

Sermon Series: *Summer in the Psalms*

Be Glad In the Lord & Rejoice

Psalm 32:1-11 (ESV)

- 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!

One of the greatest blessings anyone can ever receive, is having one's sins forgiven. The road to true happiness begins at the gates of forgiveness.

Psalm 32:1-2 (ESV)

- 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.*

The word for 'blessed' here, "when used of man, denotes a state of happiness."¹ The equivalent New Testament Greek word, *makarios*, when used in pagan Greek literature is used to describe the state of happiness and well-being that the gods' enjoy.² So when David writes, "Blessed is the one..." think "*happy is the one...*" The kind of blessing that is being described is not only an outward state where blessed come upon someone from the outside, but it also refers to an inward state of contentedness and happiness.

The blessing pronounced, and twice repeated to show emphasis, is directed at the person who has two particular characteristics:

- 1) The one whose sins are forgiven
- 2) The one in whose spirit is no deceit

Blessed is the One Whose Sin is Removed

Three words are used synonymously for sin; transgression, sin, and iniquity.

- 1) **Transgression** - willful rebellion and disloyalty against rulers or those in authority; it means you know the boundaries and yet you choose to cross over them anyway.
- 2) **Sin** - miss the mark, or miss the way; you fall short of what is right and correct; you fail to live up to the expectation.
- 3) **Iniquity** - means to bend, twist, distort; to make crooked and perverse. It means you take something that is good in this world and you twist into something evil and wicked.

Similarly three descriptions are used of having one's sins removed. Blessing is pronounced upon the one whose

- 1) Transgression is **forgiven** - which means having transgression "lifted up & carried by another; taken away;" responsibility to repay is removed.
- 2) Sin is **covered** - 'hidden, concealed, blotted out; unseen.'
- 3) **No iniquity counted against** him - the word refers to the mental attitude of God; the iniquity is not thought of against the person; He will never remember it against you or bring it up again in the future.

This is the first characteristic of the person who is blessed; he has his sins forgiven.

Blessed is the One In Whose Spirit is No Deceit

The second characteristic of the person who is blessed is that there is no deceit in her spirit. The happy person is the person **in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

¹ W. W. Wessel, "Blessed" In , in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard et al., 3rd ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 142.

² Ibid.

Deceit is the attempt or disposition to lead someone into error; to cause one to believe what is false; to conceal or misrepresent the truth.

Why does David mention deceit here?

What sort of deceit is happening and between whom is it taking place?

If deceit is concealing or misrepresenting the truth, then is anything here being concealed and misrepresented?

The answer is 'Yes.'

Psalm 32:3-4 (ESV)

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*

Something should be spoken of, but instead, David has kept quiet about it. He tried to hide something that should not have been hidden. He does not say what it is at this point, but he clearly admits that he suffered greatly because of it.

my bones wasted away
groaning all day long
day and night **Your** hand was heavy upon me

David is speaking **to** someone. He is directing this Psalm to the very one whose hand was 'heavy' upon him night and day. Whoever this is, He was relentless (i.e. night and day) in weighing David down because of whatever was being hidden. The one to whom David is writing is not pleased with David's efforts to hide that which is hidden. The result is,

my strength was dried up as the heat of summer

The Strength Sapping Summer Heat

Being out in the heat of summer does sap your strength, doesn't it. We had a yard-sale yesterday and after dinner, I lay down beside Alisa and said, "I'm exhausted, but all I did was walk around the yard all day and talk to people." She said, "Being out in the sun all day will wear anyone out." This is mostly true. Alex, my eleven-year-old son, was with us all day in the sun, selling his Legos, and Hot Wheels, and wheeling and ealing, and selling everything he could, but while I was lying down trying to recover, he was break dancing with three of his buddies out on the front lawn. [I think they almost caused an accident on Route 3 because people were slowing down, necks craning, to see what was happening in the yard.]

Selah

At the end of verse four you will notice the word, 'selah' (סֶלָה [celah /seh-law/]), which means "to lift up, and to exalt. It is a technical musical term probably showing accentuation, pause,

interruption.³ It may be somewhat equivalent to a rest in sheet music. So David may be saying, “OK, just stop a second and take this in.”

Summary of 1-4

There is great blessing and happiness to be had, but it can be missed. The summer sun certainly sapped my physical strength yesterday, and David is saying his deceitful silence about something he wanted hidden brought about a similar spiritual state. So stop and receive the truth; the LORD is able to greatly bless people, but there is pathway you can follow that will entirely miss that blessing and happiness.

The Key to Unlock the Blessing

Now in verse 5, things come into clearer focus. So David endured a terrible time when the blessing he commended in verses 1 & 2 was absent from his life (vs. 3-4). But when he ceased being deceitful, then he experienced the blessing. When he stopped trying to hide what should not be hidden, then he knew the blessing. When he started speaking and stopped being silent, then things changed for the better and he enjoyed the happiness of God.

Verse 5 answers several questions:

- 1) It answers the question, “About what was David being silent?”
- 2) It answers the question, “With whom was David being deceitful?”
- 3) It answers the question, “To whom was he addressing these words?”

Psalm 32:5 (ESV)

*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*

Notice that once again David uses all three words in reference to his failings; sin, iniquity, and transgression.

The key to experiencing the great happiness and blessing spoken of in vs. 1-2 is through **confession of sin to LORD (Yahweh) and the subsequent forgiveness He gives**. Notice three things happened in this verse.

1. David decided to stop hiding his sin.
2. He confessed his sins directly to Yahweh.
3. Yahweh forgave David’s sins.

³ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001).

It is impossible to deceive God. He knows the secret intentions of our hearts. He knows our thoughts before we even think them. We only deceive ourselves if we believe we can hide our sin from Him. Sin cannot be hidden. Yahweh knows our secret thoughts.

1 Samuel 16:7 (ESV)

7 *“The Lord sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks upon the heart.”*

1 Chronicles 28:9 (ESV)

9 *“... for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought.”*

Psalms 139:1-4 (ESV)

1 O LORD, you have searched me and known me!

2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

3 You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.

4 Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.

Jeremiah 12:3 (ESV)

3 But you, O LORD, know me;
you see me, and test my heart toward you.

Jeremiah 17:10 (ESV)

10 *“I the LORD search the heart
and test the mind...”*⁴

Even though David had previously tried to hide his sin, Yahweh’s hand was **‘heavy upon’** him. Yahweh would not let David rest, when his sin was unconfessed. God is not content to allow His children to hide from Him or be dishonest with Him. When you are living in sin and God makes you miserable, this is a very severe but kind grace. He is alerting you that things are not right and they need to be made right. He is teaching you that it is better to be near Him than toying with sin.

Sin Is Always ‘Against Yahweh’

Notices that it is Yahweh (i.e. LORD) who forgives sin. Who can forgive an offense except the one who has been offended. If you say something snarky to Doug Simpson and hurt his feelings, it does not work for you to come to me and say, “I’m really sorry I said that. Will you forgive me?” No. You need to go to Doug and say that. He is the one who was offended.

This illustrates the truth that **all sin is primarily sin against God** before it is ever a sin against anyone else. All sin is a personal affront against God’s perfect personality. If I steal your car, I have indeed sinned against you, but the reason that my actions were sinful is because God first gave the command, “Do not steal.” So before I ever sinned against you, I first sinned against God by breaking His command and ignoring His word.

⁴ See also Ps 139:23; Prov 15:11; 17:3; Jer 11:20; Lk 16:15; Rom 8:27; 1 Thes 2:4.

When David sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah, he wrote to God,

Psalm 51:4 (ESV)

4 Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...

David did not write, “Against Uriah’s family, and Uriah’s family alone have I sinned.” David had sinned first against God. And David learned this from God Himself who spoke through the prophet Nathan.

And God said to David,

2 Samuel 12:9-10 (ESV)

*9 Why have **you despised the word of the LORD**, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because **you have despised me** and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’*

When we sin, we sin against God. He takes it very personally. When we sin we turn our backs upon Him and choose to willfully disobey. It is as if we look Him in the eye and say, “I’m going to do this anyway. I really don’t care what you say.” That is the kind of behavior that needs severe, loving discipline. [David with his hand on candy.]

This is why confession needs to be made to God AND the offended party. We confess first to God then to the one we’ve sinned against. David confessed to Yahweh and then **Yahweh forgave the iniquity of his sins**.

The Fact of Forgiveness

Notice that David states forgiveness as a fact. He confessed and Yahweh forgave. **Forgiveness is not an experience to be felt, but a promise to be believed.** The Bible is clear, it is through “the blood of Jesus that one can be cleansed from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

1 John 1:9 (ESV)

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Having one’s sins forgiven is not an observable transaction. However, it yields a very visible result.

Matthew 9:2-8 (ESV)

*2 And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “**Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.**” 3 And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” 4 But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “**Why do you think evil in your hearts?** 5 **For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk?’** 6 **But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins**”—he then said to the paralytic—“**Rise, pick up your bed and go home.**” 7 And he rose and went home. 8 When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.*

This young man's life was forever different. And the primary reason was because Jesus knew his greatest need was to heal the paralysis of his soul before healing the paralysis of his legs and so he dealt first with his problem of sin. Sin the greatest problem of every human being. This is the problem Jesus came to earth to deal with. And verse 5 tells us that through a prayer of confession, all sin can be forgiven, hidden away, and forever covered, never to be brought up in our faces again!! This is tremendous news! And what is David's response?

Psalm 32:6-7 (ESV)

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*

Having experienced the blessing that comes from being forgiven, David then immediately commends this prayer to everyone. It is as if he is saying, "Hey! I've had my sins washed away and so can you! So come on, let everyone pray and pray today!! He hints that this should be done sooner rather than later. Do not delay this prayer to pray.

Not Judge, but Protector

Notice that once forgiveness is received God is not seen as a judge condemning what is wrong, but a hiding place and a protector. When God becomes your forgiver He also then becomes your protector. God preserves David from trouble and surrounds him with shouts of deliverance.

The Barrier Removed

Having one's sins forgiven, removes the barrier that keeps us from God. Forgiveness of sin is the doorway to intimacy with God. Before our sins are forgiven, God is judge and we run and hid from Him just as Adam & Even did in the Garden of Eden. However, after our sins are removed, then we are free to draw near to Him. ***Sin is what separates us from God. Forgiveness is what allows us to draw near Him!***

Isaiah 59:2 (ESV)

2 *your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God,
and your sins have hidden his face from you
so that he does not hear.*

In sin we are separated from God. In forgiveness we are drawn close to God. And what happens when we are near to Him? He talks to us and we talk to Him. He guides us and instructs us. Once again we can enjoy a walk with Him in the cool of the evening—a privilege that was lost after we sinned in the Garden. What good is forgiveness if still can not have the direction from God that we need for our lives? What good is protection if we still cannot talk to God and have Him talk to us? If you have receive forgiveness for your sins, then you are as near to God as speaking a word!

Now God speaks directly in verse 8.

Psalm 32:8 (ESV)

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

This is the promise of God, “I will give you the instruction you need. I will tell you where I want you to go. I will lead you and I will watch over you every second! I will counsel you and give you the wisdom to make the right decisions.” This is the sweetest verse in this Psalm, in my opinion. This is the joy of having one’s sins removed—being able to talk to God, to speak to Him and have Him speak to you.

And sometimes when I choose not to speak so clearly to you, you will still know what to do because I will guide you with my eye. Just keep your eyes on Me, and you’ll know which way to go.

And now David offers his own wisdom.

Psalm 32:9 (ESV)

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.*

Don’t be like a stubborn mule who knows nothing. Don’t refuse to come near to God. A stubborn mule has to be directed with painful bits and bridles strapped around his head, but don’t be like him. Don’t resist God. God is able to direct you, just like a farmer is able to direct his mule with bit and bridle. But it does not have to be so forceful and painful.

Stay near Him because you enjoy His presence, not because it’s too painful to leave. Learn the sweetness of willing nearness to the LORD. Running away from the LORD only leads to sorrow, but love will surround the one who chooses to trust in Yahweh.

Psalm 32:10 (ESV)

10 *Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.*

Being surrounded by love sounds like a wonderful place to be. If you trust him that will be your experience of Him.

Psalm 32:11 (ESV)

11 *Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*

So be glad in the Lord. There is a way for your sins to be forever removed as far as the east is from the west and if God so removes them He will never again throw them up in a future argument. When Jesus died and rose from the dead, He proved that payment for sin had been made and accepted by God. There is no longer a sin problem for those who trust in Him (i.e in Jesus). So there is no reason not to be near to Him.

Are you near to Him today?

Then pray the prayer of confession and He will forgive you. And believe His promise, "If you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you. Then receive that promise and walk in that promise and sing for joy and rejoice in the Lord and stop staying away from Him. Don't be like the mule! Stop refusing to go near God because of your stubborn sin! The sin that separates is removed in Christ. So draw near and stay near.

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice!