

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.
 - Proverbs 3:5-6, is a perfect summary of last week's sermon.
 - It says:
 - **"Trust in the Lord with all you heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."** Proverbs 3:5-6
 - 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 of sin.
 - Lasting joy doesn't come from earning more money, or having good health, or going on lavish vacations, or landing a dream job.
 - All these aren't bad things.
 - And we can praise God, when God gives them to us.
 - 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, so Jesus might heal their friend.
 - But they couldn't get close to Jesus, because crowds of people were surrounding him.
 - So, they made a little hole in the roof of the house where Jesus was in, and let their friend down from the roof.
 - When Jesus saw their faith, instead of healing the paralyzed man, Jesus says, **"Son, your sins are forgiven."** Mark 2:5
 - These men worked so hard, to bring their friend to Jesus, so he might be healed.
 - But before healing the man, Jesus declares 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.
- And it may be the case, that some of you are here:
 - And you may feel that you can't go to heaven.
 - Or that you don't deserve to be forgiven.
 - Or that you're not as good as others.
 - Or that you're 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.
 - Because through this Psalm, God shows there are not secondhand Christians.

- And when you come to God and confess your sin, no matter what you've done, God is willing and able to forgive you and bless you, and restore you fully as his child.
- So, the question for us this morning is this:
 - How can we find blessing in God's forgiveness?
 - How can we experience the joy of God's 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.
- 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.
- 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 Psalms, 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 1, there's only a single blessing.
 - 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, don't ever doubt, that is able to forgive you and bless you.
- Not only is God able to bless the sinner, but I want you to see how God is able to fully restore the sinner.
- Sin is rebellion against God.
 - That's what this word, transgression, means in verse 1.
 - Transgression, is rebellion.
 - It's going against God's will.
 - It's holding a fist in his face.
- And when you rebel against God, and choose to live your own way, that means his wrath is over you.
 - The Bible says that when a person rebels against God:
 - **"The wrath of God remains on him..."** John 3:36
 - That means God's wrath is always over the person in sin.
- If you choose to live against God's will, there's never a moment in your life, when God's wrath isn't against you.
 - When you sleep, when you wake up, when you go to work, when you're with your friends, when you're with family members, 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
- 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 for 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.
 - Job 8:22 states how those who sin, will be clothed with shame.
 - When you sin against God, and your sin is exposed, you'll feel
 - Falling short, brings shame.
 - That's why when Adam and Eve failed to obey God's command, they felt shame and tried to cover themselves.
 - Sin will make you feel ashamed.
- Not only is sin, rebellion.
 - Not only is sin, falling short.

- 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, guilt.
 - It means you're declared guilty.
- Imagine a courtroom, and the judge reading everything single sin you've ever committed, and saying guilty as charged.
 - The lustful thought you had on this date, guilty.
 - The jealousy you felt on this date, guilty.
 - The burst of anger you had on that date, guilty.
 - The selfishness you had on that date, 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 against God, having God's wrath remain on you.
 - It's falling short of God's standard, 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 I want you to also see the good news.
 - Here we also see, a full picture of forgiveness.
 - Here we see, why David feels blessed by God.
- In verse 1, we see how forgiveness means that God's wrath is lifted up and carried away.
 - This word, forgiven, in verse 1, literally means to lift up, or carry away.
 - It refers to someone lifting up an object, and carrying it away.
 - And that's what God does with his wrath.
 - When we repent of our sin, 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, 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 from us.
 - 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 all 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 can and will also bless you when you confess your sin.
 - He will remove his wrath.
 - He will cover your shame
 - And he will not count your sins against you.
- 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 in, 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, and had the men draw back, so Uriah would die.
 - He had Uriah killed.
 - 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 a long time after Psalm 51, detailing what he learned from the experience.
- And 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 in verses 3 to 5:
 - **"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.
 - But it made everything worse.
 - He felt trapped.
 - He couldn't experience joy.
 - He felt that all his strength was squeezed out of him.
- And then David says that God's hand was heavy upon him.
 - When you have 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 his sin.
 - Can you imagine the guilt and heaviness of hiding that you slept with another man's wife, then losing the baby that the woman conceived, and then killing her husband to cover your sin?
 - 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 as well.
 - 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 act generous, but clutch tightly to what we have.
- 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 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 confessed, and was forgiven.
 - Rather, they all say that David made a choice to confess, and even before his confession, he experienced the forgiveness of God.
 - Verse 5 states:
 - **I said, "I will confess...and you forgave."**
 - Even before his confession was made, God forgave David.
- Isn't this what happened to the prodigal son?
 - This son sinned against God and against 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.
- When we try to hide our sin, our bones will waste away, our strength will leave our bodies.
 - But it's when we honestly confess our sin, and lay it all before God, that we can experience joy, and peace, and mercy, and forgiveness.
 - Here we see the blessing of honest confession.

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, so you can be forgiven.
- 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 out 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 purity, and righteousness, and holiness.
- And the reason, God doesn't count our iniquity is because Jesus Christ paid for our sins.
 - The Bible talks about books that are open in heaven.
 - And on the last day, there will be a book with our sins.
 - And it's possible, from the beginning of your life, you'll see a record of your sins.
 - And if this book were to exist, you'll turn to a page, and you'll find a list of your sins from such and such a date.
 - And it'll say guilty, guilty, guilty.
 - But then, when you look on the bottom, it'll say, paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - And then, when you turn the page, and you see a list of your sins, it'll say, paid for by the blood of the Jesus Christ.
 - And you may turn to the page, where you committed your most heinous sin.
 - The one you wish you could take back.
 - And it'll say paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ.
- And so, let's confess our sin, and ask for forgiveness.

- Let's not cover our sin, or give excuses for our sin, but let's clearly.
 - 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 secret sins affect others around us, because they rob you of joy and peace and rest.
 - And 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.

- And finally, let's give thanks for what God has done for us.
 - Let's be glad and shout for joy.

- I wonder if there are some of you here, and you may be saying, "Pastor Tom, I know this already."
 - "I know I'm forgiven."
 - "This is Christianity 101, I want to hear something new."
 - Let me say this, if you that is you, and you feel no joy in what Christ has done for you, it may be that your heart has grown calloused.
 - It may be that pride has crept into your heart.
 - It may be that you've lost the joy of your salvation.
 - Ask the Lord to soften your heart so that you can remember all that Jesus has done for you.

- So that you might rejoice 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!