

THE GLORY OF GOD FOR THE CONTRITE HEART



One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and took his place at the table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner."

Luke 7:36-39

If we're going to live the life most of us want so badly to live, only one thing is needed:

We need the presence of God burning inside us.

If we have God walking with us,

dwelling in us,

we will do God's will, fulfill God's purpose.

If God is not in us, we can

- fast seven days a week,
- give away all we have,
- offer our bodies to be burned,

but we are still dead within, incapable of doing one good thing or bringing any genuine help to someone else.

The whole purpose of our gathering together week-after-week,

- our turning aside from our fevered activities to pray day-after-day,
- our pursuing God's word to find its meaning for us,
- is so that we might have God with us continually,

enabling us to go out and do his will.

And yet, who of us can deny that much of the time we simply do not have the presence of God in our hearts, the assurance that he is walking with us.

We seem to be trying hard enough.

Why isn't it happening?

For the same reason that Simon the Pharisee in the above gospel episode sat next to Jesus at the table and felt nothing of God ...

... while the prostitute weeping at Jesus' feet was flooded with God's glory.

For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite."

Isaiah 57:15



Jesus is the fulfillment of this prophetic word from Isaiah.

In him, the high and lofty One,

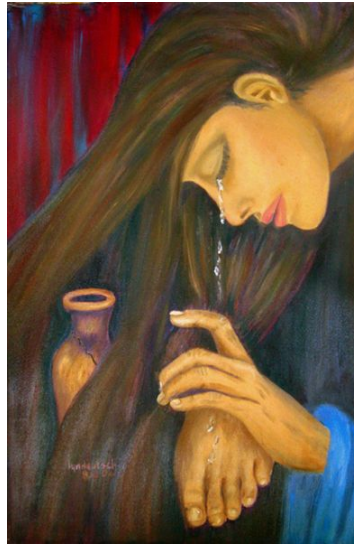
- who inhabits eternity,
- whose name is Holy,
- who dwells in the high and holy place,

...comes also to dwell with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit ... to revive the spirit of the humble, to revive the heart of the contrite.

Whenever Jesus' word and Spirit are present, if there is a contrite heart, that heart will be revived. While the heart that is not contrite will remain blind, unmoved, unchanged.

Hence, this woman who had made her living as a prostitute, comes in with her wealth in an alabaster flask of ointment and lavishes it on Jesus.

It was like pouring out her whole life on Jesus' feet.



Simon the Pharisee who had never committed adultery and who had been tithing since he was thirteen, and who was in many respects a good man, was giving Jesus something too – a meal – doubtless a sumptuous meal, but hardly Simon's life.

And because Simon was pouring out so little he wasn't getting much out of this dinner. His eyes were unable to see who this Jesus really was. Nor could they see the miracle which was taking place – the transformation of this woman, the cleansing, the reviving, as the glory of God entered her heart.

In the one essential the woman was light-years ahead of Simon the Pharisee. Those tears falling on the feet of the Master were coming from a broken, contrite heart. That was what Simon lacked. Most of us, even if we know that our lives are messed up, are still at heart like Simon the Pharisee.

- We are drawn to Jesus,
- We know he's wonderful,
- We delight to have him as a guest at our table,

- but somehow we aren't able to break down and receive the blessing Jesus bought for us at such a price.

"Lord, it's a comfort to be in your presence. What a blessing to eat at table with you!"

And yet, we can't seem to bring ourselves to pour out our lives. And when someone like this woman comes along and seems to be able to walk right in and lavish everything on Jesus and find peace, it troubles us.

"Why is it possible, Lord, for this woman to get so close to you so fast?"

"How come she walks out of the house totally changed and never goes back to her old ways while we keep struggling with the same weaknesses and defeats?"

"Because this woman has one thing, Child, you do not have: a contrite heart."

"When you bring me a contrite heart I will be able to do for you as I did for her. I will be able to send you away in peace filled with the glory of God."

For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite."

Oh that God would help us come to his Son's table with a contrite heart!

1. A contrite heart accepts responsibility for its sin...

...It doesn't shift the blame.

Our tendency is always to come up with an excuse. Every vile thing we do is someone else's fault.

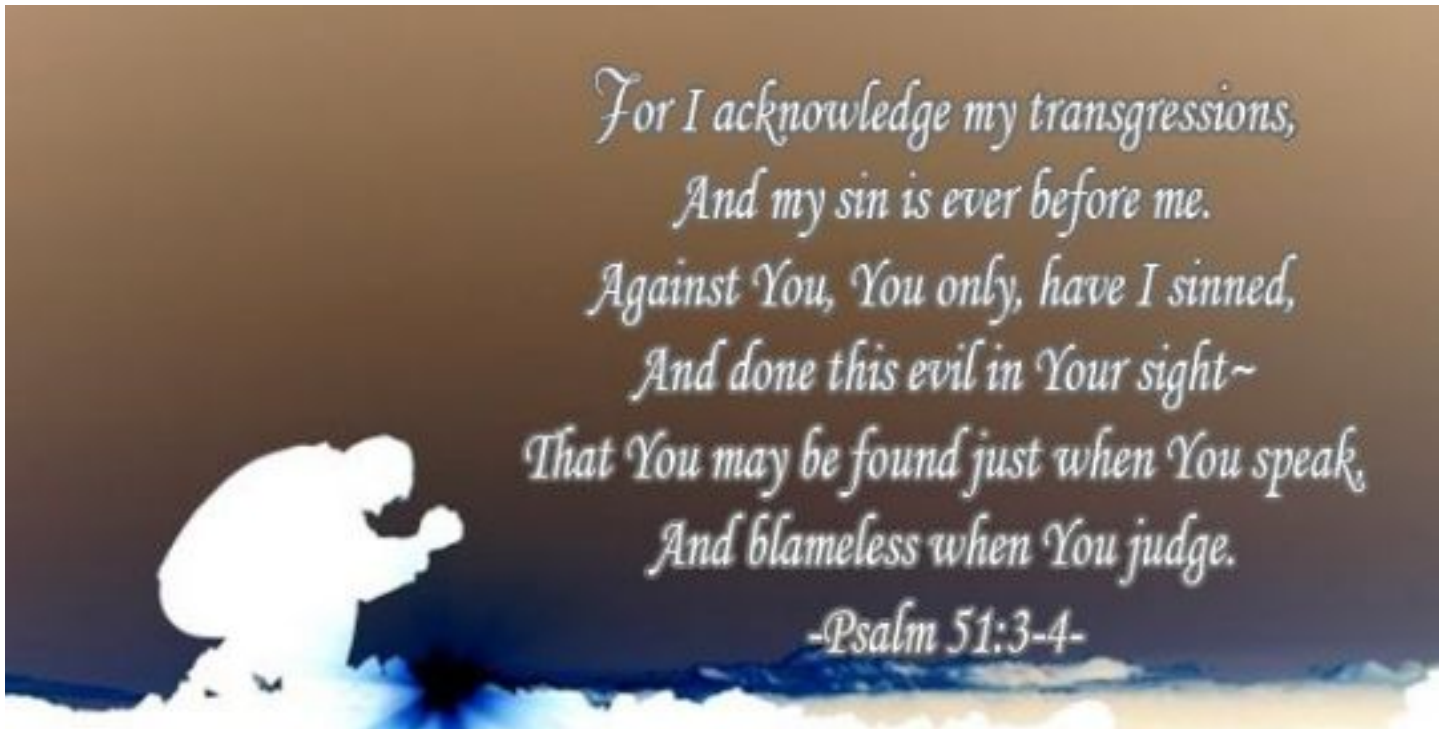


- My mate drove me to become the hard person I am.
- My mother neglected me.
- My father rejected me. I never had a chance.
- I've always been a victim of circumstance.
- Everyone I ever got close to let me down.

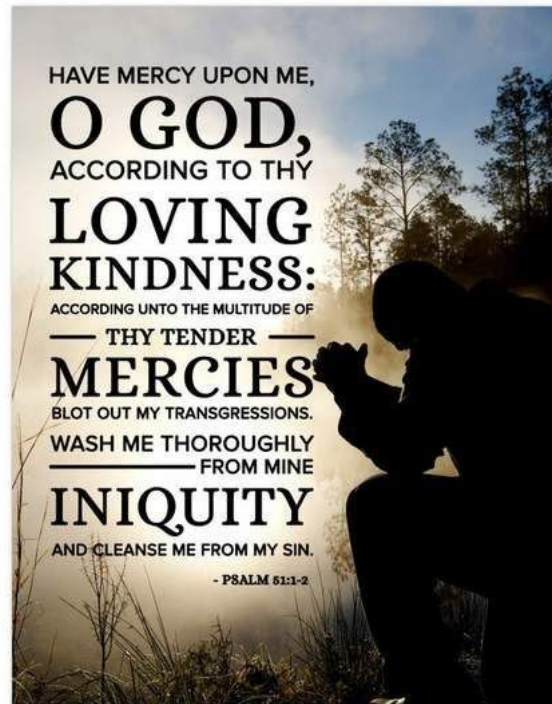
But how different everything looks the day we give up shifting the blame and accept full responsibility for what we've been, what we've done, what we are.

Others may have sinned against us but that didn't make us what we are.

- We made those choices.
- We passed by those opportunities.
- We failed those people.
- We spoke those lies.
- We inflicted that pain.



2. A contrite heart sees the greatest need of its life as forgiveness.



Often we seem to think that forgiveness is the last thing we need.

"All I need is a break!"

"If only I had better circumstances!"

"If only I had a little more money!"

If you got that break, and all that money, the emptiness in your heart would still be there.

Our greatest need is to be forgiven by the living God day-by-day.

The day this becomes our prayer, the day we begin to see how totally Psalm 51 applies to us, is the day we meet God.

3. A contrite heart earnestly desires to change from its old ways.

There are those who seem to want God's peace but they really have no strong desire to live a different life.

They get cleaned up, then they go right out and wallow in the mud again.

This is a sure sign that while the heart may be uneasy it isn't contrite.

Create in me
a clean heart
O God,
and renew
a right spirit
within me.

psalm 51:10

"Lord, I want to walk a new road. I want to live a new life. I want to break out of my old ways and enter into your joy, your mercy, your purity, and your goodness.

Lord, I want to change!"

**4. And finally, a contrite heart does more than just wish –
desiring its desires sitting in a chair.**

It gets up and pursues!

A contrite heart will go to any lengths, make whatever changes necessary to find God's peace.

So this woman takes the most precious thing she has, an alabaster flask of ointment and hurries to the house where Jesus is, defies the contempt of the righteous men at that table. Her heart is set on one thing – the peace which only this holy man can give her.

Not one word does she speak. Just tears.

She drowns his feet with her tears, wipes them with her hair, kisses those feet with the purest kisses of pure love her lips have ever given.

"Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."



How far are we willing to go to find that peace?

For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite."

Jesus is asking for only one thing from us:

A contrite heart!

God help us to bring his Son a contrite heart that he may dwell with us to revive our spirit and revive our heart.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You who are high and holy, we need your presence within us. Without you we are dead inside. Tender, Merciful Lord, show us how to truly bring to you contrite hearts and humble spirits. Help us to break our alabaster jars. We pour our lives at your feet. We acknowledge our sin against you, our vileness, our dark hearts all we are, say and do. We seek your forgiveness. Have mercy on us, wash us of our sins, erase them forever. For they separate us from you. Change us. Give us new hearts, tender and loving and burning with a passionate desire for you. May we rise up cleansed... revived in spirit and heart... ready to pursue the peace you offer us and delight in living your will.

Maranatha Mirror Messages



THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN