

Uncovering Sin, Covering Forgiveness

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[0 : 00] God, we are grateful for the privilege to be adopted into your family so that we could have a loving father who loves to grant us the request we bring in prayer.

And Lord, we want to pray according to your will. So we want our prayers to be informed and motivated by what we find in your word.

So we pray that as we go through Psalm 32, you would speak to us. Meet with us this evening. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

We're in Psalm 32. It's a masochist of David. I'll read it out loud to start.

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

[1 : 27] For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Selah. 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. 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.

You are a hiding place for me. You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts of deliverance.

Selah. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule without understanding, which must be curbed with a bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.

[2 : 33] Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, O you upright in heart.

So the main message of this psalm is that sin must be uncovered in confession before it is covered by forgiveness through Jesus Christ. And it talks about the blessing of forgiveness and the joy of confession.

And in the first part, verse 1, David begins to talk about what a blessing it is to be forgiven. But then he goes to recount a time when he hadn't confessed his sins and the pains he experienced.

And he uses three different words for sin. Transgression, which refers to kind of crossing a boundary that you're not supposed to. Sin, which refers to missing a mark kind of that God has for us.

And then iniquity, which refers to kind of a corruption, distortion, or perversion of God's order. So I think he uses the three words to indicate the fullness of his sin. You know, that he's sinned in all the ways that God has told us not to.

[3 : 40] And when we do that, you experience grief and loss and pain. And David describes in verses 3 to 4, For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. So this could be a metaphorical description of a spiritual struggle.

But it could also just be that the spiritual struggles that he experienced left him physically disabled to kind of ailing. And so when he turns, this all turns around though, when he starts to confess his sin.

And then when he's confessing his sins, he uses the same three words he used earlier to talk about his sin. So transgression, iniquity, and sin, I think to indicate the fullness of his confession. He brought it all to God in verse 5.

I acknowledge my sin to you and I did not cover my iniquity. I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. And the result is, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

[4 : 49] As I was preparing for this, I saw a really helpful analogy from a Bible commentator named Peter Craigie. And then he compares confession to kind of opening a dam, right?

Like when the dam, before I get it closed, all the pressure builds. There's a lot of, you know, pressure, pain just kind of surrounding that. But as soon as the gate lifts, you know, the water subsides.

And then there's peace and there's easing of the pressure. And that confession, that kind of breakthrough, a spiritual breakthrough. And then we wonder then why does God forgive sins? Because unless someone has paid for the wrong that they've done, unless there's penance, it's not right to absolve someone of their guilt, right? Unless they pay for it. And so how can God do that? Because he does that without really us making proper amends for the sins we've committed. And then Romans 3 talks about that. Of course, later, God was able to forgive sinners in the past because he was looking ahead to the fact that Jesus was going to come and make it right and show forth God's justice by absorbing the punishment that the people God forgave deserved themselves.

[5 : 57] And so that's the reason why God forgives sins. And he could forgive sins even here because he's looking ahead to Jesus. And that's the reason why, as Christians, we can come to God in confession with joy instead of dread, right?

Because we know that God's gracious to forgive. And so he says in verse 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. And it's kind of similar to Isaiah 55, 6, which is, Seek the Lord while he may be found.

So he's saying that there is an opportune time for confession. You know, of course, it's right after you've committed it really is the best time to confess your sins, to come to God, to not delay, to not wait, because we know that God's waiting to forgive, waiting to hear us, hear our prayers.

And so he's saying there's an opportune time, so don't wait. May everyone offer prayer to him at a time when God may be found, because it might be too late when we try to confess when the judgment comes.

[7 : 03] And that's the reference here into the rush of great waters. It's the same word for flood that came at the time of Noah. So when the judgment comes, it'll be too late, so we should confess our sins, repent of them when we have the opportunity.

And then really the crux of the psalm, the joy of confession here comes down to verse 5, where verse 1 and verse 5, there's a play on the word cover. It's the same word. It talks about how David at first covered his sin, but then later he talks about how the sin will be covered by God.

It's the same word, right? So there's a word play there to convey the fact that sin has to first be uncovered before God in confession, before it can be covered by God's grace, by forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

And this is a really key insight, because sin always thrives and grows, and grows in power in isolation, in darkness. When it's not confessed in the secrecy of the human heart, it grows in power. And then connected to that, it's important that we confess our sins not to just God, but to one another, as James talks about, right? In James 5, 15 to 16.

[8 : 08] And this is the case, not because confessing to each other is more important, confessing to God is the most important, but because of our lack of faith. So really, it should be harder for us to confess our sins to an all-knowing, perfect, and holy God, who is perfectly righteous and just.

I mean, it should strike fear in us to be able to bring our sins to him, confess them. But because we don't really believe that God is like that, because we don't really believe in the gravity of our sin, when we bring it to him, we could rattle off, confess our sins to God, but in a way that we would never dare to do with another human being, right?

And that's why it's so important to expose our really easy believism, just our really, that's another way to cover our sins is to say, oh, I confess to God and not bring it to other believers, to the church, right?

And so that's why I think that confession to one another is specifically enjoyed in James 5, 15 to 16. Because when we bring it to another believer, another brother or sister, we bring it to God, because we bring it to the body of Christ, right?

And so that's, so sin has to be uncovered in confession before it is covered by forgiveness through Christ. And that's the, uh, ...