

## PSALM 32 – YOU ARE MY HIDING PLACE

**Speaker:** Rev. Dr, Cecil Clements

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**Scripture:** Psalm 32

### Psalm 32: 1-11

*32 How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,  
Whose sin is covered!  
2 How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity,  
And in whose spirit there is no deceit!  
3 When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away  
Through my groaning all day long.  
4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;  
My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah.  
5 I 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. Selah.  
6 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.  
7 You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble;  
You surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah.  
8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go;  
I will counsel you with My eye upon you.  
9 Do 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.  
10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked,  
But he who trusts in the Lord, lovingkindness shall surround him.  
11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones;  
And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart."*

Some psalms rise out of victory. They are victorious psalms. Some rise out crisis. They come out of difficult situations. And then there are psalms that rise out of failure. And Psalm 32 belongs in the third category. It is a psalm that came out of failure.

But before we get into all that, I want us to look at certain words that preface psalms or come between psalms.

- **Maskil:** A *maskil* of David. The Hebrew word *maskil* comes from a root meaning to be wise, to instruct, to teach, to give insight. And most scholars understand a *maskil* to mean that it's a contemplative psalm, a teaching psalm, a psalm meant to impart understanding. In other words, this psalm, Psalm 32, is not just emotional poetry. It's instructional theology. David is not merely confession. He's actually teaching through what went on with him, what he has learned through failure, and then forgiveness.

Now he's saying: "Let me give you insight so you don't say where I stayed." And that fits beautifully with v.8 because we see, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go." Psalm 32 is a testimony turned into wisdom. So when I preach it, I'm not only Narrating

David's story, I'm participating in the *maskil*. I'm helping people gain insight from his own experience.

- **Selah:** This word continues to come throughout the psalms. Sometimes we just look at it and read it, but have no idea what it is saying. In fact, we see it three times in this psalm – v.4, v.5, and v.7. The exact meaning of the word *selah* is debated by scholars, but most agree that it's some kind of a musical notation or liturgical notation, and means that something needs pause or to lift up our gaze for a moment, or to reflect upon something or to consider something carefully.

So, it's not a filler. That word is not filling the space. It's saying you need to take a little time to reflect on what you just read. Take a moment. Don't rush through into the next verse. Think about it. Turn your gaze towards heaven and say, "Lord, is there something that needs to be spoken to me at this time? it's a moment for reflection. It invites the listener not to rush past what has just been said.

Let's get into the psalm now. This psalm is not written by a man who got everything right. He didn't. It's written by a man who got something terribly wrong, and then discovered something even more wonderful about God. Yes, we are speaking of David, the shepherd king, the giant slayer, the songwriter of Israel.

But he was also a man who sinned deeply. For a season, he tried to hide it. He kept silent, and he tells us what the silence did to him. This is not exaggeration in any way. This is confession after the fact. This is a man describing what it feels like to carry hidden guilt.

Psalm 32 is not primarily about sin; it's about forgiveness and it opens with this blessing.

*Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven. Or, Blessed is the one whose sin is covered.*

That word blessed, is the same word we see in Psalm 1. But here, the blessed person is not the one who has never sinned. It is the one whose sin has been covered; not covered by the person who sinned, but covered by the Almighty God. And that changes everything.

David says: *When I kept silent, when I kept the sin hidden, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was drained away as if with the fever heat of summer.*

This is not exaggeration. This is not dramatic words being spoken. This is a man describing what silence and hiding sin did to him.

Notice what he does not say. He does not say: When I kept silent, nothing happened. And sometimes, that's the position we take. We think: If I can keep silent, it will just pass me by. And yet, it had a huge effect on him. Something was happening quietly, internally, and constantly.

#### **Four effects that happen when we cover up sin.**

- i) **It affects us emotionally.** He says, "I was groaning all day long." Groaning is not loud crying. It is a kind of moaning, that low internal noise that never quite stops. Have you ever felt that? anxiety, anxious thoughts that have no clear source. You just know that you're under the gun. There's irritability over small things, a loss of joy that you cannot explain, a heaviness that sits behind your smile. You wake up tired, not just physically, but inwardly. You rehearse conversations in your head. You defend yourself internally, justify what you are

doing. And the mind never rests. And we wonder: Am I stressed? It's just the silence, and what happens in the silence of hidden sin.

- ii) **It affects us physically.** "My bones wasted away. My vitality was drained," he says. Guilt does not stay in the soul alone. it seeps into the body. sleepless nights, tight shoulders, headaches, fatigue that no amount of rest seems to fix. And you feel depleted, like something is constantly drawing energy from you. David says it felt like standing under scorching heat and finding his strength evaporating. Sometimes, what we call burnout is actually moral unrest. It's your body carrying what your mouth refuses to confess to God.
- iii) **It affects us relationally.** When we keep silent, we don't just hide from God. We begin hiding from people as well. we guard our words. We avoid certain topics. We withdraw slightly. We become defensive too quickly. Someone asks a simple question and we feel very exposed. Hidden guilt builds invisible walls. We may still attend church, still show up at work, still sit at the dinner table. But something is definitely disconnected. So we ask: Are we more guarded lately? More reactive, more isolated? We wonder: Is that my personality? Or is that concealment?
- iv) **It affects us spiritually.** "Day and night, Your hand was upon me, heavy upon me." This seems to be almost the most painful line. Not that God abandoned him, but that God pressed into him. Prayer begins to feel dry. Worship feels distant. Scripture feels flat. Not because God is silent, but because something is blocking intimacy. You may sing the songs, but they don't really reach you. You read the word, but it doesn't penetrate. You pray, but the ceiling feels very low.

And David is saying, "I knew something was wrong" There are times in our lives when we want God to do everything for us, when our will is not aligned with His will. We know that what we are doing is wrong. We know it's wrong without a shadow of a doubt. And somehow then we say, "God, You do something. You do a miracle in my life and somehow take this away from me." When God is saying, "I cannot do anything if your will is not aligned with Mine." In everything in our lives, what God has still left with us is the ability for us to decide for ourselves. our will still belongs to us.

I had a professor who was into all kinds of stuff which he knew was wrong, before he became a professor of theology. He said, "I was an altar junkie. Any time there was an altar call, I was there. I would come and kneel. But my prayer always was: Lord, You do something. And one day I realized that my will was not in play here. I was asking God to do something, but I didn't want to change anything in my life."

God doesn't operate like that. If we want God to change something, we need to say, "Lord, I'm willing for You to bring about that change." Coming to an altar by itself doesn't mean anything. We come here with wills that must be aligned with a holy God and say, "Lord, I know that what I'm doing is wrong. I align with Your holy will. Lord, now do something. Break what is going on in my life. I'm yielding to You in this moment."

That's exactly what David did. He knew something was wrong. And he knew that he had to make a connection with God.

I don't know if there's some of you here who understand that kind of silence, the kind of weight that can come when God is saying, "You're not where I want you to be." You're just going through the motions. You may fool people all around you, but you cannot fool God. God looks deep within our hearts. He looks beyond the words we speak, the façades we have. He looks at the heart, and He

knows exactly what is going on. That's why He presses into you, beloved, because He loves you. He loves you deeply and it breaks His heart to see His sons and daughters indulge in sin, because sin is direct conflict with the will of God for you and for me.

Once David realized what he was doing, he wanted out. He says, "I acknowledged my sin to You. I did not cover. I said, I will confess." Notice, the misery was so long, but the confession is so short. Because the problem, beloved, is not complicated. It's very simple. If you know that what you're doing is wrong, then the very next thing to do is acknowledge it and ask God for forgiveness.

It's the carrying of unconfessed sin that leads to these three verses that David talks about. "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away, groaning all day. Your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was drained from me." What a place to be! But the moment concealment ends, relief begins. And You forgave.

How beautiful!. Immediately God forgave. That's why vs. 3 and 4 must penetrate so much. Because if you feel the weight, you will long for the freedom. If you're a child of God today, and you're carrying unconfessed sin, it's going to weigh heavily upon you. Psalm 32 is not in any way trying to shame you into confession. It's trying to show you that the silence is hurting you. God's hand is heavy not to crush you, but to bring you home to Him. From hiding sin to hiding in God.

That's how he ends. Hiding in God. After forgiveness, David says, "You are my hiding place." What a beautiful place! We often sing that chorus:

You are my hiding place.  
You always fill my heart with songs of deliverance.  
Whenever I'm afraid, I will trust in You.  
Let the weak say, "I am strong."  
Let the poor say, "I am rich, because God has done a work in me."

Before confession, he was hiding his sin. After confession, he is hiding in God, safe and secure. What a shift!

Then he says, "You surround me with songs of deliverance." Not groaning anymore, but singing. Beloved, that's what forgiveness restores. Emotionally, joy returns. Physically, strength is renewed. Relationally, walls comes down. And spiritually, intimacy is restored.

And then, God speaks. He says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you with My eye upon you."  
Post-repentance, God does not shame. He says, "I will guide you. From here on, listen to Me. I will show you the way."

Then He ends with this final warning. He says, "Don't be like the horse or the mule. Don't be stubborn. Don't require the bit and the bridle which are painful things to use to bring a horse into play. Be sensitive, responsive. Be teachable."

And David closes with this contrast. He says, "Many are the sorrows of the wicked." He's not talking about evil people here. He's talking about wickedness that goes away from God's will, where sin is involved.

He says, "Many are the sorrows of people like that." All of us can testify to that because some time or the other, we've been there. we know how it is to be disconnected from God, to carry the weight of

doing something wrong and walk as if there's nothing wrong with us. He says, "Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in the Lord, loving kindness shall surround him."

Last week, I've been captivated by the word kindness. It doesn't take anything to be kind, to say a kind word, to be kind to somebody. It's easy to do. Somebody drops something, pick it up and give it. You see a smile and you say: Your smile really lights up the room. Kind words. Just imagine how lifted we are when somebody uses kind words for us. just imagine God surrounding us with kind words that are cloaked in love. Can you imagine that?

He says, "That is your heritage. Loving kindness will surround you." I don't know about you, but I want to be surrounded by His loving kindness. What a beautiful thing to be cloaked in – God's loving kindness.

Then he ends by saying, "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice. Shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart." What a way to leave this place! Maybe you walked in weighed down. maybe you walked in smiling, but really hiding. Or maybe there's one sliver in your life that you don't want exposed. And David would say to you and me: Do the transaction today.

The only thing that you need is to acknowledge your sin and ask for forgiveness. Nothing else. Acknowledge your sin. And then say, "Lord, I recognize I have sinned against you only. Lord, would You forgive me? And Lord, from this point on, would You lead me? Would You guide me? Would You take me by the hand? Would You clothe me in Your loving kindness? And would You lead me forward in sure steps?

The ball is really in our court this morning. We've heard the word. Now the question for us is: Will we keep silent or will we confess? Will we walk out heavy or will we walk out restored? Will we leave still hiding, or will we leave hiding in God? The choice is yours, just as the choice is mine. But what a blessed place to be. Forgiven, surrounded by loving kindness and able to say: You are my hiding place.

I know that God wants to do business with some of us here. I know that with all of my heart. What I'm not very sure of is how to make that happen, how to help you in that decision. Sometimes it takes boldness to deal with things. Sometimes it's easier to sit in your seat and say, "Lord, I'm so sorry. Please forgive me." And it's something else to walk up to the altar and say, "My will is aligned with Yours today, Lord. Would You forgive me? I want Your living kindness." Maybe it's a long time since you heard loving, kind words from God. And maybe today is the day that He wants to speak over you.

So, I'm going to invite you to stand where you are. Everybody. And would you just bow your heads? Don't look around. Just bow your heads. I'd like to pray for you. And if you'd like prayer, if God has been speaking to you and saying, "You need to ask for My forgiveness," and you're ready to do that, here's what I'd like you to do. Would you ask Him for forgiveness? And when you've done that, would you look and just meet my eye? And I'm going to end by praying for you today.

So just in the quietness of these moments, I'm not going to say anything more. If you are inviting Him, asking for forgiveness, do that and then look up at me.

Holy Spirit, would You move in our midst? Lord, Your word says that You will forgive. And we believe, Lord, that every prayer that has been whispered up to You asking for forgiveness, You have heard. Your word also says You will cleanse. And I pray that everyone who prayed a prayer of forgiveness will experience Your cleansing at this moment. O Master, let them just feel the water from heaven

coming from the throne room washing over them, clearing all the stuff that was there before and rendering them clean. Your word also says that Your Spirit will align with their spirit. So Lord, as one, as heaven and earth come together, release joy into their hearts. Lord, let Your peace that passes their understanding rest upon each of them.

I also pray for those who are online. If you've prayed the prayer, I pray blessing over you as well. Experience God's joy and His peace and His cleansing. Lord, fill to overflowing the presence of Your Spirit. Take charge, Lord Jesus. And may nothing but the beautiful, bountiful sense of Your holy presence emanate from our lips, our thoughts, our words, and our deeds.

Lord, clothe us in loving kindness as we leave this place and we will always give You the honor, the glory, and the praise. In Your name, Lord Jesus, we pray. Amen.

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