

Blessed Are the Forgiven
Psalm 32
Reading: Genesis 2:10-17

Bethany Baptist Church
June 13, 2021 (a.m. service)
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...pray...

I know my transgression, and my sin is ever before me... My sin is ever before me...

That was David: *King & adulterer; Hero & schemer; Poet & murderer.*

He *covered* his sins & *languished* in guilt for weeks...*months.*

Then God sent the prophet Nathan to *rescue* David...w/ the *truth.*

So Nathan appeared before the King with a story about a *poor man* and his lamb, a *rich man* and his greed.

Nathan ended his story like this: ***“Thou art the man!”***

The King was *struck* through and through... *“I have sinned against the Lord...”*

Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

David *confesses*...David is *forgiven*...David is *free!*

Turn w/ me to Psalm 32 (one of the OT seven penitential psalms).

The *poet* is David (superscript & Paul’s reference in Roman 4:6).

The *occasion* is David’s moral collapse in the *Bathsheba Scandal.*

The *time of writing* is after *Psalm 51* (compare tone) & after *Nathan’s courageous confrontation.*

David *labels* Psalm 32 a *maskil* → perhaps a psalm of *instruction* or *reflection.*

David’s *theme (big idea)* is ***forgiveness*** – the *joy of forgiveness* experienced through the *confession of sin*

Psa 32: David’s invitation to glory in your forgiveness (2X).

- 1.) vv.1-2 – *Blessing of forgiven sin (introduction).*
- 2.) vv.3-7 – *Testimony of a forgiven sinner.*
- 3.) vv.8-11 – *Promise of a forgiving God.*

The blessing of knowing your sin is forgiven.

1. David's *first 2 verses* set the tone for his psalm & seem to serve as an *introduction*.
 - a. This hymn is going to be all about *forgiven* sin.
 - b. And all about *being blessed*.
 - c. In fact, let's begin by noticing **vv.1-2 & 11** (**1st** & *last* lines).
 - i. David launches with *blessing* (1,2)...
 - ii. ...and lands (11) with *shouts of joy!*
 - iii. So the idea of *blessing & rejoicing* are *bookends* that should *inform* your understanding of David's anthem.

2. Let's *drill down deeper* on some of David's *vocabulary*, beginning w/ the familiar word ***blessed***.
 - a. To be *blessed* superficially means to be *happy*, but in Scripture the idea is much richer. To be *blessed* is to *experience the favor of God*.
 - b. The concept of *blessing* appeared in the *first entry* in the Psalms (Psalter) – *Psalm 1:1* – *How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked*.
 - c. Jesus, of course, used the concept of *blessing* over & again to begin His *Sermon on the Mt*. e.g. "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted*." As in...*mourn over their sin*.
 - d. David uses the term here *twice*, in quick succession. Once in **v.1** & then again in **v.2**. His usage is similar to Jesus'. *How blessed is he whose sin is forgiven...and, How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity*.
 - e. David uses the term in the *plural* (Hebr), as if to say ***multiplied blessings are on the soul of the forgiven sinner!*** 😊
 - f. Clearly, David's *goal* is for you & me to stop & consider just how *fundamentally & irrefutably* wonderful it is to be *forgiven of the sins which have severed us from God!*

3. Speaking of *sin*, Psa 32's introduction features a *trifecta of sin-words*. David evokes **3** distinct yet related terms to underscore that *sin* is the *enemy* of the soul of God's people.
- a. "*transgression*" (1) – (Heb. *peshah*) – *departure, rebellion, defiance*
 - b. "*sins*" (1) – (Heb. *hataa*) – *to go astray, to miss the mark*
 - c. "*iniquity*" (2) – (Heb. *awon*) – *corrupt, twisted*
 - d. For David to carefully arrange these **3** expressions of *iniquity* is not simply *good poetry*, it's *good theology*. It emphatically reminds us of the ever-present *threat* of our flesh. → Even the *man after God's own heart* fell – he fell *far* & he fell *hard*.
4. But the *real theme* of David's hymn isn't *sin*, it's *forgiveness*. And again, David deploys a *triple crown of forgiveness expressions*.
- a. "*forgiven*" (1) – *taken away (off)*; as a burden lifted.
 - b. "*covered*" (1) – like the *ark* covering the mercy seat or *sea* covering Pharaoh's chariots. Spurgeon points out that *God sees everything*, yet in Christ He covers our sins so completely that in some sense *even He can't see them!*
 - c. "*not imputed*" (2) –
 - i. To *impute* is to *credit* or *reckon* something to someone that was **not** formerly true of them. Like Christ's *righteousness* being *imputed (credited)* to sinners by *faith alone*.
 - ii. David draws on the *opposite* of *imputing* to point out that *forgiveness* means God **won't** *impute* your sins to you.

5. Let's stop & apply David's introduction on the *blessings of being forgiven*.
- a. First, I want to simply do a *re-run* of something Paul writes about in Romans. *Forgiveness & justification* must go hand in hand!
 - i. God *justifies* you because Christ's *substitutionary, sin-bearing* death made it possible to *forgive* you.
 - ii. Paul ties the two ideas of *forgiveness & justification* together when he explains Psa 32 in **Rom 4:6** – *just as David also speaks of the **blessing** on the man whom God credits righteous apart from works*. Then he goes on to quote these **2** verses.
 - iii. Paul's point is that *crediting righteousness & **not** crediting sin* go *hand in hand!* You can't have one w/o the other.
 - b. Second, I want to remind you of a fundamental message of the Bible (made very plain in the Gospel): ***You can know your sins are forgiven (2x)***. No matter how *heinous*. God forgives sin based on *faith!*
 - i. **Psa 51:17** – *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.*
 - ii. **Psa 86:5** – *For You, O LORD, are good, and ready to forgive.*
 - iii. **Lk 7:48** – *“Your sins have been forgiven.”*
 - iv. **1 John 1:9** – *When we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
 - v. You can be *assured* that your sins are *forgiven* & therefore that *you are right with God*, based on *faith in Jesus*. Now *that's a blessing!*

Here is wonderful, happy, exciting, live-changing truth: you can experience the blessing of knowing your sin is completely forgiven – (re-read vv.1-2).

David is ready to stand up & share the *testimony* of a forgiven sinner.

1. As I read *David's testimony* (3-7), let me *point out* a few things to you:
 - a. David's grammar changes from 3rd person to 1st & 2nd. David is now speaking *about himself* and he is speaking *to God*.
 - b. His grammar also changes from *present tense* to *past*; David *turns back the hands of time*. The memory isn't *pretty*, but it's *helpful*.
 - c. David's testimony is punctuated by 3 Hebrew *exclamations* (markers): "*Selah*"! → vv.4, 5, 7. They *mark the movement* of the confessing king's testimony. Watch these things as I **read vv.3-7**.

2. In vv. 3-4, David compounded his *transgressions* by stifling his *confessions*!
 - a. We know about David's *adultery & conniving & murder*, but the poet's *spiritual tragedy* didn't stop there. David now has another confession to make (3): *for the longest time, he didn't confess*.
 - i. Notice back in 2:b this thought: *no deceit in his spirit* (good!)?
 - ii. But David, at first, had refused to *come clean, to tell the truth*!
 - b. Yet God (love!) *wouldn't just leave* the king alone. God *pressured* David to *repent* (confess). God's *hand* was heavy on the *man*.
 - i. Can you imagine *how heavy the hand of God must be* when He wants to ***bring the pressure***! David *felt it*! (Perhaps you too...)
 - ii. A *guilty conscience* reduced David to a *groaning bowl of human jello*! His body (bones) *wasted away*! His *vitality* was *drained*.
 - iii. Ever felt absolutely *listless* on a *hot & muggy Missouri afternoon*? The *last thing* you want to do is ***anything***! That was *David*, and it was **God** bringing the *heat*!
 1. So, v.4, ***selah*** – *pause & think!* ...
 2. If you *deny* your sin, God's going to *lean* on you to *repent...pause & think about that!*

3. Steve Lawson points to **v.5** as the *psalm's pivotal verse*, here the *backslidden king finally gets it!* ... With a little help from the *Prophet Nathan*...
 - a. **2S12:** *Thou art the man!*” The *light flickers on*, David’s *hard heart melts*, & the king *confesses*: “**I have sinned against the LORD.**”
 - b. Again, the *poet-king* employs *poetic theology*! **Three** expressions of *confession* are matched w/ our **3** familiar expressions of *transgression* (**read v.5**).
 - i. *Acknowledge – admit; to own up to; take responsibility.*
 - ii. *Not hide – to reveal; bring out in the open (light).*
 - iii. *Confess – agree with*
 - c. Then *smack-dab* in the *dead-center* of David’s hymn is this *blessed assurance*: **You forgave the guilt of my sin! (2x) → Selah – enjoy!**
4. David gave his *testimony* for **your** benefit! He has some *counsel* (6-7): **come clean!** Pray (*confess, uncover, acknowledge*) while you still have a *chance!* **Read 6-7.**
 - a. God *heard* David’s confession & God *forgave*, *restoring the joy* of David’s salvation. **Therefore** ...you should do the *same!* 😊
 - i. Don’t *delay*. Don’t *languish* another day under Jehovah’s *heavy hand*. Don’t *presume* upon His *grace!*
 - ii. Your willingness to *repent & confess* is *evidence* (6) of your *born again godliness*. *All men wander – the godly return.*
 - b. God *restores* David & David *worships* God. There is a subtle *crescendo* of *confidence & assurance* in **v.7**. God is *refuge* (hiding place) ...God is *champion* (preserver)...God is a *fortress of victory* – *You surround me w/ songs of deliverance. Selah!*
5. There is a lot of *wise counsel* in David’s *honest testimony!*
 - a. Don’t *groan* under God’s *hand* another day...
 - b. *Confess* your sins & do so *immediately*.
 - c. Full strength assurance of *forgiveness & restoration* is promised.
 - d. Because *God forgives* the *guilt of your sin!*

God promises the blessing of knowing your sins are completely forgiven.

David's celebration of forgiveness concludes with God's promise to restore the contrite in heart. Read vv.8-11

1. David's grammar as we examine vv.8&9 is still 1st person, but now it is clearly *God speaking*, instead of King David.
2. What we've just read is that David *prayed* to God, *confessing* his transgressions, & God responded by *covering* (forgiving) the king's sins.
 - a. But God's *answer* to David's *prayer* doesn't stop with a promise to *acquit* David of his crimes. *God promises more.....*
 - b. God wants David to *put his feet* firmly back on the *path of faithfulness*.
 - c. So God *promises* to *help* David (8)! The LORD commits to *guide* David's steps.
 - i. Just like we've noted in *every section* of the psalm, David likes to emphasize his point with *triplets*.
 - ii. So God's *promise of active guidance* is painted w/ the **3** similar verbs (8) of *instruct & teach & counsel*.
 - iii. Think about God's *counsel* in v.8.b: "*I will counsel you with My eye upon you.*"
 - iv. God's *teaching* is **not** a *long distance learning program*; He *counsels* us with His *eye* on us.
 - v. Like a *tender mother* with an *infant* in one arm, guiding a *toddler* with the other; loving words of *instruction ... all day long!*

- d. *Refusing* God's guidance just *doesn't make sense!* Beasts of burden might *refuse* their master; might *require* a *steel bit* between their teeth.
- i. The mules' problem is he stays away from his master so the master has to bridle him with a bit in his mouth.
 - ii. Should *men & women* be just as *senselessly stubborn?*
 - iii. Beloved, **don't** stay away from God! *Confess* your sins (5) and *purify* your heart and hands (Jas 4), and *draw near* to God. He will *draw near* to you!
3. There are *unrighteous* people who **don't** think they need God or His forgiveness. There is *no fear of God in their eyes*.
- a. And there are men & women who *profess Christ* but don't seem concerned to *live a holy life*. God's offer of *instruction & teaching & counsel* doesn't seem very *compelling* to them...
 - b. Those are *foolish* responses! God simply warns the *unrepentant & the backslider & the worldly wanderer* (10): *many are the sorrows of the wicked*.
4. So Psalm 32 reminds us that there are really only two kinds of women & men in this world: *the wicked & the trusting*.
- a. The *wicked* will have *sorrows* in this life & *unfathomable sorrows* in eternity.
 - b. The *believer* will be *immersed* in the LORD's *steadfast, loyal lovingkindness!*
 - c. In fact, here in the midst of the **OT Psalter** is the timeless truth that we so often associate with the *simple clarity* of the **NT Gospel**: *trust...to trust in the Lord* is to *take* God's at His word & *believe* His promises.
 - i. *Forgiveness & assurance & lovingkindness* are *blessings* that God *pours* on men & women of *faith alone*.

5. **Psalm 32** was *launched* (1,2) w/ twin boosters of *blessings*, fueled by a *potent mixture* of ***forgiven*** transgression, ***covered*** sin & ***unimputed*** iniquity.

- i. *How blessed is He whose transgression is forgiven!*
- b. Now (11) David *lands* his anthem w/ ***high-decibel hallelujahs!***
(Vs.11 is ***loud!***)
- c. God has ***acquitted*** every crime, ***expunged*** every iniquity.
- d. God's people, ***imperfect but forgiven thru faith***, are counted *righteous & upright!*
- e. The *poet-king* has one final *emphatic triplet* (11) – a *triplet of praise* for *forgiven sinners*: *be glad, rejoice, shout for joy!*

I want to conclude with a very *simple*, & I hope very *encouraging*, summary of Psalm 32.

This is the testimony of a *man after God's own heart*...

...who went *very far astray*: *transgression, sin, iniquity*.

Yet all God required was David's sincere *confession & repentance*.

God promised to *forgiven* him, *restore* him & *guide* him.

The result was *blessings* – *gladness, rejoicing, shouts of joy!*

So Psalm 32 is an *inspired preview* of the Gospel ...

...God *forgives* the most sinful of men/women when they *turn* to God's Son and *trust* that He *acquits* their sin through Jesus' death & resurrection.

"How blessed – doubly happy – is he whose transgression is forgiven!"

...pray...