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Whiter than Snow

By Teresa Hampton

Today is one of those cold, wintry days. Snowflakes are falling and beginning to lay a white blanket on everything. It brings to remembrance a song we sang many times during worship when I was a child.

The words of the song “Whiter Than Snow” likely came from David’s prayer in Psalm fifty-one. His adulterous affair with Bathsheba and the taking of her innocent husband’s life weighed heavily on his heart. Particularly moving are David’s words, “*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*” Just a few verses before he said, “*Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.*” Blot out. Wash me. Cleanse me. His prayer strikes at the core of our great need to acknowledge sin and hunger for God’s forgiveness.

David pleaded, “*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit*” (verses 9-11). Create. Uphold. Restore. David understood that God’s forgiveness is powerful.

When I feel that I have disappointed my Lord, I meditate on David’s soul searching prayer. When I doubt the power of God’s forgiveness, I read again Psalm fifty-one. When personal failings bring me to my knees with a broken heart, the memory of David’s psalm leads me to seek God and likewise plead for His great mercy. And I sing, “Lord Jesus, Thou see-est I patiently wait. Come now, and within me a new heart create. To those who have sought Thee, Thou never saidst No. Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow; now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

Today’s Verse: *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart – these O God, You will not despise (Psalm 51:17).*

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