

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 6.23.2024

PSALM 32 - BLESSED ARE THE FORGIVEN

I. INTRODUCTION

Psalm 32:1-11

1 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah*

5 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. *Selah*

6 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.

7 You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance. *Selah*

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

9 Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,

which must be curbed with bit and bridle,

or it will not stay near you.

10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked,

but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord.

11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous,

and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

II. THE BLESSING OF FORGIVENESS

- The psalm opens with a beatitude, like we saw in Ps 1.
- Here, David blesses the one who has experienced being forgiven by the Lord.
- Blessed is the word “Happy”, David begins with how happy God’s people are whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.
- David is happy because his God has forgiven his sins.

- David uses three synonyms for sin and three verbs to denote forgiveness.
- “Transgression is forgiven”
- Transgression is an act of disloyalty, it is crossing a boundary, it is rebellion and resistance to God.
- “Forgiven” means to be “lifted,” “removed,” or “carried away.”
- Transgression against God’s moral law is like a burden upon the human soul and forgiveness is God lifting that burden off of us and carrying it away.
- “Sin is covered”
- The word for sin means “missing the mark.” It’s an archery term.
- Sin is falling short of the goal, missing what God has called us to aim at in our relationship with him.
- Forgiveness is God covering our sin; our missing the mark is concealed, it is out of sight, hidden from view.
- “The Lord counts no iniquity”
- “Iniquity” means “guilt.” The word denotes “going astray”, “deviating from the right path.”
- David writes that forgiveness is God not counting our guilt against us.
- When we sin, our guilt is added to our record of sins. Sin is debt that is owed. Sin incurs a penalty.
- But David says, “Happy is the man whose guilt, whose sin debt, is not counted against him.”
- God does not keep a record of it. The past record of sins is obliterated.

- These first two verses give us a picture of comprehensive forgiveness.
- It is a picture of the grace of God in dealing with sinners.
- In the OT, the way sin was dealt with was through sacrifice in the temple system and the priesthood.
- Leviticus 16:20-22 “And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat. 21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. 22 The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness.

- The whole picture shows the severity of sin and what is necessary to have sins atoned for, covered, and removed.
- Sin is not a mistake. It is an act of treason against the Holy One.
- It is a deliberate attempt to subvert what God has declared to be morally true and right, consistent with his character and what is truly good for us.
- But, these first two verses are saying that the Lord can completely forgive any and all sins we commit, no matter how serious.
- That is amazing news!
- But there is a contingency clause.
- V2 concludes, “and in whose spirit there is no deceit.”
- What that means is that we don’t attempt to deceive God or ourselves.
- We don’t try to hide our sin. We are honest before the Lord and honest with ourselves.

DAVID’S EXPERIENCE WITH UNCONFESSED SIN

- The best way to understand this is in what David expresses in the following verses.
- Psalm 51 is the most recognized of the penitential psalms. It was written after Nathan, the prophet of the Lord, confronted David regarding his sin with Bathsheba.
- Ps 51 is David’s plea for God’s mercy, he is asking for the Lord to blot out his transgressions, wash him from his iniquities, and cleanse him from his sin.
- He acknowledges how he has sinned before the Lord and he is seeking forgiveness.
- That Psalm does not indicate that David had yet experienced forgiveness, but was seeking it.
- Many commentators believe that Psalm 32 was written after Psalm 51, and that it is a reflection of forgiveness experienced after having tried to hide his sin.
- Consider David’s sin and his attempts to cover it up. You can read the account in 2 Samuel 11-12.
- V3 David says, “For when I kept silent...”
- His deceit was keeping silent. He was not open and honest before God, he tried to hide his sins.
- Instead of coming to God and having his sins covered through forgiveness, he tried to cover up his sins and conceal his sin from others. It began to consume him.
- V 3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.
- He was in distress and unrest. And the cause of that was not so much his heinous sin but his silence and his attempts at a cover up.
- Look at what David says is the source of pain.
- v4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.
- God’s hand was heavy on him. It was God’s hand of punishment that caused his distress and unrest.
- He felt like he was dying under God’s hand of punishment.
- Psalm 38 captures what David experienced with a little more graphic language.
- Psalm 38:1-8
- Notice the term, “Selah” after this verse. It’s likely a term for an interlude of some kind. It introduces a pause before the next lines are sung.

- So let's pause for a moment and reflect on the passage we have looked at so far.
- Do some of us keep silent, trying to hide our sins from God?
- It's our natural tendency to try to hide when we sin.
- Adam and Eve sinned and they tried to hide from the presence of the Lord in the garden. (Gen 3:8)
- When you consider where you are today in your walk with God, could it be that you are in some kind of distress and unrest because you have failed to confess your sin honestly before the Lord and come to him for forgiveness.
- Do you feel God's hand heavy upon you?
- When we harden our heart, when we conceal our sin, we maintain a posture of impenitence and fail to come before God, we are storing up wrath for ourselves, we are under judgment.
- The writer of Hebrews reminds us that God disciplines us for our good, and the discipline may be painful, but it is necessary to yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:7-11).
- When you refuse to confess your sins, the Lord must deal with you to bring you to repentance.
- Paul writes that it is that it is God's "kindness that is meant to lead you to repentance" (Rom. 2:4).
- Confess your sin to the Lord, your silence has detrimental effects on your relationship with the Lord.
- The longer you wait to confess your sins the more miserable you will be as we can see from David's experience.
- The blessedness of forgiveness is available to you in Christ.

III. THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS

- David's punishment drives him to confess his sins.
- 5 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. Selah
- David uses the same three words for sin as he did in the first two verses.
- But now he owns his sin, "My sin...my iniquity.... My transgressions"
- And he uses three words for his confession. David acknowledges his sin to the Lord, he no longer attempts to hide it, and he confesses his sin to the Lord.
- Take note of the immediacy of the forgiveness David experienced upon confessing his sin to the Lord.
- 2 Samuel 12:13 David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.
- In the psalm, David expresses his intent to confess his transgressions, and experiences immediate forgiveness.
- The burden is lifted. His sins are covered. The iniquity of his sin is not counted against him.
- That's the gospel in a nutshell. "And you forgave the iniquity of my sin."
- It is the grace and mercy of God!
- Let's pause and reflect on God's lavish grace and mercy!
- When you honestly confess your sins, there's immediate forgiveness.
- The riches of his kindness and mercy are inexhaustible.
- If God, before the coming of Christ, would immediately forgive David's many sins, all of his attempts at concealment, all of his silence, how much more will we be instantaneously forgiven of our sins after the coming of Christ.

- Christ already paid for our sins.
- His sacrifice has already atoned for our sins.
- Our sins were laid upon him and our sins have been lifted from us.
- God no longer counts our sins against us.
- Christ's righteousness has been imputed to us.
- When we confess our sins, we can be assured that they are forgiven.
- 1 John 1:7-9 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- That is so powerful and liberating.
- We don't need to hide our sin before God, it doesn't work anyway—he's sees it all.
- But if we confess, he forgives.
- That is the immediacy of forgiveness because of God's grace in Christ. It is promised!

DAVID'S INSTRUCTION

- V6-11 David takes what he has learned and uses his experience to instruct Israel.
- Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.
- His instruction to Israel is as follows:
- V6 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.
- When is the time to confess your sins? Now! At the judgment it will be too late!
- The rush of great waters evokes imagery of the flood judgment.
- Times of distress will come in the lives of God's people.
- But if they remain faithful in offering prayer to the Lord, David assures God's people that these destructive waters shall not reach them and sweep them away. God will keep them safe.
- They will be like the inhabitants of the ark who were preserved as the flood waters covered the earth.
- V7 You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah
- Don't hide your sin, hide yourself in God!
- That's the only safe place.
- That is the heart of the gospel message.
- In God there is safety from judgment, you are preserved, in God you will find refuge and security.
- "You surround me with shouts of deliverance."
- This is the glad cries of God's people in the temple, God has delivered them, God has rescued them and saved them.
- They shout unto God and sing praises to their Deliverer.
- Today, the local church is the place where a part of God's family comes together, and you are surrounded by brothers and sisters, who have experienced God's deliverance, and we all rally together under the banner of Christ to sing and praise God for the deliverance he has provided for us in Christ.
- You don't have to hide here, you don't have to isolate yourself when you are feeling discouraged, when you are feeling weak, when you have failed God, here you are surrounded by shouts of deliverance.
- We are forgiven people who cling tenaciously to the sheer grace of God in Christ and the forgiveness he has purchased for us.

- Another “selah.”
 - What a loving God, what a mighty God we serve!
 - When trouble comes our way, the rush of mighty waters will not overwhelm us.
 - God is our refuge, our hiding place, he will preserve us.
 - And we are not in this alone.
 - God provides us with a community of believers who surround us with shouts of deliverance.
- In v8, God himself speaks. He promises to walk with David into the future.
 - He will instruct and teach him in the way he should go so that he stays on the right path.
 - He will counsel David and keep a close watch on him.
 - God will be with him. God will be personally involved in David’s life so that he does not have to face the future alone.
 - He will be like a watchful Father!
 - What a comfort that is for us. Our heavenly Father will personally see to it that those who are forgiven in Christ, will be led on the right path.
- He addresses his fellow-worshippers exhorting them to stay close to the Lord, he will teach them the way they should go.
 - He tells them not to be like a stubborn horse or mule who has to be controlled with a bit and bridle because they want to go their own way and not stay close to their master.
 - Don’t let stubborn pride keep you silent in your sin, confess it and receive the forgiveness and guidance the Lord promises to us.
 - Seek wisdom, stay close to the Lord.
 - If you don’t, If you persist in sin and silence, the Lord will discipline you to bring you to repentance.
- Lastly, the psalm closes with more great news.
 - V10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord.
 - In contrast to the wicked who experience many sorrows and torments, those who trust in the Lord are surrounded by God’s steadfast love.
 - Those who trust are the forgiven.
 - The wicked trust in themselves. The wicked don’t see their sinfulness thus they see no need to seek forgiveness from the One they have offended.
 - But those who trust in the Lord, they are surrounded by the constancy of his enduring covenant love, protection, and faithfulness.
- David’s groaning all day long is changed into glad rejoicing and shouts for joy.
 - V11 is an exhortation for us to “rejoice” in the blessings of God’s forgiveness, protection, and guidance.
 - These blessings are for the righteous, who have placed their trust in Christ alone for their forgiveness and salvation.
- Maybe you’re here today and you’ve failed God, and you’ve been hiding, you’ve been keeping silent.
 - We have a God who pursues sinners and extends to them his grace and forgiveness.
 - Remember how Adam and Eve tried to hide from God?
 - Well, God calls out to them, “Where are you?”
 - Our loving heavenly Father seeks us out and offers us in Christ, grace, mercy, and forgiveness.
 - Turn to him, confess your sins, acknowledge what he already knows about you and receive his gracious offer to you in Christ.
 - He will forgive your sins.

- O what a blessing it is to be forgiven.
- Marvel at our gracious and loving God, who sent his Son to die for our sins, He is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world!
- May we joyfully dedicate our lives to serve, worship, praise and glorify Him who has forgiven our sins.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?