

Time yet to find

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Bible Text: Psalm 32:6

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Congregation, tonight the year 2019 comes to an end and this year went like a train, unstoppable, fast. Jacob used another example, the example of a pilgrimage and he said in Genesis 47 to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years." Then he says, "few and evil, few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." And we read in Psalm 90, "For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told." It goes fast. This is story, you tell it to them in a story, a chapter. It's over so quick and so life goes fast. It's fleeting. And I always look at the last day of the year as there is a door at the end, a door at the end of the year 2019, and we all go through the door at 12 o'clock and that door closes behind us. But before, just before we go through the door, we look back. That's what we hope to do tonight, look back. What was this year like? What were my sins like? Who was God like? And tomorrow morning, the Lord willing, we look forward to the new year. So we look tonight backwards and tomorrow, the Lord willing, forward.

Now when we look back, you wonder if there is some unfinished business. You look and you wonder is there something that needs to be solved first. Can we even leave this year this way? Wouldn't it be nice if things would be solved tonight between you and your brothers and sisters and husband and wife, something that you cannot continue on with, you have to solve it before you leave this year? And maybe in between God and your soul, be special if tonight something would be solved. So that's why I have chosen Psalm 32 and there is one specific verse in Psalm 32 that speaks about the time. You may have missed it. It's kind of hidden in between there. A time to find, a time to seek, that's the time we have received. Psalm 32:6a, the first part of verse 6, "

6. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found

For this, that is the reason, for this shall, must, everyone that is godly, God-fearing, pray unto thee in a time, what time? In a time when thou mayest be found. A time when thou mayest be found.

The theme for tonight "Time yet to find." Three thoughts. A time of hiding my sins, you see that in verse 3 and 4,

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. 4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.

So that's maybe you tonight, hiding, not acknowledging your sins. Secondly, a time of confessing my sin, that's very close to our text, "a time that thou mayest be found," to confess our sins in the time of grace. And in the third place, a time of forgiveness of sins. That's how this Psalm begins,

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

So time yet to find: a time of hiding my sins; a time of confessing my sins; a time of the forgiveness of my sins.

Congregation, you remember Psalm 51 as well, right? Psalm 51 and 32 are very close, the background of David's sin with Bathsheba, Uriah, you know that, but yet there's quite a difference between 32 and 51. What is it? Well, 51 is a prayer, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." He's really directing himself to the Lord. "O Lord, forgive. Be merciful unto me a sinner. Don't take thy Holy Spirit away from me." The 51st is a prayer, not so with 32, 32 is almost a thanksgiving song, a song of praise. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." But then he mentions, David mentions in this Psalm yet what happened and how this sin was forgiven, and how he received that blessing that he's talking about. Then he is honest, "When I kept silence." There was a time when David didn't want to talk, didn't want to talk about all things except about one thing, his sins. He tried to swipe it under the carpet. He tried to hide it from people. He didn't want to let it surface in his own heart either. He just wanted to put it out of his mind, his sins. He didn't want to think about it at all. He wanted to be positive. He wanted to be happy so he was keeping it silenced but it was like pushing a ball underwater. When he tried to do that, the deeper the ball goes, the more pressure there is to get it up and he kept silence but his "bones waxed old." Now your bones are the strongest part of your body, quite firm, but they are waxing old like a garment is waxing old, that's the word. So he felt worn. His bones felt weak. He could hardly stand up anymore and walk anymore. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old," and there was a roar in his life. Nobody heard it. It was a kind of a groaning within, unhappiness inside. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." Something was not sitting well. He looked old. People saw it, "You're not happy, David. What's the matter with you?" "Oh, nothing." And he knew it but he suppressed his sins. He kept silence and day and night the hand of God was heavy upon him, as if the Lord with both hands was condemning him and people put pressure on him. Day and night, he could often not sleep at all, "day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." He was withering, had no energy, could not continue with his life, felt so tired.

So that might be true somehow tonight for you. Kind of cranky, unhappy, something not sitting right, not being able to confess your sins. You feel kind of guilty but you don't want to admit it. Is that not what people are by nature, more or less? With gross sins or less gross sins but anyway, anyhow, kind of suppressing it, not wanting to admit it that we are sinners against a holy and righteous God? Here I read in Genesis 3, "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Blaming someone else and blaming the serpent. "And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." And so we have a tendency to be silent and to blame others and not to feel too guilty yourself, trying to defend yourself like Cain did. The Lord was asking Cain, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" And he said, "I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?" so there is a tendency in people to say that our sins are not that bad, that it could have been worse, and so make God a liar and his word is not in us.

So tonight will be a good night to have something solved, would be a good night to open your mouth and to confess your sins, and to become real with God because something can be solved tonight. Still this evening hour, it belongs to what we read in this verse 6, the time when thou mayest be found. It's finding time. It's time that the Lord still wants to deal with people and is inviting us to come unto him. You would say, "But what sins do I have to confess?" You know that better than I do. Your bosom sins? Have you wholeheartedly confessed them before the Lord or are you still trying to keep it silent and you just try to not be too serious about it? David ruined his life. You know he fell into gross sins and he admitted that he was born in it and he had to express himself very clearly, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." He tried to cover up his sins but shame and fear and wondering if the Lord would be good and forgiving at all.

Are you minimizing your sins, our first thought. Let's go to the second one: confessing my sins. Then it happens in verse 5, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee." To become honest, that's so awe-inspiring, that's so beautiful. There came a time that David could not keep it in anymore. He had to talk about it and he had to go on his knees and he acknowledged all his sins unto the Lord, between God and him alone. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee." Acknowledged, that "to know" is in there in English but also in Hebrew, to know, "I knew my sins, I realized my sins, I experienced my sins, I kind of tasted my sins, the bitter taste of it. I felt my sins. I was grieving about my sins. I acknowledged my sin, not the sin of others but my own sin." And sin meaning something that is not pleasing to God at all.

So "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid." That is the tendency, to hide it, but he said, "I could not hide it anymore. My iniquity, my intemperance, my weaknesses have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD." Transgressions, that's quite a word. That is a word with the word breaking in there, to break with God, to rebel with the Lord, to not listen to God at all. And he said, "I had to confess my transgressions, not my mistakes, not my faults, not my failures, but my transgressions, and I confessed them unto the LORD, and the LORD forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

You know, Isaiah speaks about that as well and the Apostle Paul. They all speak about that time. I think Isaiah is quoting in Isaiah 55, is quoting Psalm 32, and he writes, you know this text, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found." What does that mean? "Seek ye the LORD," I gather what that means, but "while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." While he is near? Or 2 Corinthians 6:2, "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." What is that day that thou mayest be found? What is that day that the Lord says, "Seek me while I may be found"? That's the time of grace, right, and that time of grace is from our birth to the end of our life. That's the time of grace. That's the time that he may be found. But let's be careful. It does not mean that is the time that you have a chance to be converted. That's not what it means. Of course, it is a time that it could happen. It means so much more. It does not mean it's the time that you just should use the means calmly and relaxed and just enjoy the time of grace and hope that something would happen. That's not what it means.

It says, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found," while he is to be found, while he is to be found immediately. There is no waiting room. There is no queue. There is no time that you have to wait because the Lord would be reluctant. No, time of grace is the time that you can receive grace now, immediately, tonight. The Lord is ready to forgive tonight. Tonight you could be forgiven. You don't have to wait until tomorrow, do you? Do you have to wait until tomorrow? Do you have to wait maybe for 10 years after now and say, "Lord, I don't know. I just ask that maybe in 10 years I'll get it." Don't you think the Lord is willing to give it today? Does the Lord not say, "Today if you hear my voice, harden not your hearts"? The Lord says today and then the Lord is not willing to give it today? Won't make any sense.

I looked it up in the margin of the Dutch Bible, very trustworthy commentary, where elders are probably familiar with that, and I looked up Isaiah 55:6, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found." What does that mean according to the margin? And they say, "God offers his mercy with an invitation to repent." So meaning the Lord offers his mercy today, that is, the time that thou mayest be found, that's what the time of grace means, that the Lord is waiting for you, that the Lord is stretching out his arms unto us so we could leave the year 2019 on a positive note. You don't have to leave this year unconverted. The Lord can still do wonders.

So the time of grace is not a time that you might receive it, it's not a time that you should seek it in the hope the Lord is willing to give it someday, it's more than that. The Lord is willing to give his grace unto them that whole-heartedly repent and acknowledge their sins, and not only acknowledge their sins but are also sincere about that, and do not only admit their sins but grieve about their sins. It's possible to admit something, right? Your dad says, "Did you do that?" "Uh, yes, I did." But you don't feel sorry. That's possible, right, that you admit something you don't feel sorry for. But if you confess your sins and you feel sorry for it, then you belong to those in whose spirit is no guile, and then if you acknowledge your sins and you don't hide your iniquity, I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin, that follows right

on. It maybe follows on that. If someone truly confesses his sins, then he receives forgiveness immediately.

Also our Heidelberg Catechism speaks about that. In the Heidelberg Catechism we read about the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and those keys of the kingdom of heaven are important, and they entail that if someone confesses his sins and takes refuge to the Lord Jesus Christ, that that person needs to be pronounced forgiven, that from the pulpit we may say, "Thy sins have been forgiven thee."

Now if someone says tonight, "That goes too easy. That goes too easy, that's not right." I see your point because it's not something trivial, it's not something small. It is something only the Holy Spirit can work. It's something people resist. It's something that people don't even want. We'd rather keep hiding our sins and not acknowledging them but the Holy Spirit is able to yet bring people to their senses and to let them acknowledge their sins and to let them receive God's grace today, if you hear his voice, not hardening the heart.

"For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found." Every one that is godly, that's godliness. What is godliness? That there is no guile. That you admit your sins and you know your sins, you're grieving about your sins and you're coming to the Lord and you become honest with him, and you don't hide anything, you don't keep anything behind and you just pour out your heart before him, expressing how unworthy you are of life and are worthy of death and hell. You won't be disappointed. You won't be disappointed. The Lord will not say, "I have to think about that." The Lord won't say, "It's only for a few." The Lord will receive in mercy.

So the forgiveness is God's grace in the Lord Jesus Christ, but there are prerequisites and the prerequisite is to confess your sins and to be sincere and to be genuine, not merely admitting your sins and rejecting your sins as repugnant, and if you don't feel repulsed in your heart about your sins, then you don't repent of it. You only acknowledge your sins when you feel your sins, so I invite you to acknowledge your sins although I know that the Holy Spirit only can bring you there. But although only the Holy Spirit can bring you there, I still have to call and still have to say, "Oh, acknowledge thine iniquities," like Jeremiah said.

So why is that confession of sin necessary then, and why would it would be so fitting tonight if you would confess your sins? Why is it so necessary? Because every sin, I say this with reverence, is a slap in God's holy face. Every sin is. And if you only admit that but don't hate it, something is wrong. So we must admit sin and hate sin and be ashamed of our sins and see what sin is like, and then confess our sins without guile. You know, if you don't take the advice of someone, financial advice, something else and you say, "No," that's an insult, especially if that person is wise and you say, "I'm not listening to you." But that's our nature regarding God. We don't take his advice and the Lord takes that so personally, so the Lord wants us to not only admit our sins but the Lord wants us to also grieve our sins and hate our sins.

Do you see the difference? First, "I kept silence, my bones waxing old through my roaring all the day long, day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah." He makes a point of it, puts emphasis on that, but then, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee," unto God," that's a precious time when the hearts break, "and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD," unto the LORD with capital letters, Jehovah, the Almighty One, because the Lord does not want to only overlook sin, the Lord wants to take them away, and he wants to change people. The Lord is interested in having a relationship with his people and therefore the sins need to be out of the way, they need to be admitted, confessed, and hated.

Today if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts, the time that thou mayest be found. So also tonight is an excellent night, an excellent day to confess your sins, and I hope you're convinced about this, that you could receive forgiveness tonight, that you could receive that if you come honestly for your sins, without guile, or as it says later in this chapter in the last verse, "Be glad and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." The upright ones and I know by nature you are not upright and you're not free of guile, but that's what it says in this Psalm. If you come honestly without any pretenses, with that void in your heart, with all your sins and guilt, not defending yourself in one way. If you come the way you are, you won't be disappointed and then you could end this year still on a positive note and you could end this year yet in happiness. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

It brings us to the third thought. First, we sing.

Congregation, you know what the Beatitudes are, don't you? The Lord Jesus spoke the Beatitudes on the Sermon on the Mount with seven times, "Blessed are... Blessed are... Blessed are..." Right? Do you know that also the same way Psalm 1 begins, and also this Psalm, two times even, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed," again, two times, blessed. What is that? What does that mean, blessed? Blessed new year. What is blessed? Could you substitute the words? Someone says, "Fortunate." Some would say, "Happy." Well, that's also a good translation.

Let me give you an example. If someone is sick, he might not feel sick. When someone says, "I feel sick," that's something else than to be sick. To be sick is a fact. It's objective. To feel sick is how you experience it. Two sides of the story. How it is, how you feel. And that's also with the word "blessed." God's people are blessed. They simply are. But this word also means they feel like that. Happy. "Happy is that people whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." That's a real, true, deep, divine happiness. And it will be so great if you could end this year with that happiness, right? And that would be really meaningful when people say to you, "Happy New Year," you say, "I know what that means." Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

It's possible yet to leave this year with that happiness. Are you craving it? Do you want it? Do you want the true happiness in the forgiveness of your sins? Do you say,

"Minister, that's my heart's desire, to have my sins forgiven. Nothing else makes me happy. I can't be happy in any different way." You know, this is the time of grace, the time that he may be found, the time of forgiveness, the time that the Lord says, "You don't have to wait. It's available right now." I thought about that sentence, available right now, and I just wondered could I say that or not? And the longer I think about it, the more sure I am about it. The problem is our unwillingness. The problem is our insincerity. But from the Lord's side, he is ready to forgive. The Lord is happy to give you that happiness, but then you have to acknowledge all your sins without guile, not only admitting your sin but hating sin, and that's the work of the Holy Spirit, right?

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven." Transgression, we talked about that, that is the rebellion, breaking with God, revolting, and that's in my heart, isn't it? In my heart is that tendency of breaking with God and making my own decision and disagreeing with the Almighty One. Transgressions, transgressions forgiven. It says in the original lifted up, taken away, brought somewhere else, like the Lord Jesus' name, "Thou shalt save my people, he shall save my people from their sins," from their sins to take it away.

Would you like your transgressions to be forgiven and your sins to be covered? Covered. If something is not covered, it's visible. If something is not covered, you can just look at it. See? The facts, that's what happened. Your sins bare in public before God's eyes. The Lord sees them uncovered but the Lord is able to cover them, to make them invisible, to make them irretrievable. Same example as letting them sink in the depths of the sea. Same as as far as the east is from the west, so far as he removed our transgressions from us. That's all in here, "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. O blessed and happy is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, does not credit it, does not lay it to people's charge, but he forgives it and takes it away. He does not impute iniquity upon his people and whose spirit is no guile."

Forgiveness. The Lord is willing to conceal that sin and let me quote that text from Paul in 2 Corinthians 6 again about this, "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." It does not mean next year. That means today, the day of salvation.

"For this every one that is godly will pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be feared." But how is it possible? How is it possible the Lord is doing this? Well, let us let the light of the New Testament shine on this and those words that we talked about. It said silence, right? "When I kept silence." If someone should not be silent, it is the Lord Jesus. He could have spoken up and said, "I didn't do it. This is so wrong. This is injustice." But he was silent before Pontius Pilate and so often silent before his prosecutors, he didn't say much back. He was silent for his Father because he was willing to absorb the wrath of God. He kept silence under wrath he did not deserve. He was like a lamb, like a sheep before the shearer is dumb. He opened not his mouth.

And also think of the Lord Jesus on the cross. He was at the very end of his life, very end, one look back, he looked back upon his lifetime, he was going to die, right? The door, the

door was going to open and to close behind him but one more time he looked back upon his life almost 33 years on earth, and he looked at it and he said, what? He said, "It is finished. I did it all right. I did not make any mistake. There was no guile in my mouth. There was no sin in my thoughts. I was perfect. It's finished." And he finished it all so that people that can say that at the end of the year can yet be saved. You don't have to say, right, looking back, "It's finished. I did it all right." But he did and that's why he is the only Savior. And yet his bones waxed old, yet the hand of God was heavy upon him, upon the Lord Jesus Christ. He did not acknowledge any sin because he had no sin. No guile in his mouth, yet his moisture turned into the drought of summer. He said, "I'm athirst."

So this Psalm is so clear about Christ, "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found." That is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is his meritorious work, to find it, to find grace. So congregation, it is the acceptable time yet, the time of grace also tonight that you may bow your knees tonight, young friend, and say, "Lord, I've heard there is forgiveness with thee, and I heard the Lord is willing to forgive today." Really, the Lord is willing to forgive today but you are not willing to be forgiven. That's the problem. Oh, we fell so deep and yet the Lord is holding out that blessedness. How does that sound to you, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." So the Lord is inviting and calling us, or like the Dutch margin said, offering his grace with required repentance that we have sinned against a holy and good-doing God.

Congregation, the Bible is the most wonderful book. Always new things. It's self-authenticating. It proves itself. It shows the greatness of God. It touches the heart of God's people. It is obvious it is divine. So I would say go over that first part of this Psalm again tonight and try to spell it out and to go over the words word after word and say, "O Lord, that this word might be the word for me today before I leave this year, before I go through the door." Let's not forget that you go through the door of this year, to the year 2020. You can't go back anymore and that's not only true for the year, it's true for the week, that's true for every hour, that's true for every minute, and you cannot spend it twice. You can't spend money twice, you can't spend time twice. Only one time you can spend it. So 2019, confess it before the Lord and say, "Lord, there was a whole year, I may have wasted my time and wasted my energy, but I seek forgiveness in him who was silent under the mighty hand of God. All in him is grace." Amen.