

Living Lent | Friday, February 21

Barry Howard

Reflecting on the Mystery of Grace

Today's Reading: Psalm 51:11-17

"Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

Psalm 51:11-17

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

Popular author and speaker, Anne Lamott confesses, "I do not at all understand the mystery of grace - only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us."

During this Lenten season, we are wise to revisit the words of Psalm 51, a heartfelt cry of repentance and a plea for renewal. Likely written by King David in the aftermath of his grievous sins, it is a song of contrition and a fervent desire for restoration.

Verse 11 resonates deeply with us: "Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me." David recognized

that his sins had distanced him from God, and he implored for grace not to be removed. As we journey through Lent, we too may feel the weight of our transgressions. We may have moments when we fear being cast away from God's presence. Yet, in our repentance, we find hope.

"Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit," David continued in verse 12. Lent is a time of rediscovering the joy of salvation, a season for turning our hearts back to the One who offers grace and renewal. We can take comfort in knowing that God delights in restoring those who genuinely seek forgiveness.

But renewal is not just for our

benefit alone. In verses 13-15, David expressed a desire to share his experience with others. He wished to teach transgressors God's ways and to witness sinners returning to a right relationship with God. Lent provides an opportunity for us to do the same—to reflect on our own journey of renewal and to extend grace to those in need.

In verses 16-17, David recognized the profound truth that God desires a broken and contrite heart more than sacrifices. It is not religious rituals or external displays of piety that move God's heart but the genuine humility and repentance of a contrite spirit.

This Lent, as we meditate on Psalm 51:11-18, may we find encouragement in knowing that God's grace is available to us, no matter the magnitude of our transgressions.

Philip Yancey contends, "Grace is the most perplexing, powerful force in the universe, and, I believe, the only hope for our twisted, violent planet."

Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ:

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