

Thought for the Day 23rd October - John Reed

Read Psalm 51

How often do you wash your sheets? (Please don't ring me with the answer!)

A recent survey of 2,000 people in the UK found that 30% of Brits said they washed their sheets just once a year.¹ I'll let that sink in for a minute. Once. A. Year. To be fair, that means that 70% wash their sheets more often than that. But still ...

Not surprisingly, experts say this is not a good idea. Apparently, this can lead to a build-up of bacteria, mites, and itchy skin. Not to mention the smell, surely?

It doesn't end there. 18% admitted to only washing their jeans once a year. And when it comes to underwear, while most wash them after every wear, 25% of men and 13% of women wash their essentials after being worn five times, and 10% of men and 3% of women apparently only wash theirs after ten outings.

Maybe it's something to do with being a cold climate, and people not sweating so much? It would be interesting to see the stats for Australia. (And once again, please don't ring me with yours!)

The Bible often describes sin as making us dirty, or unclean. Isaiah 64:6, for example, says: "We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment." This reflects Isaiah's earlier comment, when he saw the Lord (presumably in a vision), and he was high and lifted up and the train of his robe filled the temple, and the foundations shook at his voice (Isaiah 6:1-4). Confronted with the awesome glory of God, Isaiah said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (Isaiah 6:5).

Here in Psalm 51, written by David when Nathan the prophet confronted him over his relationship with Bathsheba, another man's wife, David pours out his heart and confesses his sin, saying: "According to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!" (verses 1-2), and "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (verse 7).

David knew that he needed to be washed clean. And that it couldn't wait until next year's washing day.

We too need to confess our sins and pray for healing (James 5:16); trusting that when we do God is faithful and just and will forgive us and purify us from all our sins (1 John 1:9), and will bring us times of refreshing (Acts 3:19). By contrast, those who keep silent, who don't confess and seek forgiveness waste away (Psalm 32:3) and do not prosper (Proverbs 28:13).

How often do you put on the spiritual wash? Please, please, let it be much more than once a year!

¹ <https://metro.co.uk/2020/10/16/a-third-of-people-only-wash-their-bed-sheets-once-a-year-13431864/#:~:text=A%20third%20of%20people%20in,to%20keeping%20up%20with%20washing.>