



THE ORCHARD

Series: Our Refuge and Strength

Title: Pray for Forgiveness

Passage: Psalm 32:1-11

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Introduction:

- We've been looking at how God is our refuge and strength.
 - And we saw last week, how we can trust God, because he is righteous, because he knows our afflictions, because he has perfect timing, and because he's storing up good for us.
 - And so, let's continue to trust the Lord, and serve him with love.
- As we continue in our series, we'll learn today, how God is our refuge and strength, because he forgives our sins.
- The Bible shows how our greatest need in life, is forgiveness.
 - Lasting joy doesn't come from earning more money, or having good health, or going on dream vacations.
 - But lasting joy comes, when you confess your sin, and find forgiveness from God.
- In Mark chapter 2, four men brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus, to heal him.
 - But they couldn't get close to Jesus, because of the crowd of people.

- So, they made a little hole in the roof of the house where Jesus was, and lowered their friend.
- But when Jesus saw their friend, instead of healing the man, Jesus says, **“Son, your sins are forgiven.”** Mark 2:5
- These men worked so hard, to bring their friend to Jesus.
- But before healing the man, Jesus declared forgiveness of sin.
- Why does he say this?
- It was to show that our greatest need in life, isn’t physical healing, but spiritual healing.
- It was to show, that what we need most in life, is forgiveness of sin.
- It may be the case, that some of you are here:
 - And you may feel burdened by your sin.
 - Do you ever feel you’re not as good as others?
 - Or do you doubt God’s forgiveness?
 - Do you feel like a secondhand Christian?
- If that is you, I want you to know that Psalm 32 was written for you.
 - Because through this Psalm, God shows how his mercy is greater, than your sin.
 - How there aren’t any secondhand Christians.
 - Rather, when you come to God and confess your faith, no matter what you’ve done, God is able to forgive you and bless you, and fully restore you, not as a servant, but as his child.
- So, the question for us this morning is this:
 - How can we find blessing in God’s forgiveness, and fully experience the joy of salvation?

Point 1:

- First, we see in our passage the blessing of full restoration.
 - God is able to fully restore you, and make you whole.
 - Verses 1 and 2 state:
 - **“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.”** Psalm 32:1-2
- In verses 1 and 2, David uses three words for sin.
- And David begins by referring to sin, as transgression.
 - This word has the meaning of rebelling against a higher authority.
 - And that’s what sin is, it’s rebellion against God.
 - It’s going against God’s will.
 - It’s holding a fist in his face.
- And when a person rebels against God, and lives their own way, they invite God’s wrath.
 - To the rebel the Bible says:
 - **“The wrath of God remains on him...”** John 3:36
- That means, if you choose to live against God’s, there’s never a moment in your life, when God’s wrath isn’t against you.
 - When you sleep, when wake, when you work, when you’re with your friends or family, even during Christmas, God’s wrath remains against you.
 - Everyone loves John 3:16 where it talks about God loving the world.

- But if you look a few verses down, in John 3:36, it says,
 “Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” John 3:36
- Sin is rebellion.
- Not only is sin, rebellion, resulting in wrath.
- It's also falling short of God's standard.
 - In verse 1, when it says that our sins are covered.
 - This word, sin, has the meaning of missing the mark, or falling short.
 - It's like you're trying to shoot an arrow to hit a target, but you're not able to hit the target, because it's too far away.
- And when you fall short of God's standard, what you'll feel is shame.
 - That's why, when Adam and Eve failed to obey God's command, they felt shame and tried to cover themselves.
 - Failure to obey God, brings shame.
 - Sin is falling short.
- Not only is sin, rebellion.
 - Not only is sin, falling short.
- But sin is also a guilty verdict.
 - In verse 2, David uses the word, iniquity, to speak about his sin.
 - This word has the meaning of, being guilty.
 - It means we're declared guilty.
- Picture a courtroom.

- And the Judge opens the record of your life and begins to read.
 - And he says:
 - “The envy you felt when you scrolled through that post, guilty.”
 - “The angry words you spoke to your spouse, guilty.”
 - “The images you lingered on late at night, guilty.”
 - “The lie you told to protect your reputation, guilty.”
 - “The bitterness you held toward that person, guilty.”
 - Iniquity is God saying to the sinner, guilty, guilty, guilty.
- And because God is just and holy, he needs to judge every wrong thought, and word, and deed.
 - God wouldn’t be good, if he didn’t punish people for wrong.
- And because we’re guilty of sin, that means we’re responsible to pay the punishment for our crime.
 - There’s not a single sin, God will overlook.
 - Jesus says in Revelation 22:12
 - **“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.”**Revelation 22
- What is sin?
 - It’s rebellion, having God’s wrath remain on you.
 - It’s falling short, having to live in shame.
 - And it’s a guilty verdict, having to pay the price for every sin.
 - This is very bad news.
- But here there is good news as well.

- Here we also see, a full picture of forgiveness.
 - We've given 3 words that describe sin, but we're also given 3 words that describe forgiveness.
- In verse 1, the word forgiven, literally means to lift up, or carry away.
 - And that's what God does with his wrath.
 - When we repent, God lifts his wrath and carries it far away from us.
 - **"As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."** Psalm 103:12
 - This means, for the believer, there's not a minute, or millisecond, where God's wrath comes back to you.
 - God has removed his wrath from you.
- Not only is forgiveness, God's wrath being lifted away.
 - It also means, God covers our shame.
 - **"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."**
- When Adam and Eve failed to meet God's standard, they felt ashamed.
 - They saw they were naked.
 - But do you remember what God did?
 - He covered their shame.
 - He gave them clothes to wear.
- And that's what God does for us as well.
 - He takes our dirty and stained clothing, and replaces them with clean and white clothing.
 - He covers the shame of our sin.

- God lifts his wrath, God covers our shame.
- And even more, forgiveness also means, that God doesn't count our sins against us.
 - **“Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity.”**
 - In other words, God doesn't condemn us, for any of our sin.
 - There's not a single sin, that you have to pay for.
 - God will never say:
 - “I can forgive you of most of your sin, but there's one that was really bad, and you need to pay the price.”
 - Instead, God says:
 - **“I, I am he who blots out your transgressions...and I will not remember your sins.”** Isaiah 43:25
- God will bless you when you walk in righteousness.
 - But God will also bless you when you confess your sin.
 - He will remove his wrath.
 - He will cover your shame
 - And he won't count your sins against you.
- You may not notice at first, but when you read Psalm 32 verses 1 and 2, it's very similar to Psalm chapter 1.
 - Psalm 1 says:
 - **“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers...”** Psalm 1:1
 - Psalm 32 begins with:
 - **“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.” Psalm 32:1-2

- They both speak about ways to be blessed.
 - But do you see the difference?
 - In Psalm 1, the righteous man is blessed, because he doesn’t walk in the way of sinners.
 - But in Psalm 32, the sinner is blessed, because he’s been forgiven of all his sin.
 - God is able to bless the sinner.
- There will be times in your life, when you resist temptation, and you choose the right path, and reap the benefits of living a righteous life.
 - There will also be times, when you fall into temptation, and you choose the wrong path, and face the consequences of sin.
 - In those times, you may feel that you can’t be blessed by God.
 - You may feel that, God has taken away, the good he’s stored for you.
 - But God reminds us in this Psalm, when you fail to live like the man or woman in Psalm 1, you can still be blessed.
 - Because God is able to forgive all your sin.
 - And just to make sure you know, that God is able to bless sinners, the Bible gives a double blessing in Psalm 32.
 - In Psalm 1, there’s only a single blessing.
 - **“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked...”**
 - But in Psalm 32, there’s a double blessing.
 - The Bible says:

- **“Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**
 - And then it says:
 - **Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity...”**
 - Now, to be clear, the Bible isn’t saying that you should sin more, to gain more blessing.
 - Rather, the Bible is saying, no matter what you’ve done in the past, no matter how dark your sin, no matter how deep your shame, you don’t have to doubt, because the mercy of God is greater than your sin.
- Here we see the blessing of full restoration.
 - Through his forgiveness, God is able to fully restore you, and make you whole.

Point 2:

- Second, we see in our passage, the blessing of honest confession.
- We can’t be 100% sure, but it’s possible David is sharing what he experienced after his sin with Bathsheba, in Psalm 32.
- Just in case you don’t know the story, let me briefly share how David sinned.
 - King David slept with a woman named Bathsheba, who wasn’t his wife.
 - And he ended up getting her pregnant.
 - And to cover up his sin, he called Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband, back from war, and got him drunk.

- The plan was to get him drunk, so Uriah would sleep with his wife, and when the baby was born, everyone would think it was Uriah's child.
 - But Uriah refused to sleep with his wife.
 - Uriah thought it was wrong to sleep with his wife, while all the men were fighting in the war.
 - And so, David finally ended up sending Uriah into the front lines of war, where Uriah died.
 - And for almost a year, David said nothing.
 - He kept silent.
 - And finally, after many months, God sent Nathan the prophet to confront David.
 - And in Psalm 51, we're able to read David's confession.
 - David finally, repented of his sin.
- And though David repents in Psalm 51, Bible scholars speculate that Psalm 32 was written sometime after Psalm 51, detailing what he learned from the experience.
- Now, we can't be sure, but whether it's his adultery and murder, or some other sin.
 - In verses 3 to 5, we learn, what it felt like for David to keep his sin a secret.
 - He says:
 - **"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. 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." Psalm 32:3-5**

- David says that his bones wasted away because he was groaning all day long.
 - He says that he felt he had no strength.
 - David's secret sin, made his body ache.
 - His soul was in distress.
 - He couldn't experience joy.
 - He felt that all his strength was squeezed out.
- And then, David says that God's hand was heavy upon him.
 - When you have secret sin in your life, the best thing that can happen is for God to bring it to light.
 - And that's what happened with David.
 - God's hand was heavy on his heart.
 - God kept pressing him, until he confessed.
 - Can you imagine the guilt and heaviness of hiding that you slept with another man's wife, that you killed her husband.
 - He kept silent, he kept this a secret, but God pressed his heart, and after acknowledging his sin, he was able to experience the joy of God's forgiveness.
 - These were horrible sins, but David found that God's mercy was greater than his sin.
- The natural inclination for us is to hide our sin and shame.
 - In fact, that's what Adam and Eve did, after sinning against God.
 - Their first instinct was to cover and hide.
 - This wasn't just external shame, but internal shame.
 - They were ashamed of who they were inside.
- And if we're honest with ourselves, isn't this our inclination as well?

- To hide our sin?
 - We pretend we're fine, when we're falling apart inside.
 - We post smiling pictures online, when things are a mess at home.
 - We act confident in front of others, but we're full of fear and self-doubt.
 - We say we've forgiven someone, but deep down, we still hold resentment.
 - We tell people we're praying, when we haven't prayed in days.
 - We talk about trusting God, while secretly trying to control everything.
 - We act humble, but quietly crave attention and approval.
 - We hide our pride, and lust, and envy, because we feel ashamed.
- But the truth is, when we acknowledge our sin, that's when we can begin to heal and experience the joy of salvation.
 - That's when we can truly experience God's mercy and love.
- And what's so encouraging about verse 5 is how David says, **"I will confess...and you forgave."** Psalm 32:5
 - I read through more 10 Bible translations of this verse, and all of them say the same thing.
 - They don't say that David made a passionate, and articulate, and convincing confession, and was forgiven.
 - Rather, they all say that David made a choice to confess, he just acknowledged his sin, and he experienced the forgiveness of God.
 - Even before David could speak, God forgave David.
 - **I said, "I will confess...and you forgave."**

- Isn't this what happened to the prodigal son?
 - This son rebelled against God and against his father.
 - And he decided to confess to God and to his father.
 - And as he was walking home, he rehearsed what he would say to his father.
 - **“Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”** Luke 15:18
 - But when the father saw his son from a long distance away, the Bible says that he felt compassion, and ran to his son, and embraced him, and kissed him.
 - Even before the son could confess his sin, the father embraced his son.
 - **I said, “I will confess...and you forgave.”**
- When we try to hide our sin, our bones will waste away, our strength will leave our bodies.
 - But let's remember, that when we acknowledge our sin, we can confess to God, because he is ready to forgive.
 - The heavenly Father is running to you, even before you can speak.
- And if you're a believer, let's remember that our confession of sin, is our confession of faith.
 - When we confess, we're not finding salvation all over again.
 - Rather, we can confess, because we know that God has already forgiven us.

Point 3:

- Third and finally, we see in our passage, the blessing of timely hope.
 - Listen to what the Bible says:
 - **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.** Psalm 32:6-7
 - David is saying that the time to repent is now.
 - The time to confess is now.
- We don't think about it much, but there's going to come a time, when it's too late to repent.
 - There's going to come the time for prayer will be over.
 - And so, God is urging you today.
 - If you haven't repented of your sin, to confess today.
- And the reason we can repent and find forgiveness in God, is because of Jesus Christ.
- The reason the wrath of God was removed from us, was because the wrath of God was poured on Christ.
 - The punishment that you deserved and I deserved, was put on Christ.
 - While you were his enemy, he went to the cross, to bear the full penalty for your sins.
- And the reason, we are covered in God's grace, is because Christ was stripped naked, and put to shame, and was nailed to a cross.

- Not only did Jesus bear God's wrath, he also bore our shame.
- He was despised on the cross, and clothed with our sins, so that we could be clothed in righteousness.
- He takes our sin-stained clothes, and covers us with the robe of righteousness.
- And the reason, God doesn't count our iniquity is because Jesus Christ paid for our sins.
 - He paid for our guilt.
- The Bible talks about books that are open in heaven on the day of judgment.
 - And on the last day, there may be a book that contains all our sins.
 - And it's possible, from the beginning of your life, you'll see a record of your sins.
 - But if you were to look in this book, it wouldn't say, guilty, guilty, guilty.
 - Rather, it was say, paid for, paid for, paid for by the blood of the lamb.
 - If you were to look at one of the pages.
 - It would have the date on top, and a list of all your sins from that day.
 - But over it, it would say, paid for by the blood of Christ.
 - And going to the next page, again it would say, paid for, by the blood of Christ.
 - And you may turn to the page, where you committed your most heinous sin.
 - The one you wish you could take back.
 - And would still say paid for, by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

- And so, let's confess our sin, and ask for forgiveness.
 - Because God's grace is greater than your sin.
- Let's not cover our sin, or give excuses, but let's clearly state our sin.
 - The reason I said that, was because I was jealous.
 - The reason I did that, was because I was angry.
 - The reason I didn't do this, was because I was lazy.
 - Let's not hide our sin, but clearly confess and admit, what we've done.
- And let's also confess, how our sins have made it harder for other people around us.
 - David's sin, affected Uriah and Bathsheba, even his Kingdom.
 - Even secret sins affect others around us, because they rob you of joy and peace and rest.
 - And they make you ache in your bones and it keeps you from effectively serving God and others.
 - Let's repent of our sins, because they make us harder to live with, more difficult to work with, and tougher to love.
 - Let's ask the Lord to change our hearts, and make us whole.
- And when you confess honestly, and acknowledge your sin.
 - You will find what David found:
 - **“Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity...”**
- And finally, let's give thanks for what God has done for us.

- Let's be glad and shout for joy, because of God's grace.
- There is no sin too great for the mercy of God.
 - There is no shame he cannot cover.
 - No guilt he cannot remove.
 - No rebellion he cannot forgive.
 - And at the cross, Jesus bore your wrath, your shame, your guilt, and in exchange, he gives you his righteousness, his joy, and his peace.
- And so, let's rejoice, and be glad, and sing:
 - *My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!*
 - *My sin, not in part but the whole.*
 - *Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more.*
 - *Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*