaches us today that each of us can have a healthy spiritual heart.

1.) There is hope for every unhealthy heart: V's 1-2

Note: When you become fully aware of your sin it can be very overwhelming. In this context, David was confronted about his sin and it brought enormous condemnation upon his heart and life.

Principle: When your heart is unhealthy before God, you will be hindered in your worship and praise of the Living God.

This sense of responsibility about your sin can lead you to think that you have no hope. You begin to think that God hates you, will never take you back.

And that is what Satan wants you to think! He is the accuser of the brethren!

Read: Revelation 12:7-10, "Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

“Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.”

Point: Satan has been doing this for centuries. He accused Job. He will use our sin to condemn. He wants us to fold and live our days with this overarching sense of judgment and despair.

And while our sinful actions do have varying levels of consequence, David makes it clear in these first two verses that there is hope for every unhealthy heart here today!

Note: Verse 1

David highlights two key attributes of God...

- The “faithful or unfailing love of God”.

Read: In the face of Israel’s turning away from God, in Hosea 14:4 promises, “I will heal their apostasy; I will freely love them, for My anger will have turned from him.”

Read: Paul declares the love of God in Ephesians 2:4-5, “But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”

The love of God is incredible! We can hardly comprehend it.

Illustration:

In the book, "Children's Letters to God: The New Collection", a little girl named, Nan, writes this letter: "Dear God, I bet it is very hard for you to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only four people in our family and I have trouble loving them!"

God loves us with an everlasting love! There is hope!

- The abundant compassion for those in need.

Read: Psalm 86:15 says, "But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness."

There is tremendous hope for all who want to have a healthy heart and right relationship with God!

Illustration:

SERVICE REQUIRES ACTION

A man fell into a pit and couldn't get himself out.

A subjective person came along and said, "I feel for you down there."

An objective person walked by and said, "It's logical that someone would fall down there."

A Pharisee said, "Only bad people fall into pits."

A mathematician calculated how deep the pit was.

A news reporter wanted the exclusive story on the pit.

An IRS agent asked if he was paying taxes on the pit.

A self-pitying person said, "You haven't seen anything until you've seen my pit."

A fire-and-brimstone preacher said, "You deserve your pit."

A Christian Scientist observed, "The pit is just in your mind."

A psychologist noted, "Your mother and father are to blame for your being in that pit."

A self-esteem therapist said, "Believe in yourself and you can get out of that pit."

An optimist said, "Things could be worse."

A pessimist claimed, "Things will get worse."

"Jesus, seeing the man, took him by the hand and lifted him out of the pit."

**from Internet for Christians newsletter, July 29, 2002
PreachingNow Newsletter, August 6, 2002.

Point: I'm so glad that God is loving and compassionate to all who would turn to Him. And He will be that way with you too.

2.) There is help for every unhealthy heart: V's 3-6

God loves you and wants to help you. How do you start that process of getting help from God?

Note: Verse's 3-4

- **David first of all** admitted he had sinned and was in a mess. He had probably tried to justify his sin and suppress it. But that will not lead to a healthy heart.
- **David called sin** what it was: Sin before God.

Observe: Sometimes we just need to call it what it is.

Illustration:

We went to the first softball game a couple of weeks ago. We got shellacked! We got run-ruled. They hit 110 home runs. We scored one run. I'm a positive guy. I could try to look on every bright side possible but the truth of the matter was that we got annihilated by the other team!

Point: I don't need to sugarcoat something like that. And we don't need to sugarcoat sin.

Note: Verse's 5-6

David knew that he was born a sinner. He wrestled with God knowing what God desired for his life and what his sin nature enticed him to do.

Observe: This is important that we lay blame on the fact that we do what we do because we are what we are.

And what God wants from us is to turn to Him and confess. Don't hold anything back.

Illustration:

I read a story about a British newspaper publisher and a politician. In the washroom of his London club, British newspaper publisher and politician William Beverbrook happened to meet Edward Heath, then a young member of Parliament, about whom Beverbrook had printed an insulting editorial a few days earlier. "My dear chap," said the publisher, embarrassed by the encounter. "I've been thinking it over, and I was wrong. Here and now, I wish to apologize." **"Very well," grunted Heath. "But the next time, I wish you'd insult me in the washroom and apologize in your newspaper."** *Today in the Word*, October 1, 1993.

Point: Don't hold back in confession. Make it plain and clear before God. He knows your heart anyway.

3.) There is healing for every unhealthy heart: V's 7-15

Note: David asked God to cleanse him, wash him, and blot out the sin. They use of hyssop at the religious ceremonies was to sprinkle sacrificial blood on the altar. This represented the removal of sin through the shedding of blood.

Note: Verse 8

David wanted to know that he was right with God.

Observe: Isn't that what we want to know with someone that we've disappointed or offended? We ask, "Are we good? You sure?"

Note: Verse 9

He wanted his sins to be erased as if a judge removed the offense completely.

Note: Verse's 10-12

This is the heart of worship! The heart is key. A healthy heart is the avenue of praise and worship!

David had seen how King Saul had been tormented and that God's hand of blessing was removed. David did not want that!

David wanted the joy and peace of knowing he was right with God and walking with him.

Observe: When you are harboring sin in your life, you begin to distance from others, even God.

For the life of the Christian you want to be running passionate and strong in the praise and presence of God.

The healing that David began to experience would have powerful results in his life:

- He would use his story to challenge others to turn to God.
- He would live a life of praise.

This needs to be our desire. Please God, use your story of grace, mercy, and healing in my life to point others to you. And I will live a life of praise!

Closing Illustration:

I've listened to Christian singer Michael W. Smith for 25 years. He is awesome and God is using him in great ways. But I did not know the story that you are about to hear. It's powerful....

[Play video from I Am Second: Michael W. Smith, 5 minutes]

He's almost an icon in Christian music. The successful, gold-record, award-winning singer-songwriter who seems to have his life, family and walk in place. It probably all came easy for him, right? A product of natural talent?

The road to musical influence for Michael W. Smith has had multiple stops, including some places you would not expect. Such was the case at age 17 when he moved to Nashville to pursue a musical career. Leaving home with a foundation of God's blessing, Michael's first jobs took him to after-hours bars where he flirted with temptation—and more. The flirtation involved drug use, which ultimately led to a near-death experience. He was in the “pit of life, and looking at no escape.”

Then he asked for God to do anything to get his attention. With that came Michael's rescue, leading to the impact his songs have brought to millions and an identity that is secure in Christ.

Point: Here is a man who knows the hope that is found in Jesus alone. God was compassionate and loving towards Michael W. Smith. And God is using that story in a powerful way. And Smith is a

powerful leader in the praise and worship of our God. And He will be towards you as well.

Conclusion:

Unbeliever, turn to Jesus today and He will hear you and help you and heal you.

Believer, we all struggle with sin. We have hope and help in Jesus today. And we can praise Him for all He has done!