

# Psalm32

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

sin, forgiven, david, forgiveness, god, lord, verse, iniquity, psalm, wicked, instruct, pause, confess, notice, life, shouts, steadfast love, teach, deceit, speaking

## SPEAKERS

Jim Stevenson

Please turn your Bibles if you would to Psalm 32. You'll notice in the bulletin the title of this sermon is the blessing of forgiveness. And I hope you see not only the blessing of forgiveness, but also motivation that flows out of that forgiveness. Psalm 32 This is the word of our God, a maskull of David bless. It is one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Bless it is a man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. Day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. You are a hiding place for me. You preserve me from trouble you surround me with shouts of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule without understanding which must be curbed with bit and bridle. It will not stay near you. Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but the steadfast love but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy all you upright in heart. The grass withers in the flower fades with the word of our God stands forever. So we've been making our way through the Psalms, especially even as was noted earlier in the service, this first book of the Psalms, how there seems to be a general confrontation with the unrighteous, a war, if you will, between the righteous and the unrighteous. And then we come particularly to Psalm 32. And we see something rather interesting There is all what it is mission, that he should be counted among the unrighteous. And indeed, that's really the case for all of us. Except for the grace of God. We speak of being forgiven. forgiven is not forgetting. You hear the expression, forgive and forget. Well, for one thing God can't forget. It's not possible. But he can actively choose not to hold your sin against you. That's the beauty. That's really what forgiveness at its heart is all about. not holding sin against you. Well, this is Psalm 32, as indicated here, a maskull some Sort of musical or even as a footnote in the SV has musical or even liturgical term. It is written by David and many connect this song to Psalm 51, which we'll see in roughly 19 weeks, give or take. That's all I'm 51 we know is the song that David wrote right after Nathan confronted him with his sin with Bathsheba and murdering of her husband. Now chronologically speaking because of the nature of this Psalm and the nature of Psalm 51, most believe that Psalm 32 is actually written after Psalm 51. There's more of the experience of forgiveness that is here whereas Psalm 51 praise for forgiveness. The two are not

mutually exclusive. Mind you, indeed. Our life should be one of for forgiveness, we finally come to Psalm 32. A Psalm that many like a psalm that is even alluded to in the New Testament, particularly those first couple of verses about not having our sin imputed to us. But it's more than just being covered. It's more than just gone simply saying to you and to me, that's okay. Wink wink, forget about it. All of those things, not a big deal. Well, sin is a big deal. And because sin is a big deal to be forgiven of our sins is also a big deal. What I hope to show this afternoon is simply this the blessing of forgiveness from God should motivate us to Life of joyful obedience. The blessing of forgiveness from God should motivate us to a life of joyful obedience. We'll look at this under two headings, first of all, the joy of forgiveness. And then secondly, the encouragement to godliness. So first of all, the joy of forgiveness again, verse one, bless it as one whose transgression is forgiven, who sin is covered. Verse one and two actually are saying the same general thing, except maybe that last clause there in in verse two. Not that it's unrelated. There are three very clear and very related words with the fourth being a bit more specific. Three things it's almost like a proper transgression, sin, iniquity, and then the fourth one, much more specific deceit. All are given to express the comprehensiveness of sin. Its nature, the heinousness of sin. transgression, we think of just simply like trespassing, crossing the line that you shouldn't cross, sin, just moral bankruptcy, and then iniquity just not measuring up. You're supposed to do this, this is the standard, but you only are up to here. Or in the case of sin, maybe way down here. And then of course, we know deceit a very specific kind of set. So we have these expressions here to show us the comprehensive nature of sin to show us the heinousness of sin. Yet at the same time, in the midst of these words, what David is telling us is that it's blessed to be forgiven of these things. And so while the use of these words all synonymous with sin, tells us it's comprehensiveness, David does this to show us the comprehensiveness of his forgiveness? You see, it's not as though Well, I'll forgive your iniquity because you know, nobody can really measure up anyway. But your transgression over here now I can know. It's the totality of your sin that's forgiven. As heinous as sin is, how glorious is it to be forgiven. How blessed it is. Bless it is the one whose transgression is forgiven, who sin is covered. Bless it is the man against whom the Lord towns or reckons no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. Now, as we look at that last clause in particular in whose spirit there is no deceit, such a person who's been forgiven has been shown his need has been shown the need to deal honestly, with himself and with God, and with others. So of course, that would follow from the others, in whose spirit there is no deceit. One who has been forgiven is an individual who is reckoned himself a sinner because he really is who has confessed his sin before God who can no longer hide it, and he has to be honest, you understand that confession? Sin involves honesty. And it's more than just saying, I'm a sinner, please forgive me. Particular sins, confessed, particularly. But the beauty is those who do are forgiven. They're covered. It is no longer recommend to your account sin is no longer imputed to you. That's the grace of God. forgiveness from God and it is ultimately in Christ. And as such, it is so very freeing. That's just not metaphorical. The language in Scripture that speaks of being set free from the bondage of sin, you really are. To be forgiven is so freeing. More than that, that it's the Lord who forgives you. As Jesus said, He who was set free will be free indeed. that sin is no longer imputed or recommend to you bless it is the one whose transgression is forgiven. Now notice what happened. In contrast, David talks about when he wasn't being so honest. When I hid my sin when I kept silent my bones wasted away David describes his life living in sin, living without forgiveness, living in that See fullness of I'm okay. his bones wasted away through groaning This is a rather graphic description of something that for David lasted all day notice that night and day. It's a solemn picture of what the feelings of real guilt can do. No Well how I worded that, the feelings of real guilt. It's not merely the feelings of guilt, it's feelings of real guilt. They

can waste you away of the feelings of real guilt or not getting to your conscience. That's a different issue. And that's a scary situation. But at the same time, we need to understand that although it is real guilt, you're set free through the forgiveness that is offered in Christ Jesus So objectively speaking, you who confess your sins, you who repent and turn, you're blessed because you're forgiven even if you don't feel it because God has declared it to be so, and honestly brothers and sisters, who are we to argue with him? Though we deserve it not, he declares us forgiven. But until then, we see what happens with David, he wasted away the real guilt. Sometimes we can feel guilty even though we're not you ever experienced that? Oh, man, I really feel guilty for doing this. Well, you didn't do anything wrong. It's sort of like stop apologizing for what you didn't do. But in this case, that David recognizes he's really guilty and he feels guilty that this time they go hand in hand. Brothers and sisters when you are guilty and you're feeling guilty because of the real guilt, that's actually a grace, that the Lord is pressing upon your conscience so that you return from your sin and no longer hide. Because otherwise you'll be like, David, your bones will waste away through the groaning day and night. Notice, notice what David says here in verse four, day and night, your hand was heavy upon me my strength was dried up as my heat of summer. You see here that those feelings of guilt that heaviness was brought upon by the Lord Himself. Christ reminds us as we'll see, when we get to it in John's Gospel, that it is a spiritual Lord that convicts us of sin and righteousness and judgment reminds us of these things the Lord's hand heavy upon us. In one sense, truth is not determined by our feelings. But on the other hand, we shouldn't ignore them either. Because maybe those feelings of guilt have something behind them. Maybe we really are guilty. Rc Sproul and one of his sessions I don't even remember what the topic was. He spoke of counseling somebody or talking with somebody that he was that he was speaking with and the person says, I just can't get rid of these feelings of guilt and RC as subtle as He always was. said that's because you are And sometimes it's true. We feel guilty because we are and God's hand is heavy upon us weighing us down. But in verse five, we see the experiential letting go of it all. I acknowledged my sin to you and I did not cover my iniquity. I acknowledge or made known, probably brings it home a little bit better. You can see the root is the same, made known my sin, my sin actually is first in the clause my sin I made no. It's in the emphatic position, as is my iniquity and the next clause. No longer did he cover his sin. Now, Isn't that fascinating? David just got done talking about how blessed it is to have sin forgiven, but he does not cover his sin. He lets God do it for him. You understand you can't cover your sin. Only God can. But the beauty is he does. He does really and truly you acknowledge your sin you confess before him. And notice the reaction it David even retells his conversation with himself. It's it's somewhat reminiscent of the prodigal son. He's looking at those pigs pods and looking and saying, boy, that looks tasty because he's that desperate. And the text comes and tells us Jesus telling the parable reminds us, he came to himself, and he conversed with himself and he said he was going to go home. He's going to tell him that his father that he said that he was going to make himself Servant etc, etc. That's really what David is doing here. I will say, I sinned, I will confess my transgression to the Lord. And notice what happened David just skips right to the end. You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Doesn't that seem so simple? I've got news for you. Good news, gospel news. It is. And thanks be to God that it is because what hope would we have without it being that simple. confess your sin. He will forgive you. Acknowledge Your sin particular acknowledge your sin and your sins and He will forgive you. You will toss it aside your way forgave, and as such he received the blessing of no sin counted against him. Now you may notice this is actually in verse five the second see law there. Many think and there's we can't be dogmatic about it that it's some sort of musical pause to consider and think stop for a second. Some people will read it I generally don't because it's intended

if it's a pause, it's intended to pause not be read. But first for day and night, your hand was heavier. upon me in verse four, my strength was dried up as the heat of summer. pause and think about that. I acknowledged my sin, I will confess and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Pause. Take a moment and let that sink in. All you do is confess your sin and he forgives you. Is that not worth taking a step back? Just pausing reflecting on the reality that now you who deserve nothing but God's wrath have been forgiven. Don't pause to think about such things. We don't pause to consider What's just been said. But we need to, I confessed and God forgave. That's it. faith in Christ, trusting in Christ, confessing sins, penitent Lee, leads to forgiveness. But then, of course, David wishes to share this truth. And this leads us into our second point, the encouragement to godly live godliness. look now at verse six. Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found, surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. Now the word therefore is not technically there, it's more something like this for this. Let everyone who is godly In other words, the for this is everything that David just talked about everything that I just experienced. explain to you and experience the my low life. You go now and seek it. Do the same thing I did. Confess and you know what will happen you'll be forgiven to understand verse six is a gospel message. And so brothers and sisters, you want motivation to go out and share the gospel. It's your very own forgiveness that you've received. You should be the first in line. You should be at the gate like a racehorse ready to go. And when the gun sounds off they go. Because you've been forgiven. Now you can go and tell others. Seek the Lord while he may be found. He said saying let the godly offer prayer while God may be family David's experience leads to the exhortation toward others to experience the same forgiveness and the same part and notice that David is just not keeping it to himself. I've got forgiveness, this is for me. You go over there because my friends, there's enough forgiveness to go around because we serve such a gracious God and a mighty Christ died for our sins. How can we not share that truth with others? What joy Asli good news. Seek the Lord while he may be found you've experienced forgiveness. You have known this you are blessed. Is it not? Should it not then be natural to call upon others to pray to God while he may be found? And even in the rush of great waters, a metaphor for chaos in life, the chaos of life will not reach him because that person is now secure in God. He's free. He's forgiven. Verse seven, David returns to himself, you are a hiding place for me, you preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts of deliverance in the midst of proclaiming the gospel, encouraging others, he takes a step back and offers thanksgiving to God. You see, he's so moved by the message itself, that even in the midst of encouraging others, he sort of has to take a step back to himself and just acknowledge God's greatness and love toward him. You are a hiding place for me. How fascinating it is what a contrast because he used to be the David is sin. Now he hides himself in God. He hides himself in God. It's not like hide and go seek. Sometimes I still want to play to be honest. But the Lord is is hiding place he is his safe place where harm will no longer befall him. And it's precisely because he's forgiven. you preserve me from trouble you surround me with shouts of deliverance. No will Live in modern technological ages, like going to the movies, and even we call them home theaters where we sit in surround sound where the sound just envelops you and it's everywhere around you and it's so cool. How much better is it? That shouts of deliverance surround you? You talk about surround sound. The reality is, no matter where you turn, shouts of deliverance come from that direction. Truth and the reality that you have been set free in Christ. Now the unbeliever needs to be surrounded with shouts of deliverance, calling on them to heed that call. And so my question for all of us is Are we as the church surrounding the unbeliever with shouts of deliverance? Do they hear it? And Shouldn't we be the ones proclaiming it? Precisely because we've experienced it. And those shouts surround us and notice

again, a pause to reflect and think. As you come to verse eight, the ESV doesn't quite bring this out. There's a shift in the subject. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. Most commentators and I'm inclined to agree think that this is now the Lord speaking. I will instruct you and teach you and the way you should go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you. It is the Lord who now speaks is the Lord who teaches and notice again multiplicity of words to drive home the point I will instruct that is it has the emphasis on giving insight, almost illumination, Oh, I get it. Teach, of course here is the idea of direction direct. And then of course, counsel advice. But notice also these are being done in the midst of the Lord's i upon you. Now, as we think about that the Lord's i upon you, there are two ways to take this and I think both are in view, we ought to pause and reflect on this, you would think this might be a place for that liturgical pause. But God's eye is upon you, you recognize that that is both a comfort and a warning. It's a comfort because you've been forgiven and the Lord is still instructing you, his eyes upon you. He'll be with you wherever you go. But it's also a warning because he sees everything you do. And so as a warning, it's also an encouragement not to sin. We all know if certain people were around, we wouldn't do that thing. Kids are great with this when the parents come in the room, I'm not doing anything. And we'll do it also in the workplace when the boss comes in, Oh, hi, that Solitaire window. But God is always watching and we seem to think that because we don't see him physically, he's not there, but he is his eyes on you. And that should also be a comfort. He instructs you. He directs you he illumines your mind. He Send you along the way and he counsels you. And he's watching you to see where you will go. So that if you start to drift, guess what he'll do? will kind of kick it back on the path again. And see that's a comfort because if you really think about a you and me, we will quickly go off and drift but his eyes upon you, his loving, gracious, forgiving i is upon you. And it's remarkable to me that the Lord will instruct he doesn't just forgive, he instructs us, he teaches us. You see, the gospel message is more than just about getting saved. It's living out of that salvation. Vast, we need God's instruction. We need God's guidance. We need his commands, his statutes, his judgments to teach us to direct us. The Lord doesn't simply forgive. as wonderful as that is. He teaches you righteous living. He teaches you godliness. He guide you and direct you. I don't know what to do in this situation he teaches you. I don't know where to find it. Well, yes, you do. And of course, this becomes once again another one of my favorite passages to jump on the soapbox, of the importance of corporate worship, to go to the place in which he gives that instruction to sit under it. You feel lost and aimless No direction in your life. Have you been under the preach word? Of course that means the one preaching needs to be true to the word. That's certainly true. But we need to be guided by him. But it's interesting because David continues, he goes in verse nine with with further instruction from the Lord be not like a horse or mule without understanding which must be curved, with bitten bridle roll, or it will not stay near you. You can lead a horse to water but right you've heard the expression and you've also heard the other expression stubborn as a mule. That's us. We have to be honest. I know we don't like to hear it, but it is true. That's you. That's me. Constantly and we're being encouraged. Don't be like that and see the horse in the mule or picked here because they don't speak. And they in order to be led, they need bit and bridle. Otherwise they're just going to wander off. But see, God is trying to tell us that his law is actually freeing. It's not a bit and it's not a bridle and you don't need to be yanked. Instead, his law is gracious. It is a way of life. It is a way to stay on the path. It is his instruction. He tells you with the horse, you can tell the horse as much as you want, it's not going to do anything. Yang yank the rope. That'll get them to char I fear that too often the way we live our lives, we become more like the horse that need that rope to yank us back. So this encouragement from the Lord, don't be like that. Then you also have some more instruction, this time about the wicked in verse 10. Many of the sorrows of the

wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. So we have a parallelism. That's antithetical. We've got the wicked, and then the righteous, the wicked and those who love the Lord. There's the contrast and you see the sorrows of the wicked. Now you may be taking a step back and realize, hey, we're in the book of songs. Elsewhere the Psalm is complains about the prosperity of the wicked. But the truth of the matter is, they really are in a sorry state. Else Where we see how David himself speaks of he sees their ease their money goes into the house of the Lord and he knows there and many other sorrows of the wicked. And a lot of time, the prosperity and the fun that the wicked seem to have is just a cover to hide their good times their seats of power and position and popularity. It's all just something behind which they hide from God. But contrast that with God's steadfast love that surrounds those who trust in Him. Remember earlier what surrounds David shouts of deliverance here it is God's steadfast love his said covenant Love for his people, his loving kindness, His mercy. The wicked have sorrows. You who trust in the Lord have his steadfast love. And it's not something that's just something you grab and hold on in your pocket, or stick in your backpack. It sort of rounds you. If anything, you're in its pocket. You are completely enveloped by God's steadfast love. And this leads then to some imperatives and verse 11. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice so righteous and shout for joy all you upright in heart and that first portion Be glad Rejoice. There's synonymous words are different in Hebrew. And you legitimately could just simply translate that as rejoice and rejoice. And other words, rejoice. But notice it's rejoice in the Lord. Because it's the Lord who grants forgiveness. It's the Lord to whom we tend to turn and acknowledge our sin, and he forgives the iniquity of your sin. It's like what Jesus had to teach all those around him. When you had the woman washing his feet with that perfume and her tears and our air and people were thinking, you know, if you knew what kind of woman this was, you wouldn't be allowed This Jesus uses her as an object lesson. Who's going to love more? The one forgiven little have one forgiven much? all it was an obvious answer. This woman had been forgiven much and couldn't help but show love to our Savior. Do you understand what you've been forgiven from? When you do, how can your heart not burst forth enjoy this song to him? You also understand that your life of obedience is one long, joyous act of worship. Yes, we gather corporately. We must we have to We're commanded to, but it's a joy as privilege. But even as you are blessed upon leaving here Your life is one of worship, joy, US acknowledgement of what God has done for you and forgiving your sins. forgiven much. And here's the beauty of verse 11. The command to be glad the command to rejoice, the command to shout for joy all synonymous, but notice who he's addressing, O righteous and also you upright in heart. How can that be? It's because you've been forgiven. More than that the sins been removed, and the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Now clothes you Is that not reason enough to shout for joy? You need motivation to clean living. You've been forgiven. You've been made clean. Lift that way now. be joyful in your obedience because you've been forgiven. This is such a wonderful gospel song. In the midst of the confrontation of the righteous and the wicked, David comes to a realization and as we should as well, in addition to him, I should be among the wicked but because of his grace, your cold, righteous you're described as upright and when you fail and you will we struggle with sin. The Lord is there to instruct you, to guide you, to direct you so that you may again give shouts of joy This is our God bless it indeed is a man who sin is forgiven. Amen