

Psalm 32: The Blessedness of Being Forgiveness  
Redeeming Grace Church, Oak Harbor, WA  
Lord's Day 12/04/22

- 1) Introduction
  - a) We just spent two sermons in Psalm 31 seeing Christ in the Psalm with “into Thy Hands I commit My spirit and seeing Christ’s faithfulness on our behalf.
  - b) We cry out for mercy because He was heard on our behalf. We commit our souls to Him because He so did for us.
  - c) Now we see the results of Jesus’ travail for us: our forgiveness
  - d) Opening statement: Blessed is the one whose transgression is \*forgiven\*
  - e) Closing statement with the result: Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy you upright in heart!
  - f) This psalm revolves around the joy of being forgiven from its blessed to state, to the urgency to admit our need of it, to our the relation we have to God because of it.
  - g) Those who deny the fact that we actually need forgiveness or consider it a shameful mark of weakness. Also, some religions cannot fathom their god as forgiving because it would make him/it/her weak.
  - h) “I really don’t need to ask for forgiveness because I try to do what’s right.”
  - i) Basic point of the text:
    - i) The happiness of men consists only in the free forgiveness of sins. There is nothing more terrible than having God as our enemy, and there is nothing more wonderful than having God as our friend due to His forgiveness.
  - j) Division
    - i) 1-2: The blessed state of being forgiven
    - ii) 3-4: the fallacy of denying the need for forgiveness
    - iii) 5: The act of humbling ourselves before God
    - iv) 6-7: the relation to God of those forgiven
    - v) 8-9: lessons learned
    - vi) 10-11: Where our true happiness lies
- 2) 1-2: The blessed state of being forgiven
  - a) A beatitude of forgiveness
    - i) There is a truly blessed state: the state of being forgiven
      - (1) Implies that there’s another state: a not so blessed state, one of not being forgiven
    - ii) Definition of forgiveness: sin being covered
      - (1) How covered: covered in that the sacrifice of Christ atoned for it
  - b) A second beatitude
    - i) To be forgiven to have no iniquity counted against us
      - (1) Acquitted of all charges
    - ii) Furthermore, blessed is the one in whose spirit there is no deceit
      - (1) No deceit?
        - (a) Guile
        - (b) Deception
        - (c) Malintent
      - (2) What meant?
        - (a) Truly sincere to qualify for forgiveness

(b) Or, informed by the following verses (the wasting away of keeping silent about our transgression): one who hides their sin under the pretention that there is no need of forgiveness. The one who won't admit their own sinfulness

(i) 1 John 1:6-2:2

1. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

(ii) One might have a stung conscience, but hardens themselves and ignores the threatenings

1. They may laugh and revel in sin, but they rendered unhappy not having their sins forgiven

(iii) Or we might soothe our consciences with ineffective remedies

(iv) Both refuse to seek happiness in the fatherly of God demonstrated for us in Christ Jesus

(c) Thus, the blessedness is in both the forgiveness and in knowing that we need to be forgiven and approaching God for such

c) These two beatitudes, are quoted verbatim in Romans 4:4-8

i) Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

ii) We have a picture of justification, at least that aspect of the removal of sin here

iii) How is that we have our justification, and forgiveness

(1) Does God simply forgive without our sin being dealt with? Would God be just to forgive some, arbitrarily, and to others mete out the justice deserved?

(a) No!

(2) His forgiveness is based on the death of Jesus Christ. Sin has to be atoned for. He, through his death, atoned for our sin

(3) Romans 4 is on the back of Romans 3:21-26

(a) But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

(b) Explain

- iv) So, we have the blessed state of being forgiven laid out
- 3) 3-4: The fallacy of denying our need of forgiveness
  - a) Next we see what a heart having deceit looks like
  - b) It's one that doesn't reckon with sin and acknowledge the need of forgiveness: I kept silent—silent about my own sin
    - i) Think of David after his great series of sins against God when he sinned against Uriah in his sin against and with Bathsheba.
    - ii) He tried to cover it all up
    - iii) When confronted, he fessed up and repented before God. We can see his cry in Psalm 51
  - c) He was silent with regards to confession but not with regards to sorrow—for he knew sorrow and the judgement of God
  - d) What is it we see David expressing here in his statement: 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 by the heat of summer
    - i) We see this: he was experiencing estrangement from God. His holding onto His sin by refusing to own up to it caused him great grief
    - ii) Calvin said he realized that there is nothing so miserable as being at odds with God and that we cannot understand any happiness, any joy, as great as the favor of God that comes about because of this truth: blessed is the one whose sin is forgiven, against whom God does not hold his or who iniquity.
  - e) We can learn this: no matter where we turn, no matter to whom we go, no matter how much we might cry, no matter when it might have happened and no matter why, our pain, our guilt, our malady finds no relief or lightening until we know the favor of God.
  - f) Prov. 28.13: Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.
  - g) We may think of think of this in terms of the unbeliever, but it is for us, too.
  - h) How often we soothe our sorrows, our pains, our guilt by turning to work, to hobbies, to recreation (which are good, but not the greatest good), to all sorts of distractions, when there is one who is ready and joyous to receive us in our confession and cry of neediness.
  - i) Our sin need not take the form of open and notorious rebellion against God, but pridefulness, but self-sufficiency, neglecting the means of grace. Just remember, that there is one who bones wasted away while He groaned because the hand of the Father was laid heavily upon Him, Jesus Christ son of God. Because of our union with Him, we have every reason to go to our Father in our distress. In fact, even not so doing, is a reason to go to the Father for we are indeed finding ourselves in sin.
  - j) The devil has cunningly lied to us to convince us that our Father is just waiting around the corner to catch us in the act so He can destroy us. Yes, he has wrath against sin and will judge sin severely. However, in Christ, we know the friendly face of God for our sin

has been adjudicated in Christ Jesus, and we know this: truly the one who is forgiven by the almighty knows a great blessing that is greater than any other possible blessing.

- k) The pauper who knows the forgiveness of God in Christ Jesus knows a far greater blessing than millionaire called a “productive citizen” who doesn’t know the love of God in Christ Jesus.
- 4) 5: The act of humbling ourselves before God
- a) Here is the cure for the malady: acknowledge our sinfulness before God.
  - b) Since we know this blessing, since we know this, that though we should not sin, when we do sin we have an advocate before the Father, Jesus Christ, son of God, who made propitiation for our sin. So, let us run into His fatherly arms and receive His grace and peace in our time of need.
  - c) We are participating in the table of the Lord, today, in so doing, we are acknowledging our need of God’s grace for us, of our need for Him to do His good work in us, our need of the atoning work of Christ for us on the cross!
  - d) Our propensity is to hide and pretend that we don’t have that need. That, I’m not that bad, but what do we see here: I will confess my sins to YHWH
  - e) It is in uncovering our sinfulness, our malintent, our anger, our pride, our selfishness, that we truly find refreshment and find those find true covering
  - f) We also see the nature of confession in this text
    - i) In the original languages, the text here says something like this: I will confess against myself my sin to the Lord.
    - ii) That is, we, in confession, are making a case not for ourselves, but against ourselves. We are stating our guilt and essentially pleading guilty.
    - iii) You see, the nature of acknowledging our sinfulness before God is not that of making light of it, or trying to minimize it.
    - iv) We might think, “But, you must understand, because that guy cut me off in traffic and got me so mad. So when I took it out on my wife, while it was bad, it was justified.” When we go to God confessing that at the back of our mind, we aren’t truly confessing.
    - v) Rather, we are to put away from ourselves all the excuses and pretenses that we use to make ourselves feel better about our sinfulness.
      - (1) This is not to say that there are not environmental factors that contribute to our wicked actions and rebellions.
      - (2) Rather, it is to say that they are no excuse for our sin. There is always an escape to willful engagement in sin.
    - vi) Rather, we say with David in Psalm 51.
      - (1) Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
- 5) 6-7: the relation to God of those forgiven

- a) We see the blessed conditions of those who have been reconciled to God, whether one who has come from darkness into light or for the believer who has estranged himself from the friendly face of God through a period of rebellion, or when we see and acknowledge our sin before God as we sin frequently. Oh the refreshment that comes from the friendly heart of God in Christ Jesus.
  - b) We also see the glorious reasons why we should come to Him
    - i) We have access to Him in our time of need to cast our cares upon Him—when He may be found.
      - (1) We might say that we aren't godly enough. But, what again is the foundation of godliness—our justification that we have in Christ Jesus. Our acts of righteousness are too polluted with our sin to have access to God. That pollution needs to be removed and Christ's righteousness imputed to us!
      - (2) Are we not told: cast your cares upon Him for He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). But that follows this: therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, in order that you might be lifted up in time. It is then that he says, "casting all your cares upon Him for He cares for you."
      - (3) It is in having access to Him that we find our help in time of need and shelter from the storm
    - ii) We also see this: he is our hiding place
      - (1) Child scared of the dark illustration/hiding under covers
      - (2) We need a place to hid, it is in being forgiven that we have Him as our hiding place
      - (3) But, but, I have no reason to hide, I don't need a protector
      - (4) Comment I saw but a man on such: men need to be hard, need to be strong, and must cover their weakness with feats of strength. When grieving, rather than seeking help and cover, men need to go chop wood or other such things. This is someone who was, until recently, the headmaster of a highly sought after Classical Christian school who was outed for being a vile hater of people who are of a different blood than him.
      - (5) However, what do we see here: He is our hiding place. We need a place to hide and someone to cover us in our distress and to cover our nakedness.
      - (6) Who is it that preserves us, who surrounds us with deliverance, but God in His friendly face towards us in Christ Jesus. We don't deliver ourselves.
      - (7) The worst thing we can do is put on the stiff upper lip and pretend everything is alright when it's not.
  - c) Let us accept the fact that we are weak and need to leave a place for weakness.
  - d) There is an eschatological note for us:
    - i) A look to the end when all shall be made right: being surrounded with shouts of deliverance (this age, age to come)
    - ii) We have received that as a taste of things to come, but it is the dough and not the finished cake.
- 6) 8-9 lessons learned
- a) Just like in Psalm 51, we see that a commitment to teach the right way is laid out:
    - i) Psalm 51:13
      - (1) Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

- ii) That is, by word and deed, showing that one needs to be an open book before God, and hones with one another. For, it requires accountability for this to be true.
  - b) Part of the instruction is to be teachable
    - i) One who refuses to be taught, is in for a rude awakening, we need accountability, and not just vertical accountability, but horizontal accountability. Balaam was rebuked through his donkey, so we should be ready to be corrected and taught by one another, not just someone who holds a title.
- 7) 10-11: where true happiness lies
  - a) Here we have the bookend, we had the bookend at the beginning, blessed are those who are forgiven
  - b) Now we see this: a contrast between those whose sins are reckoned against them and those whose sines are have been forgiven
  - c) The wicked: sorrows
    - i) Some now, all eternally
    - ii) Occasionally like reading legal thriller novels. One author, also a lawyer who likes poking at his profession, like pointing out the misery that those who have accumulated great wealth through devious means and the emptiness they often have in selling their souls and integrity in order to move up the ladder—often justified in terms of “the end justifies the means” so they can change the world.
    - iii) However, there are many who live under a delusion and are not aware of their sorrows. But there’s coming a day.
  - d) But those who trust the Lord? Steadfast love!
    - i) Psalm 136, which was read at our recent joint Thanksgiving gathering with Redeemer out in Sedro-Woolley. What is the constant refrain and basis for the thanksgiving and recounting his works? His steadfast love endures forever
    - ii) For by faith in Christ Jesus, and in no one else, we know this: the steadfast love of the Lord. We see and know that which is always true of God, but hidden from those outside of Christ: the friendly face of God!
- 8) Conclusion
  - a) Thus, we close with this closing exhortation: be glad in the Lord, and rejoice O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!
  - b) We have every reason to “rejoice always” as 1 Thess 5.16 tells us.
  - c) Yes, we need to be real and to acknowledge the misery of the time in which we live (which Christians throughout the ages have expressed) which is always true because sin has always been present. We should grieve, but let our grieving be tempered with this: rejoice in the Lord for we know His steadfast love in Christ Jesus. We must have an eschatological outlook rooted in God’s free and forgiving love for us through Christ Jesus, otherwise we will go insane.
    - i) Listen to these words from a favorite author of mine:
      - (1) A few generations ago the pastor of a church was the most educated and respected leader in the community. There was a day when, because of this cultural situation, the Church exercised the predominant influence in the structure of Western community life. That day has long passed. We have often felt that the world has thrust the Church into a corner and passed us by. The Church does not count in the world at large. The United Nations is not calling upon the Church for advice in the solution of its problems. Our political leaders do not often depend upon

leaders in the Church for their guidance. Science, industry, labour, education: these are the circles where wisdom and leadership are usually sought. The Church is brushed aside. Sometimes we get that feeling that we really do not count. We are on the margin of influence, we have been pushed over on to the periphery instead of standing squarely in the centre; and we pity ourselves and long for the world to pay attention to us. Thus we fall into a defensive attitude and attempt to justify our existence. Indeed, our main concern seems often to be that of self-preservation, and we assume a defeatist interpretation of our significance and of our role in the world!

- (2) When do you think that was written? A few years ago? Nope, it was written in 1953. But he comforts the Christian read with this: we have blessedness of the kingdom of God in Christ Jesus in us and have the free forgiveness and the sure and certain hope of eternal life.
- d) Furthermore, we must also encourage, exhort, and admonish each other in this regard: to look to Christ, to turn from sin, to Christ.
  - e) From Ladd, above, he also continues with this:
    - i) Let us be done with this inferiority complex. Let us for ever lay aside this attitude of self-pity and lamentation over our insignificance. Let us recognize what we are as God sees us and let us be about our divinely appointed programme.
    - ii) For God has entrusted the greatest truth that is the greatest blessing that any man or woman could ever know not to the presidency, not to Congress, not even to the United States or any other nation state that exists on the face of the earth. Rather, it is the church of Jesus Christ alone to whom this has forgiveness has been given and to whom it has been entrusted! So, let us never depart from this truth. Let us never decide we've outgrown it. Let us never decide that we have something better to offer to lost sinners.