

A PSALM OF DELIVERANCE

Psalm 32

Intro: It is generally thought that this Psalm, like Psalm 51, has to do with David's double sin of adultery with Bathsheba, and then the murder of her husband Uriah. There was about a year between these sins and the time of David's confession. But David is here rejoicing in the forgiveness of his sins. The Psalm begins and ends with great expressions of joy

The Psalm has five parts:

- 1) David's joy because of the forgiveness of his sins (vv. 1-2).
- 2) In this second part we have David's words to the Lord (vv. 3-7). And these follow two lines:
 - a) How God broke the deadlock in David's heart (vv. 3-5).
 - b) David's hiding place (vv. 6-7).
- 3) The Lord's message for David (vv. 8-9).
- 4) David's message for the Lord's people (vv. 10-11).

And so we come to the first part.

I. THE JOY OF SINS FORGIVEN (Psa. 32:1-2).

There is no question but that there is a special joy in knowing that our sins are forgiven. We first experience this when we are saved. The Lord has made us keenly aware of our sins, and we have no peace until we know that God has forgiven our sins.

And yet there is an even greater joy, and this, too, is expressed in the Psalms, and it is stated in two beatitudes which need to be considered along with what David said here in Psalm 32. The other beatitudes are in Psalm 119. This is the joy we experience when we have kept ourselves from sinning. Please turn to that passage, and follow in your Bible as I read the first stanza of that great Psalm: vv. 1-8.

- 1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.
- 2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.
- 3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.
- 4 Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.
- 5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!
- 6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all

thy commandments.

7 I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.

8 I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly (Psa. 119:1-8).

It is the most wonderful thing in the world to have our sins forgiven when we come to God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But wouldn't you agree that it is even more wonderful if we have refrained from sinning. God is the One Who keeps us, and we must be careful to give Him all of the praise when He does keep us. Often He restrains us even when we do not ask Him to do it, and when we do not realize the danger we are in with respect to sin.

Comparing Psalm 32 with the first stanza of Psalm 199 should remind us of the first two verses of 1 John 2 where the Apostle John wrote,

1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1-2).

God's will for us is that we do not sin. But, if and when we do sin, "we have an Advocate . . ." And this is where David had been in Psalm 32. He had sinned, and sinned grievously against the Lord. He had committed two sins for which he deserved to die. But mercy was extended to him by the grace of God, and so he was "forgiven." His sin was "covered," and it was not *imputed* to him; it was not charged to his account.

The word "forgiven" speaks of the removal of our sin, and then it is "covered," not where it can again be uncovered, but meaning that it is completely removed from sight. All charges are dropped, and our case can not be brought up again in the court of heaven.

And this covers the whole compass of sins. We have three words which David used to designate what his sin was. This is explained by Fausset in the JFB commentary. He said this:

The three may also be distinguished thus-- "transgression" is sin of commission; "sin" is deviation from the mark or standard-- God's Word; "iniquity," all that is opposed to equity and righteousness.

So they are closely related to each other, and David, in using them, wanted to convey to his readers, as he doubtless has confessed to God, the terrible nature of what he had done.

When he spoke of his spirit as having "no guile," he meant that the confession which led to his forgiveness was absolutely sincere before God. He was saying that the Lord knew that he was not being deceitful, but that he meant every word he had said (or written) in his confession. And the Lord certainly knows the difference. The sincerity of our confessions is marked by a deliberate intention that we will not go back to our sins again. Solomon said,

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy (Prov. 28:13).

I think that it was Spurgeon who once said that the greatest word in the English language, is the word "forgiven." It was to have our sins forgiven that we first came to Christ. Sin is primarily against God although other people are often involved and hurt by our sins. But, oh, the joy of having our sins forgiven. There has never been a child of God who has not known the joy, the amazing joy, of the forgiveness of our sins.

But the next three verses give us David's testimony as to how the Lord brought him to confess his sins. Derek Kidner in his commentary used the word "deadlock," and I can't think of a better description of what David was saying in verses 3-5.

II. THE DEADLOCK BETWEEN DAVID AND GOD BROKEN (Psa. 32:3-5)

The first way that David tried to handle his sin was by just being quiet about what he had done. Of course there were those who knew, but he evidently hoped that it would go no farther, and so he described what he did as *keeping silent*.

But God was dealing with him, and He wanted David to know that being silent does not remove sin. If such could take away our sins, then our Lord would never have needed to die on the Cross.

Instead of helping, his condition grew worse until he became physically affected by what he had done. But the Lord was relentless in bringing his child back into fellowship with Him. Notice the words "day and night." He was troubled during the day, and he could not sleep at night. And, as I have mentioned, this went on for about a year.

Notice the word "SELAH" at the end of verse 4. This was written for the musicians when this Psalm was sung, but it is there to make us stop and think about what David was saying. It seems that David was astounded at

himself as to how he sought to get peace, refusing to face the fact before God that he had sinned so terribly in what he had done to Bathsheba, and then to her husband.

Finally, it got so bad with him, that he had to confess his sin. See verse 5. Please note that here he was speaking to the Lord, as was the case in verses 3 and 4. And he confessed his sin to the Lord just as he would to someone who didn't know anything about what he had done. At this point David had realized what an absolutely terrible thing he had done.

But notice what he said that the Lord did: "And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." And this is followed by another SELAH. Here he wanted his readers to stop and marvel at the goodness and grace and mercy of God.. He was astounded that it had taken him so long to confess his sins, but when he did, he was equally astounded that the Lord would forgive him. We show, as David did, how heinous his sins were before God when he could write SELAH after his confession, and equally so, his astonished when he was forgiven.

Now David's third point, and keep in mind that he was still speaking to the Lord.

III. DAVID'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHERS WHO HAVE SINNED (Psa. 32:6-7).

We often here how people have used David's sins for an excuse to do as he had done, thinking, if God would forgive David, then he will forgive me.

But we must remember that there is no indication that David presumed upon God when he sinned. He was caught in temptation and found himself doing what he never thought that he would do.

But when you read these verses there is another way in which even David hoped that his experience would help others. It was not that they would use his sins as an excuse for them to sin, but that the forgiveness that he had found with the Lord would cause others to know when they sinned, that there is forgiveness with the Lord – and that it is only in confessing and forsaking our sins, that we can ever again enjoy the peace of God in our hearts.

And not only would the Lord forgive him, but the Lord would be to him a

hiding place where David would be preserved from sinning against the Lord in the future. And the Lord would "compass" him "about with songs of deliverance."

Now there are two way that the Lord delivers us:

1) He delivers us from our sins after we have committed them. This what we are reading about in Psalm 32.

But what is even better than that,

2) He delivers us from sinning before we commit them.

And how often He does this! This is why I have called this Psalm, A PSALM OF DELIVERANCE. Often David tells us in his Psalms how the Lord has delivered him from human enemies. But here he was telling us how the Lord had delivered him from his sins.

It should move us to tears again and again when we stop to think about how the Lord has often delivered us from sinning before we sinned. And note that again at the end of verse 7 we have another SELAH.

At this point we come to:

IV. THE LORD'S RESPONSE TO DAVID (Psa. 32:8-9).

In verse 8 we read what the Lord would do for David in the future. He had done this in the past, but He would continue to do it. What a precious verse this is, and how often people have trusted the Lord to do this for them without noticing the context, that is, what David was writing about in the Psalms.

At this point, let me put in a word for the reading of the Proverbs. If I had the authority, I would require all of you to read one chapter in the Proverbs every day, month after month. It is full not just of the wisdom of Solomon, but it is full of the wisdom of God. And it warns us over and over of the sins that have been a problem to all of us, and of all people, from the very beginning of time. It is a book to teach us about the sins that we need to avoid if we are to have the blessing of God, but it also tells us what we need to do if we want God's blessing. And much of what Solomon had to say in the book of Proverbs is what David, his father, taught him. And what David taught him, David had learned from the Lord Himself.

Verse 8 is not just for David, but it is for us. God instructs us through His Word, and that is why we need to be reading all of it every day. Hide

God's Word in your heart, and through it God will keep you from sin. We would make a lot more mistakes than we do if we did not have the Word of God as "a lamp to our feet, and a light to our paths." We need to know the truth of the Word.

But look now at verse 9.

The Lord was telling David that he had been like a horse or a mule which had to have a bit and bridle in their mouths if you wanted them to do what you wanted them to do. The Lord knows how to make us obedient, but what glory it brings to Him if we rather ask Him to make us willing to do His will.

And here we need to ask ourselves the question, "What does it take for the Lord to make me obedient to His Word?" Am I like an obstinate horse or a stubborn mule who has to be put in a harness before I will do what God wants me to do? The Lord can do that, but sometimes that is not a very pleasant experience. The best way to go is to ask the Lord to give you a willing heart. This is where true happiness comes from.

The Psalm closes with:

V. DAVID'S MESSAGE TO US, HIS READERS (Psa. 32:10-11).

This Psalm, like Psalm 1, has to do with how we can find true happiness. Our hearts tell us that we know more about what will make us happy than even God does. David evidently called for Bathsheba to come to him because he thought that would bring pleasure to him. But instead he found that he had to try to conceal that sin by committing another sin. But all of that did not bring him happiness; it brought him the most miserable year of his life.

So what is his message? It has three parts.

A. "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked" (v. 10a).

"The wicked" are those who choose to live without God, and who spend their lives doing what they want to do. They don't know that they have evil hearts that will always draw them into sin. But that kind of a life never brings gladness; it always brings sadness and sorrow – always! This is the Word of God for sinners. Any pleasure that a person has in sin, is only temporary, and the results are not worth it. But people keep trying

their own way, thinking that they will find true happiness sometime without God. But it never can be.

David's second point:

B. "But he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about" (v. 10 b).

Those who are faithfully trusting the Lord don't always have an easy time, but they can always have the joy of the Lord in their hearts because the Lord surrounds us with His mercy. There is no question about this. It is a divine guarantee, and David knew this to be true.

Consequently, this is his third point:

C. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart" (v. 11).

This verse repeats the emphasis that we had in verse 7 about "songs of deliverance." The truly happy people are the Lord's people who spent their lives doing what is pleasing to the Lord.

Concl: There are two ways we can be delivered by the Lord. He will deliver us after we get into sin, or He can deliver us by keeping us from doing what is sinful in His sight. The world hates the word "sin." But this is their undoing. Only in our Bibles can we learn what sin is, and what its dangers are. May God enable us throughout our lives to be continually singing "songs of deliverance," deliverance from sin and its consequences. This is the way to true happiness. God knows the way, and if we follow Him, we can't go wrong.