

22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

## Psalm 51

It has been said that the most important single word in the English language is the word “Sorry”. It comes from the Old English word related to **sore**, meaning pained or distressed and in its common meaning relates to expressing regret or penitence. People who use that word are often hoping to hear the most important four words in the English language “I will forgive you.”

Sorry is a word that has been used by many people over the years including members of Parliament. But we have to understand a little more about what it is to be sorry. Some people say they are sorry because they have broken the 11<sup>th</sup> commandment. You know what that is..... “Thou shalt not be found out”.

They are not sorry for the deed itself just for the discovery. King David in the Old Testament did not apologise because he had broken the 11<sup>th</sup> commandment, he repented because he broke four of the original ones. You may remember the story. He coveted another man’s wife, Bathsheba, stealing her from her husband, whose murder he subsequently arranged after committing adultery with her.

The greatest King of Israel failed spectacularly and it needed Nathan the prophet to bring him to his senses. He told David the story of a rich man who came to his poor neighbour and took his only sheep which was the family pet and served it up as a lamb roast for a party he was giving. David was incensed by the story, and then it dawned on him that he was that man.

David failed spectacularly and apologised unreservedly. He was forgiven and wrote Psalm 51 as a result, but lived with the consequences of his sin for the rest of his life. His child died, the sword never departed from his life, his family life disintegrated, and he was not allowed to build the great temple to God that he wanted to build.

None of us are perfect and we all need to say sorry from time to time. We condemn MP’s who have made fraudulent claims, in my field we condemn scientists who steal other peoples work and pass it as their own, or those who make unjustified statements that affect others adversely.

But we also should remember that when we point one finger at others 3 fingers are pointing back at ourselves and I wonder what two thirds of the world say about our life style in the other third?

So, let us try and live distinctively during this time of uncertainty for us, and poverty for much of the world. Oh, and by the way do you know what the most important two words and three words in the English language are? Thank you and I love you.