

Message

Getting Right With God

For the next few weeks we are doing a series of studies in the book of Psalms. The Psalms cover a wide variety of topics and circumstances. We are looking today at Psalm 32. In my opinion, the theme of this Psalm is **“How To Get Right With God”**. It is a Psalm that leads someone who is aware of their sinfulness through a process of confession and repentance. **How can we be restored when we are overtaken by sin.** The heading of the Psalm tells us simply that this is a Psalm of David. It does not include any incident in David’s life that would have prompted the writing of this Psalm. Another Psalm of confession and repentance – Psalm 51 – tells us that it was composed after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. As we read the Bible, we must note that the Bible is **honest about its heroes**. David is identified as a man after God’s own heart. BUT, the Bible does not try to hide David’s flaws. So we do not know which act prompted David to compose this Psalm. But he is obviously aware of his sinfulness.

Vs. 1-2. The Psalm begins with a pronouncement of joy for those who have been forgiven of their sin. The word in our NIV text says that the person who is forgiven is **blessed**. Some translations use the word **“Joy”** for those who have experienced this gift or **“How Happy”**. We may imagine David being so overwhelmed by God’s forgiveness. There may be tears of joy streaming down David’s cheeks.

There may be some people who would be surprised that David is so dramatic in proclaiming the joy of forgiveness. Some people have an idea that forgiveness would not be such a big deal for God. A casual “I’m sorry” and God simply says, “It’s ok.” Or “No Problem.” Almost automatic. But we must understand the seriousness of sin and the gracious, benevolent gift of God’s forgiveness.

In order for us to understand the sense of this verse, we need to understand the **nature of sin and the consequences of sin**. There are several words that are used in the Psalm for sin. David uses 3 of them.

Sin: This the most common word. It means to miss the mark, to miss the target of right living. Josh Buice writes: ***Sin is an offense to God’s holy law. Any action that misses the perfect bullseye of God’s holy law is sin – no matter if it hits within a millimeter of the bullseye or fifty yards from the target. Any deviation from perfection is a sin.***

Iniquity: (verse 5) The word that is translated Iniquity refers to something that is bent, twisted or bowed down. **Iniquity is an act that is twisted away from God’s standard.**

Transgression: (Verse 1). Transgression refers to an **act of rebellion, or a crime. An act of disloyalty.**

These three words help us to understand the evil nature of our sin.

And we learn that **sin has consequences**. It results in **alienation from God**. The clearest example of that is seen in Genesis 4, the story of the fall of humanity. When Adam and Eve sinned they hid from God. They were put out of the garden. They no longer enjoyed intimate fellowship with God. There are other consequences of sin. Sin results in a **guilty conscience**. **(Vs. 3 – “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.”)** If we are serious about our relationship with YAHWEH, when we act in rebellion to His will, our conscience will weigh us down. But not only do we care the weight of a guilty conscience, we will come under a spirit of Conviction: **(Vs. 4 – “For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of smmer.”)** It results in **conviction by the Holy Spirit**.

So **sin is a serious matter**. We might like to write off the seriousness of sin with the excuse that “Nobody’s Perfect.” Everyone sins. But that does not minimize the seriousness of sin. And sin is not just a “Whoops” moment, when we casually or accidentally make a mistake. All sin is an act of rebellion against God’s perfect standard.

When we understand the gravity of sin, our attitude in approaching God will be one of humility and sorrow. The Tax Collector in the Temple – **God be merciful to me a sinner.**” The woman who anointed Jesus’ feet at the home of Simon – Washed His feet and dried them with her hair, tears streaming down her face. And when

we understand the full nature of our sin, and realize that God forgives us, we will express our joy as David does.

David is blessed to understand God's treatment of sinful people. He uses 4 terms to refer to God's actions.

- **Vs. 1 – Forgiven.** The literal meaning is "lifted off". God removes or lifts the sin off of the shoulders of the sinner.
- **Vs. 1 – Covered:** The sins are covered over, never to be uncovered again; never to be seen again.
- **Vs. 2 – Does not Count:** The sin is removed from our record, or our account. God no longer holds that sin over us; He no longer holds it against us. "Remember that time...."
- **Vs. 2 – No Deceit:** Our heart is completely cleansed. A clean slate; A fresh start

That is the extent of God's forgiveness to us. Now, the question we next consider is ***How do we get from there (that place of guilt and shame) to here (the experience of forgiveness);***

Verse 5 David uses two words here. **Acknowledge** – We recognize that our actions were sinful. It may sound a bit harsh to us to use words like rebellion, disloyal, twisted to refer to our behavior. But the pathway to forgiveness begins by acknowledging that we have failed. We don't just shrug our shoulders and say "O Well – take me or leave me." The second word that David uses is **Confess**. Confess means to agree with God's assessment, and to seek His mercy. We repent – turn from our rebellion. The result of our confession is **forgiveness**.

Vs. 6-7. Fellowship with God is restored. The next paragraph reminds us that when we are forgiven, our intimacy and fellowship with God is restored. God is approachable. David reminds us that there will come a time when God may not be found. But He is ready to welcome and receive those who seek him. He is ready to protect us. And He is ready to be a safe place of refuge for us. Notice the comparison with verse 4. Before we were restored, God's hand upon us was heavy. But now God is a Hiding place for us. And He will sing over us joyful songs of deliverance. What a dramatic change in our situation.

Vs. 8-10. God's promises. As David brings this Psalm to a close, He speaks words of promise from God. He will instruct, teach and counsel in the way we should go. God does not desire that we return to our sinful ways after He has restored us. He will teach His people in order to preserve them. He promises to keep watch over His people with a Loving Eye. Horses and mules must be kept in check with a bit and bridle. But those who have been restored by God will be preserved by His word and His unfailing love.

Vs. 11. The appropriate response to God's wonderful grace is to be glad and worship.

CONCLUSION: From time to time, we will be aware of our sinfulness. We cannot deny that we fail and sin.

- Romans 3:23 says that ***All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.***
- Our sinfulness has consequences. Fellowship and Intimacy with God is broken. The person who truly wishes to live with God will become aware of feelings of guilt and shame. They will experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit
- But as we acknowledge our sin and failure, and confess our sin to God, He offers us restoration and forgiveness

How can God forgive our sin? He forgives our sin because the penalty for sin has been paid for on the cross by Jesus. As the song we played earlier reminds us – Jesus Paid it All. If you have never turned to God for forgiveness and salvation, I invite you today to come to Jesus. God longs to be your place of safety and protection from evil.

Prayer.