



## Diocese of the North Carolina

### Formation for All series:

#### What can words do?

#### Re-visiting the Psalms in a God-awful time-

## Video 2

### Confessing our Chaos

#### Opening Prayer

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

#### Discussion Questions

1. Dr. Davis opens with the idea that the psalms help us confess our chaos. And that we are often addicted to that chaos.
  - What is your relationship to chaos? Is it additive?
  - How might the chaos or disorder distort us and prevent our creativity?
  - How might we detach from the chaos?
  - How does God's *hesed*- earnest covenant loyalty—inform and strengthen your faith?
2. Re-read Psalm 51 translated by Ellen Davis-
  3. Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your covenant-love/*hesed*/τὸν, according to Your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.
  4. Completely cleanse me from my wrongdoing, and from my sin make me pure.
  5. For my transgressions I know, and my sin is before me always.
  6. Against You, You alone, have I sinned, and what is evil in Your eyes I have done—so you are in the right in Your sentence, and clear when You render judgment.
  7. Yes, in iniquity I was birthed, and in sin my mother conceived me.

8. Yes, truthfulness You desire in hidden places; and in what is concealed, You teach me wisdom.
9. Strip sin from me with hyssop, so I may be pure; wash me, so I am cleaner than snow.
10. Let me hear gladness and rejoicing; let them thrill – the bones You have crushed!
11. Hide Your face from my sins, and all my wrongdoings blot out.
12. A pure heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me [“in my core”].
17. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise,
18. for You do not desire sacrifice – else I would give it; burnt-offering You do not favor.
19. Godly sacrifices – a broken spirit, a broken and crushed heart –  
O God, You do not despise.
20. Deal well in your favor with Zion; You will (re)build the walls of Jerusalem.

- Dr. Davis calls Psalm 51 the quintessential psalm for Lent. How does this Psalm 51 speak to you in Lent?
- The sin in this Psalm is focused on self and self-understanding. What is your reaction to sin in this psalm? How might it be freeing? How are we called to see ourselves just as we are? How is that connected to covenant?
- The psalm teaches us that God is still invested in us no matter what we have done. How does that influence our relationship between you and God?
- How might we be invited to self-forgiving? How might that be different from self-forgiveness?
- How might Psalm 51 help you find a word of grace for yourself and those around you?
- Think about the last line of the Psalm 51: “Deal well in your favor with Zion; You will (re)build the walls of Jerusalem.” How might we ask God to restore us through repairing the chaos and disorder?
- What does it mean that we open morning prayer with “O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise?” Are we saying this line in isolation or are we saying this prayer the context of the whole psalm? What is a “verbal echo” you hear?

### **Closing Prayer**

Most holy and most loving God, by your Spirit unclutter our hearts and minds this day, and enlarge within us a larger space for Christ.

Being enthused and possessed by his costly glory, may we glorify you in the totality of this service of worship, and be better resourced to glorify you in the common daily-ness of this new week.

Whenever discipleship proves costly, help us to embrace sacrifice as readily as we accept our many blessings. In his name and to your praise; **Amen**

