

## **Create in Me a Clean Heart ... Sustain Me with a Willing Spirit**

### **Introduction**

What do you find to be most tiring about this COVID-time?

### **Fake, False, Fraud Solution #1 - “If only they and them.”**

*If only, huh? If only they could come up with a vaccine. If only life could get back to normal. If only ... they and them .... If only “they and them” would be smarter, more patient, more careful. If only they and them would do what they’re supposed to. That’s right! If only the rest of the world, they and them, would just do what I want, when I want, the way I want, then I would be just fine. If only “they and them” .... It’s so easy to go down that “if only ... they and them” road, isn’t it?*

What are some of the dangers of the “if only they and them” solution?

When are people most likely to fall for the “if only they and them” solution?

When are you most likely to fall for the “if only they and them” solution?

### **Fake, False, Fraud Solution #2 - “It’s just the stress talking.”**

*Our lesson gives us a better way. Our lesson is a prayer, not a prayer coming out of COVID-stress, but a prayer coming out of heart failure. So David prays, not just for an easier life, but for a new heart. And that’s good, because my problem isn’t just COVID-stress, or this stress or that stress - “if only they and them would fix this and that then I would be all fine.” No, my problem, like David, is heart failure.*

What are some of the dangers of the “it’s just the stress talking” solution?

### **Fake, False, Fraud Solution #3 - “I don’t need to change.”**

*If David were content to keep on stealing wives and killing their husbands, what would we say about his heart for God? Something fake, false, and fraud in there, right? And if we’re content to keep on in our sin, what does that say about our heart for God? There’s something fake, false, and fraud in us, isn’t there?*

What are some of the things Christians might tell themselves so they can feel “content” in their sin?

What does the Holy Spirit tell us so we don’t dare to feel content in our sin?

- Romans 6:2 - “We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?”

- Hebrews 10:26 - “If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”

### **Psalm 51 Solution - Part 1**

**For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.  
Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are proved right when you speak  
and justified when you judge.**

*David saw in himself a heart so stopped up with sin and guilt that God's love couldn't flow right. David saw in himself a heart with so many holes - you know how guilt eats at us - a heart with so many holes that it couldn't hold God's love right. David saw this in himself, that instead of God setting the pace for his heart, instead of God firing the ignition for his heart, time and again the ways of the world, worry, stress, sin, guilt, pride, envy, greed, lust, the need for control - they were setting the pace, they were firing the ignition in David's heart. David saw that in his heart. I see it in my heart. How about you?*

During this COVID-time, how do you see

- the ways of the world
- worry
- stress
- sin
- guilt
- pride
- envy
- lust
- need for control

*“firing the ignition and setting the pace in your heart”?*

*It's not easy to admit it, is it?*

Which “Fake, False, and Fraud Solution” is your Achilles heel?

How well does that work for you?

## **The Psalm 51 Solution - Part 2**

**“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.  
Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. ...  
Cleanse me ..., and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.”**

What is David’s hope for forgiveness? Not his imagination, and not his performance (past, present, or future), but God’s own declaration! When David begged God to act on the basis of his “unfailing love” and “compassion,” David wasn’t grasping at imaginary hopes. David was calling to mind how God had described himself to Moses! And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin” (Exodus 34:6-7)

What does it mean for you that God wants you to know him as a God of “unfailing love” and “compassion”?

What does it mean for you that God wants you to know him as a God who forgives?!

## **The Jesus Solution**

*With Jesus, we have that same forgiveness! With a pure heart and a willing spirit, Jesus took our place in this world. What do you find to be the worst part of living in this world - the hurt and heartache? ... sickness and death? ... the ungodliness? ... the injustice? With a pure heart and a willing spirit Jesus faced it all. And he didn't just face it, he owned it. With a pure heart and a willing spirit Jesus took on our ungodliness, impurity, unwillingness, Jesus took it all as his own and with his death on the cross he paid the price to set us right with God. With a pure heart and a willing spirit, Jesus did everything God gave him to do for you and me and that whole world out there so that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved! Now, with Jesus, God sees you as he sees Jesus. He sees you with a pure heart and a willing spirit. And what do we say? "Praise the Lord, O my soul."*

*What do you find to be the worst part of living in this world - the hurt and heartache? ... sickness and death? ... the ungodliness? ... the injustice?*

How did Jesus face - and own - that most challenging part of life in this world?

How did Jesus show his “pure heart” and “willing spirit” in facing and owning that most challenging part of life?

## Now What?

*When we love God and know how good it is to be forgiven by God, because we love God and it pains us to sin against him and that means it pains us to sin against each other, and, oh, because we love God and we want the world to know how great God is - we aren't content just to be forgiven and to keep on sinnin', are we? No, we're driven to live for God, driven to live with the heart and the Spirit of God, aren't we? So what do we do? We join David: **"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."***

How does God create in us a new heart and renew in us a steadfast spirit?  
How does he give and sustain in us a willing spirit?

Consider Romans 6, Galatians 5, Titus 3 (You could spend a rich time digging in Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 5:16-26; Titus 3:1-8.) - In Word and Sacrament, God connects us to Christ, makes us new, and fills us with His Spirit. And then, he calls us to put our Christ connection, our new life, and our Spirit-filled heart into action.

*Jesus isn't content to just wash us off and put us up on a shelf up in heaven. No, Jesus forgives us to live with his heart and his Spirit here in this world, yes, to share his heart and his Spirit in this COVID world.*

*How will you exercise his new heart this week?*

For your good, in this COVID-life -

In what parts of your life, is your new heart / willing spirit struggling?  
(Trust / Patience / Forgiveness / Stewardship / Serving ...)

In your struggling areas, what are some ways you could exercise your heart?

What question comes next? (How will you ...?)

For the good of your neighbor, in this COVID-life -

What needs are your family / friends / neighbors experiencing at this time?

How could people with a new heart and willing spirit help meet those needs?

What question comes next? (How will you ...?)