

Blessed Are Those Who Confess and Repent

Psalm 32:1-11

Of David. A maskil.

¹ *Blessed is the one
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.*
² *Blessed is the one
whose sin the LORD does not count against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit.*
³ *When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.*
⁴ *For day and night
your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.*
⁵ *Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the LORD."
And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.*

⁶ *Therefore let all the faithful pray to you
while you may be found;
surely the rising of the mighty waters
will not reach them.*
⁷ *You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.*
⁸ *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.*
⁹ *Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.*
¹⁰ *Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the LORD's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts in him.*
¹¹ *Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!*

What God Does	Unconfessed Sin	Confession of Sin
<p>¹ Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.</p> <p>² Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.</p>	<p>³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.</p> <p>⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.</p>	<p>⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.</p>
<p>⁶ Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them.</p> <p>⁷ You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.</p>		
<p>⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.</p>	<p>⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.</p>	
<p>¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him.</p>		<p>¹¹ Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!</p>

Red: about sin

Green: what God does

Blue: what the psalmist/we do

- Definition of sin: sin is not just wrong-doing or failing to adhere to a moral standard. Sin is wrong-being, being independent of God.
 - Sin is not living as if God is God. We give someone else (it could be ourselves) or something else, the place of God.

Romans 3:23, *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*

- When Adam and Eve sinned against God, it was because they wanted to be independent from God. They wanted to decide what is good and bad for themselves.
- Sin breaks our relationship with God (after they ate the fruit, Adam and Eve hid from God). Sin also breaks our relationship with one another (when God confronted Adam and Eve, they blamed each other). Sin damages relationships. Because of sin, we are not at peace with God and each other.

1. Unconfessed Sin (vv. 1-7)

¹ Blessed is the one
 whose transgressions are forgiven,
 whose sins are covered.

² Blessed is the one
 whose sin the LORD does not count against them
 and in whose spirit is no deceit.

The blessedness of
 forgiveness (vv. 1-2)

When sin is
 unconfessed (vv. 3-4)

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you
 and did not cover up my iniquity.
 I said, "I will confess
 my transgressions to the LORD."
 And you forgave
 the guilt of my sin.

When sin is
 confessed (v. 5)

³ When I kept silent,
 my bones wasted away
 through my groaning all day long.
⁴ For day and night
 your hand was heavy on me;
 my strength was sapped
 as in the heat of summer.

What We Do	What God Does
Acknowledge our sin	Does not count our sin against us
Does not cover up our iniquity	Covers our sin
Confess our transgression	Forgives our transgressions
No deceit in our spirit	Forgives the guilt of our sin

- “Cover”:
 - Cover up (v. 5): Out of guilt, shame and fear, we want to cover up our sin, hiding them from God, from people
 - Covered (v. 1): God doesn’t hide our sin, he addresses it with us, he forgives and restores, and then keeps no record of that sin anymore. God covers it with forgiveness and freedom.
- God convicts us of our sins. We can try to ignore or suppress the conviction, but we will still know that we are disobeying God.
- Unconfessed sin is like a festering wound. It doesn’t just go away when we ignore it. It will fester into other parts of our lives like an infection.
- “Bones wasted away”: Unconfessed sin bottles up in our soul that it will lead to an infection that eats away our bones.
- “Strength was sapped in the heat of the summer”: When we live in sin, we live in lies and deception, we need be constantly on guard to hide our secret sins. We live in constant fear of being exposed of our sin. It depletes our strength. In the end, we have to sin more in order to cover up the sins that we are unwilling to let people know.
- Unconfessed sin makes us dishonest and untransparent with God and with people. Dishonesty only leads to superficial relationships. Our fear of being exposed leads us to isolation. We will not enjoy relationships because when we are not honest, we put a barrier between us and others. We cannot engage meaningfully. We end up isolating ourselves from God and from people.
- In contrast, it is a blessing when our sins are forgiven, when we can acknowledge our sins, when we do not need to cover up our iniquities, when we confess our transgressions to the Lord, knowing that the Lord is ever ready to forgive us.

James 5:16, *“Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.”*

- In confessing our sin, we may experience guilt and shame. Healthy guilt and shame should come from our sorrow of disobeying God, of hurting God and people. At the same time, it is in our confession that the bondage of sin can be broken. In Christ, there is no condemnation. He frees us to receive the forgiveness and healing that can only come from God. In due time, God will heal us from our guilt and shame.
- There is also power when we confess our sin to others. We no longer fight the temptation of the sin alone; we have accountability, we have support, we have prayers from God’s people. When we confess our sin, we no longer live in fear and shame of sin, but in the grace and love of God. We recognize that we are sinners in need of the mercy and kindness of God and his people.
- The more we feel the need to hide something from people, the more we need to tell someone about it. That is sin festering in our soul, and it will continue to pull us away from God unless we confess it to God and be accountable to someone.

John 1:8-10, *“⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.”*

⁶ *Therefore let all the faithful pray to you
while you may be found;
surely the rising of the mighty waters
will not reach them.*

⁷ *You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.*

- Just as sin breaks our relationship with God, the confession and forgiveness of sin brings reconciliation with God. As we look to God for forgiveness, we can seek refuge, comfort, protection and deliverance from God.

2. Repentance: Do Not Be Stubborn Like the Mule (vv. 8-9)

⁸ *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.*

⁹ *Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.*

- The instruction, teaching and counsel of the Lord is to help us understand, to help us have wisdom, so that we can make wise and good decisions, judgments and actions. God warns us not to be stubborn like the horse or the mule. But, when we refuse to understand and act like a stubborn mule, we give God no option but to “control” us by bit and bridle.
- God is instructing and teaching us so we can understand his path, what is good and bad for us, what abundant life is. But, we like to interpret his instructions and counsel as God controlling us, so we rebel, we refuse to listen, we have no understanding. It is when we are stubborn and refuse to listen that we force God to use his power to do the very thing that we did not want God to do in the first place, to control us.
- In verse 3, we read that David “kept silent” even though he knew he sinned. We are not sure when David wrote this psalm. But, looking at his sin with Bathsheba, from the onset of his adultery, David did not confess or repent. When Bathsheba got pregnant, he tried to cover up his sin by bringing Uriah back from the army. When Uriah did not go home, David knew he couldn’t cover up his sin, so he plotted for Uriah’s death. One sin led to another sin, to another and another. Was it possible that David did not know that he was sinning? It was evident that he knew, but the problem was that he was stubborn. He did not want to confess or repent.

- All of us can identify with David when it comes to stubbornness. We all have our fair share of insisting our ways.
 - (i) We are doing a lot of good, and it outweighs our bad. So, in a way, our “little sin” is no big deal. Our good deeds justify and excuse the need of repentance.
 - (ii) We excuse ourselves by saying other people are doing the same thing; other people are doing other wrong things too. After all, we are all sinners, so we give ourselves permission to sin.
 - (iii) We think that our giftedness makes us indispensable. We may hold positions, possess wealth, talents, resources, and we justify that we are blessing other people through these things that we have. So, we think we can continue to be a blessing and sin at the same time.
- There are more reasons and excuses that makes us stubbornly unrepentant. But all of them come from the same arrogant evaluation of ourselves. We think that we have the right to control our lives, to make decisions that is pleasing to ourselves. It is our lives, so it is our rights to do what we want.
- It is terrifying that David, the man after God’s own heart, the man who looked to God for refuge and strength when he fought Goliath, when he was running for his life from Saul and Absalom, when he had to act like a madman to save his life, the man who always found assurance in the Lord during his challenging times, this same man not only sinned, but was blinded by stubbornness, and that led him to more sin.
- When we are stubborn, when we insist on our ways, on our rights, on what we want and deserve, we begin to numb ourselves to the convictions of the Holy Spirit. We harden our hearts against God. The religious leaders during the time of Jesus hardened their hearts that they could not see or understand what God was saying and doing through Jesus, and they missed out on the coming of the Messiah and the work of God right in front of their eyes. (Matt 13:13)
- God graciously instruct, teach and counsel us with his loving eye on us. He instructs because He loves. God chastise us with gentleness. God wants to help us understand what is good and bad for us. Jesus came to give us abundant life, and God is giving us the guidelines (in his instructions, teachings and counsels) to help us live that abundant life that he freely gives. That means that there are certain things that we want that may not be good for us, and God has to chastise us. There are certain things we don’t like to do, but it is good for us, and God has to push us.
- Repentance is the willingness to acknowledge our sin, to recognize our way of life does not work, that only God knows how to give us what is good for us. And repentance require us to change. God will teach us the way we should go. There are things we need to do. It is not just an emotional remorseful episode; repentance must be accompanied by concrete modification in our thoughts and actions.
- We are all guilty of stubbornness, of insisting our ways. We all have suffered the consequences of choosing our ways, of disobeying God, of sin. We had our share of groaning, our share of living without peace, of striving to survive and to succeed. When will we acknowledge that our way doesn’t work? When will we stop being stubborn in insisting our way? Must God control us by bit and bridle to make us go to Him? Will we only repent when God forces us?

There is No Middle Ground (vv. 10-11)

¹⁰ *Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the LORD's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts in him.*

¹¹ *Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!*

- The volume of Psalm speaks about the contrast between the wicked and the righteous: the wicked will be condemned while the righteous will be vindicated. In Psalm 32, David is assured of the woes, the anguish, the suffering, the curse on the wicked, but the righteous is surrounded by the Lord's unfailing love.
- God doesn't expect us to be perfect. Those who trusts in the Lord, the righteous, those who are upright are not those who are without sin. But, they are the ones who are honest and transparent before God. They are willing to acknowledge their transgression, not cover up their sin, they are those who confess their sin and repent from their sinful ways, to obey the Lord's instructions, teaching and counsel, to walk on the path of the Lord, trusting that only God knows what is best for them.
- There is no middle ground. We either choose God or sin. We either choose to be righteous through Christ or be wicked and join the enemy. We have to choose one, we cannot put our legs in 2 boats, and we cannot say we are in neither boat. If we do not choose God, we are choosing sin.

John Piper, "The human heart hates a vacuum. We never merely leave God because we value him little; we always exchange God for what we value more."

- The choice is ours:
 - To continue to keep silent in our stubbornness, groan and suffer in anguish
 - To acknowledge our sin, to not cover up our iniquity and confess our transgressions, receiving forgiveness and walk in the way God instruct, teach and counsel us.
- For those who choose to pursue God, we can rejoice in the Lord and be glad because we can be honest and transparent before God and before his people, we do not need to lie or cover up, we are free.

Prayer

- We will not cover up our sins in shame and fear but invite God to cover our sins, forgive us and free us from the bondage of our sins.
- We will not be stubborn like the mule, we will not harden our hearts against God, we will acknowledge that our way of life does not work.
- Our repentance will be accompanied by our thoughts and concrete actions.
- We will receive God's instructions, teachings and counsel to have wisdom and understanding to make good decisions, judgments and actions.

Church

- We will hunger for God, through prayer and the meditation of God's word.
- We will be focus on what is important, instead of pursuing worldly treasures.
- Transformative work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.
- We will be faithful to welcome and minister to all the people that God sends to us.
- We will be a place of healing, restoration and reconciliation.
- Unity based on God's love and truth: breaking barriers between people from different groups.
- Workplaces: we will respond to our calling in the harvest field, representing Christ to the world.
- Compassion and wisdom to help those who are in need.
- Salvation for our loved ones.
- Ministries:
 - Open doors
 - Wisdom and discernment to reach out and minister
 - Sensitive to the needs of the people

Covid-19

- Healing and deliverance
- Government: wisdom and compassion
- Economy
- Mental health, domestic abuse
- Church: to bring hope with the Gospel

Healing

- Rita
- Jayden

Malaysia

- Leadership: righteousness, integrity, compassion for the people
- Unity: between all people group
- Justice and mercy: care for the marginalized (the poor, oppressed, widows, orphans, foreigners)
- Salvation
- Church: instruments of love and unity, prophetic voice to the nation

