

BURDEN OF SIN TO JOY OF FORGIVENESS

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Scripture: Psalm 32

Psalm 32

*"How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered!
²How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no deceit!
³When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away
Through my groaning all day long.
⁴For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.
⁵I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I did not hide;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD";
And You forgave the guilt of my sin.
⁶Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found;
Surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him.
⁷You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble;
You surround me with songs of deliverance.
⁸I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go;
I will counsel you with My eye upon you.
⁹Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding,
Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check,
Otherwise they will not come near to you.
¹⁰Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
But he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him.
¹¹Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones;
And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart."*

Heavenly Father, let these words which You inspired through Your servant, David, come alive for each one of us today in our context, in our situations and in our circumstances. And Holy Spirit, would You etch these words upon our hearts in the way that we need to hear from You so that we would not only be led in a new understanding, but we would also be transformed into the way that You want us to walk. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

I want us to look at this psalm from two perspectives:

- In terms of how we would go about doing a Bible study,
- How we can look at it also from a sermonic point of view and which you're used to in terms of three points that get applied on a Sunday.

A psalm of David – a maskil. A maskil is the Hebrew word which actually means to instruct or to make wise. So, this psalm of David is meant to be an instruction or it's meant to provide wisdom for us in the situations and circumstances that we are in. The first thing that we need to do in a Bible study would be to break it down. Instead of looking at 11 verses in its totality, look at it maybe in terms of themes that seem to emerge.

So we look at the first two verses. it talks about the blessing of forgiveness, and I'm just giving captions as we go along with each of these themes.

The blessing of forgiveness. (verses 1 and 2)

How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. How blessed is a man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity and in whose spirit, there is no deceit.

So when the blessing of forgiveness rests upon us, three things happen:

- Our sin is covered,
- Iniquity is not imputed to us,
- There is no deceit. There is a sense that we come in sincerity and truth.

The consequences of unrepentant or unconfessed sin. (verses 3 and 4)

"When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer."

My body wasted away; I was groaning all day long. God's hand of conviction was heavy upon me and I had no vitality. I had no zest, no zeal for life. All of these are the consequences of unrepentant sin, sin that continues to lurk in our hearts, in our lives, in our bodies and which is unconfessed to the Lord.

The consequences of repentant hearts or confessed sin. (verse 5)

It's a turning point. *I acknowledged my sin to You and my iniquity I did not hide. I said, "I will confess my transgression to the Lord"; and You forgave the guilt of my sin.*

You forgave. When I turned to You, the result of turning to You was forgiveness and the lifting up of guilt from my heart.

One of the things that we continue to bear when we have unconfessed sin is a sense of guilt that stays upon us. it not only permeates our day-to-day affairs as we go around, but also permeates the relationship and the fellowship that we have with God. No longer can we walk around with God saying, "I enjoy beautiful fellowship with Him," because guilt gets in the way of that relationship. And so, the consequences of being repentant and confessing sin is that we have forgiveness and the removal of guilt.

Seek the Lord while He may be found. (verses 6 and 7)

Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him. You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance.

A truism, beloved! When we hold on to sin, fellowship with God is broken. We also run away from Him. We no longer approach Him. Just as Adam and Eve did when they sinned in the Garden of Eden, they tried to run and hide. And that's our response as well. We run away and hide. And so he says, even before that, the place that we need to be is a place where we go to Him when He can be found. He can be found in the times when we have beautiful fellowship with Him – to maintain that kind of relationship, that kind of fellowship so that we are never moving away from Him. In that place, God becomes our hiding place. Not the world, not the brush, not the sin that we are running to, but God becomes our hiding place. And he says that in that place, God then preserves us from trouble.

So, David is espousing here that this is the place that we need to make, the place where God becomes our hiding place, for in that place, we are secure, we are preserved from trouble and we are surrounded with songs of deliverance.

God speaks. (verses 8 and 9)

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go"

In this place where we are in God's presence, in the hiding place that He gives to us, God says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. The direction that you need to take, I will give you.

"I will counsel you with My eye upon you."

I'll give you the wisdom you need to be able to make the right choices. It's easy to follow when God says, "I want you to go in a particular direction." And it's very clear. The only issue here is obedience to do that. but sometimes God says, "Go ahead." We have multiple doors in front of us. and it's at that time that we require God's counsel and His wisdom to know how we need to operate in terms of picking the right door to go through. And God says, "I will not only instruct you, but I will give you the wisdom and the counsel to choose the right thing."

Then he says, "Don't be stubborn, don't be like a horse or a mule that needs a bit and a bridle to be pulled so that only then will it respond. Respond rather as sons and daughters of God who are able to embrace His will, to hear His voice and to be able to follow.

David's conclusion. (verses 10 and 11)

Many are the sorrows of the wicked,

But he who trusts in the Lord, lovingkindness shall surround him.

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones;

And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.

What is David doing in conclusion? He is contrasting the fate of the wicked and the fate of the righteous. He says the wicked will have much sorrow. The wicked in this context are people who have unconfessed sin, who are not repenting of the sin or carrying sin with them. But, he says, the righteous, however, God's lovingkindness will envelop them. The ones who have repented, who have this wonderful proximity with God, are in His presence, in His hiding place. God's lovingkindness envelops them. In that place, be glad, rejoice, and shout for joy.

DOING A BIBLE STUDY

This is what you would do. Break up this passage into the six sections as we have just done. But we want to take it further. We need to synthesize it into maybe three points that we can now begin to apply to our own hearts. I want to offer you three areas that we've actually talked about. Those are the three themes that David is talking about, that he is instructing the people: the burden of sin, the act of confession, and the joy of forgiveness.

1. THE BURDEN OF SIN

He's talking of vs. 3 and 4 in this particular context. He says, "When I had sin, I wasted away, and I was groaning all day long." Beloved, one of the consequences of harboring sin in our lives for an extended period of time is that it slowly begins to hurt us. When we have sin in our lives, we know it is wrong, and intentionally we try to cover up. And the amount of emotion that it will take to do that, both in terms of attitudes, in terms of willing these things, in terms of planning it, in terms of how to carry it on.

He says, "When I had sin in my life, my body wasted away." It affects our bodies. "Day and night, Your hand was heavy upon me and my vitality was drained from me." No longer do we have a vibrant

relationship with God. No longer the sense of vitality about life, a zest and a zeal for the things of God. We just go through the motions.

That's one of the things that happens when we have sin in our lives and it is allowed to reign. We allow it to stay there. The Bible is very clear about when we intentionally harbor sin, or when we get into willful sinning or when sin becomes habitual. If we read through the book of Hebrews, we'll find that the warnings are so strict. In fact, at one point the writer says, "If you do this, if you're in that position, there no longer remains a place of forgiveness for you." Why? Because by sinning intentionally, willfully, you have trampled underfoot the precious blood of Jesus that was shed for you at Calvary. That's the blood only that can bring cleansing to you. And so, there doesn't remain any place for you to go after that.

Proverbs 28:31, "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy from God."

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

David wrote this psalm, but you remember one of the lowest points in David's life was the sin with Bathsheba. It took so long before it was actually confessed. Until the prophet Nathan confronted him and told him, "You are that man!" Only then did David acknowledge what he had done. And what had he done? He broke up a marriage through his sin. He committed adultery. And then he committed murder to cover up. And that's the nature of sin – to try and cover up and cover up. There's no ending. And it didn't. Not only did Uriah get killed, but it affected Joab as well. Imagine the commander of David's armies being told to send the men into battle right up to the gates. And then, when Uriah goes as well, withdraw the men so that Uriah is killed. Imagine Joab having to do that without being able to tell the men that this is what David had told him to do. And imagine the kind of respect they would have had for Joab after that, when they found that Uriah, one of his bravest men died because of this foolish decision. One never went up to the walls because that's from where the bows and arrows were shot. One stayed beyond the range of those arrows. The cover up was so much. Sometimes that's where we end up when we nurse sin that hasn't been confessed; then we have to cover and cover and cover. And each of the coverings is another layer of sin.

2. ACT OF CONFESSION

We see this in v.5 where he says, "I acknowledged my sin and my iniquity. I did not hide, and so God forgave."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." An open invitation to us to always search our lives and see if there is anything, any wickedness in me, anything that I'm carrying for a long time, that I've just allowed to become a part of who I am. That is why it's always a good practice every morning to just invite the Holy Spirit, to say: Search me, O God, and know my heart today. See if there be any wicked way in me. And then lead me out. I want to walk in the path of righteousness, not in the path of sin.

When we give the Holy Spirit the permission to do that, He will turn the spotlight on those areas of darkness that maybe we hadn't seen, but maybe we just continue to let ride along with our lives. Therefore, confess your sins to each other, James 5:16 says, and pray for each other so that you may be healed. Along with the act of confession and repentance, God is able to work healing in our lives as well. And that's a place that we need to come where we recognize that we have sinned.

Remember the prodigal son in Luke 15, when he's sitting with the pigs, having to eat the husks that the pigs were eating. Then he realizes: I have sinned against God and against you, he was going to tell his father. but before that, in the midst of the pigs, he says, "I will arise and I will go to my father and I will say to him: I am no longer worthy to be your son; treat me as one of your hired servants. I have no expectations. The only thing that I want is that you will receive me back, that you will forgive me."

Beloved, that's always the position of a sinner. Coming home is to come back in humility. To come back without any expectations, to come back and throw ourselves as the mercy of God. The truth is that mercy always envelops a repentant heart, "a humble and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise," the Word says. And so, we come before Him, repentant. And the prodigal son was embraced and forgiven, treated like a son again. maybe, that's where some of us may be. maybe we know that there is sin. Maybe today is the day that we run to the Father and say, "I have sinned against heaven and against earth."

3. THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS

The joy of forgiveness is sprinkled throughout the psalm – in the first two verses, in v.7 and then the last two – kind of like bookends.

Always, when you are looking at bible studies, look also for verses that are outside the immediate context that will bring some kind of understanding to what you're doing. Look at the larger context of the word of God. Isaiah 1:18 says, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool." He washes clean when we come to Him; He cleanses us completely.

Luke 15:7 says, "I tell you that in the same way, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent." They throw a party in heaven when we come home. That's how sinners are received.

Remember the woman caught in adultery in John 8. They came to condemn her. Jesus said, "Whoever is without sin, throw the first stone." Then they all slunk away. And He said, "Is there nobody to condemn you?" and she said, "No Lord, nobody." He said, "Neither do I condemn you, but go and sin no more." That's what we need to also understand. When we receive His forgiveness, that we are told not to return to the place of our sin. Repentance is not turning 360 degrees around. That will bring you back to the same place you were before. Repentance is a 180 turn. So you turn the other way and you never come back to that place. "Neither do I condemn you, but go and sin no more." Don't sin again. So, as we look at our own lives and say, "Lord, I bring this sin before you," we also come with the resolution that we will not return to sin. We will walk away from it and invite Him to give us His strength to make sure that we don't return to it like a dog returns to its vomit.

That's what David is saying in this maskil, in this instruction, in these words of wisdom. He's saying: Watch out for sin, because it rests upon you as a tremendous burden. It's a weight upon you. It eats away at you. It deals physically with you, mentally, spiritually; it breaks the connection, the relationship, the fellowship that we have with God. But he says the moment you turn to God and confess and repent of it, the He brings forgiveness. He removes the guilt so that you can walk guilt-free each and every day.

At the end, he says, as you receive forgiveness, receive also the joy of a reconnected fellowship with God, which results in joy and gladness. One of the most beautiful qualities for me that I love about God is just the words – His lovingkindness. That does something for me. All of us have been in places where we've received kindness from somebody. It does something. When you get an act of kindness

done towards you, it just brings such warmth to your heart. and it's God's lovingkindness that he says envelops you and holds you in place.

The burden of sin, the act of repentance and confession, and then the result of the joy of forgiveness. And that brings us to where we are and what we need to do with this maskil, what we need to do with this instruction or these wise words.

The first thing is to turn to the Lord and say: Lord, let Your Holy Spirit search me. So let's do that this morning. Would you bow your heads, close your eyes, and just ask the Holy Spirit to show you areas of your life that may have sinned – unconfessed, unrepentant even, maybe sin that you've harbored for a long time. Maybe you realize too that it has affected you physically, or mentally, spiritually.

Then, as He does that, would you then turn and say, Lord, would You forgive me? Your voice I have heard today through Your Holy Spirit. Would You forgive me? I come humbly before You, I come with a contrite heart and a broken spirit for I have sinned against you.

Then beloved, experience the joy of being forgiven, being cleansed, being reunited with the fellowship that you used to have with Him. I would even say experience the renewed vitality that God can even now pour into you. Fresh purpose. All of these things would you embrace along with His lovingkindness, that you are His precious son, His precious daughter this morning, and then just thank Him for what He has done. Thank You Abba, for we pray this in the name of Your Son and by Your Spirit.

Amen.
