

(During the sermon the verse from George Fredric Handel's Chandos Anthem, "Have Mercy On Me" will be played.)

On Repenting - February 10, 2016

By Wayne J. Schneider - Glorificatus Te

Confession Brings Joy

Psalm 51:1-17

Psalm 51 is an appeal for God's mercy. King David confesses his personal sin, that spins in his mind like a music track stuck in our memory. It is against God that he has sinned. Here the penitent asks for a new beginning starting with an eager heart.

Ash Wednesday precedes the season of Lent. The Protestant church has historically ignored this day, in part because it is a day focused on sin. We are often reluctant to face our sinfulness because, of our fear and doing so is not considered politically correct. Society's response to sin is often, "*Does it really matter what we do? Who cares, anyway?*"

Ash Wednesday provides the answer and Psalm 51 speaks its truth: "*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.*"

(playing of musical track)

King David, a member of the Bible's Hall of Fame, understands his need of forgiveness and renewal. Now is always the time for restoration. Of course, the idea that we sin is hard to swallow, because Americans have fallen victim to the "I'm OK, You're OK" syndrome. Left to our own devices, we tend to choose our way and not God's way.

It is God who invites us to be the people of God. David pleads, "*Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.*" Joy is one of the gifts of the Christian life. We don't produce joy Only God can do that! We sing, "I've got the joy, joy, joy, down in my heart!" but only because God gives it! Humanity longs for joy and tries to find it in a frenetic search for ecstasy.

The entertainment business is a memorial to our culture's decline of joy. Being

entertained is not itself a bad thing. One look at the parables of Jesus reveals his impeccable timing and sense of humor. It is lunacy to imagine that authentic joy may be found in the entertainment industry. Joy is not something we can do or buy. Our need is not for distraction but cure. The remedy stems from a dynamic relationship with Jesus.

As we begin our journey into the spiritual desert of Lent, may we discover God's joy, as we confess our sin and live in the hope of continual renewal in Jesus Christ. Alleluia.
Amen.