

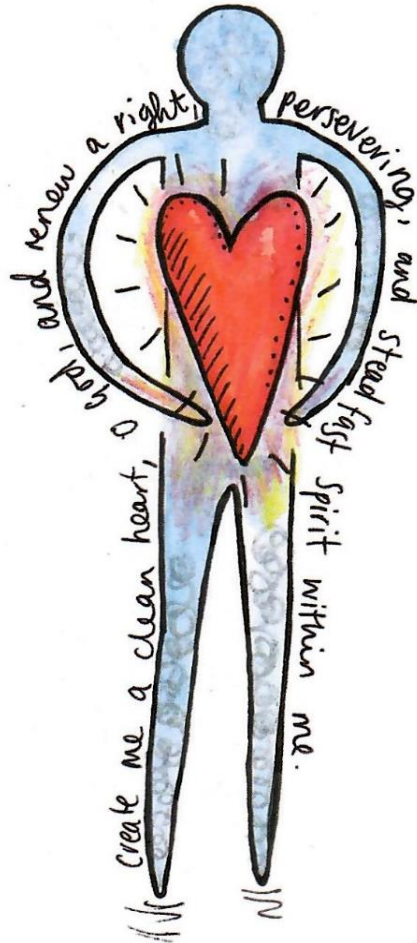
# PSALMS OF HOPE

## United Church Ferndown's 2023 Lent Programme

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March

Reflection #29

### WHAT DOES SORRY REALLY MEAN?



lmo. kelp 51 6/7/15



#### Pray:

My Lord: thank you for the daily journey you are taking me on. Thank you that you and you alone guide my footsteps. You go before me, you are ever with me, your hands steer me and you always lead me on the right paths. As I commit each day to you, I know Lord that you will always direct me, inspire me, teach me and discipline me. How can I but praise you for this journey that you are taking me on, in the full knowledge that your loving arms are with me for the entirety of the adventure. By your strength Lord, help me today, and always, to give ALL praise, glory and honour to your holy name. **Amen.**

## Introduction:

Before I became a Christian, I hurt a close friend very badly. I betrayed her trust and lied about some important things in my life; and, to make matters worse, I did not do it just once, but I did it throughout a period of two years. It all ended suddenly. I woke up one morning in floods of tears – I just could not stop crying. My Dad panicked and called the person who was closest to me at the time – the very friend to whom I had been such an awful person. What could I do? Say sorry, and that would make it all okay? This double life that she could never forgive, she would hate me forever, and rightly so, I thought. I did say sorry, between tears, garbled explanations, and excuses. She did not hate me forever, but she showed me God's love in action; she brought me to a saving knowledge of Christ and said the prayer at my baptism. She is my friend now and it is a friendship of 35 years and counting!



## Read:

### Psalm 51:1-4,10-12 & 15 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.

<sup>2</sup>Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

<sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.

<sup>4</sup>Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. ...

<sup>10</sup>Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

<sup>11</sup>Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. ...

<sup>15</sup>Open my lips, Lord,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.

## Consider:

David was chosen by God but he still messed up. Before we judge David too harshly, haven't we all at some time turned our back on what we know to be right and gone our own way? James writes **'If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them'** (James 4:17).

So, what do you do when you have sinned against God? You say sorry! But sorry is not a passive word; although not a verb, it is a **'doing' word!**

David knew he had messed up, big time! But he and we cannot put things right without God because we have nothing to bring but our brokenness, but God brings love. We know that because he sent his son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. We need to acknowledge our sin and seek to make changes in our life. If 'sorry' is just a word, then nothing will change, but if God uses our sorry to open our heart to his way, his truth and his life, then change must happen. I am not saying we will never sin again, but if we put our trust in God and seek his guidance then we are seeking to live a life of faith and service.

Once we have said sorry, we need to believe that God will forgive us, and that is hard because we put our own human values on sin and whether it 'deserves' forgiveness. But God is not limited like us. He wants to free us from the chains of guilt and shame, so that with humility and peace we can serve him. Repenting and believing in God can be the start of the biggest adventure of our lives.

**Pray:** Ask God to show you the things that you need to say sorry for in your life. Remember he sees everything, and he wants to forgive you for everything. He wants to set you free and he wants you to accept that freedom as a free gift from him to you.

**Try it out:** Fill a bowl with water and place your hands in the water. If you are able, wash your face and hands as you pray a prayer for forgiveness. Say you are sorry to God and feel his healing love seep into every pore of your being as his peace and grace fill you to overflowing.