

### **Psalm 32:1-7**

**<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. <sup>2</sup> Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. <sup>3</sup> When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. <sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. <sup>7</sup> You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.**

Dear children of God

Have you ever noticed how many people in the Bible have tried to cover up their sins? You have Adam and Eve hiding in the Garden so full of guilt and shame that they sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness. You have Jacob fleeing in the night after stealing the birthright from his brother Esau. You have the brothers of Joseph feeling that guilt and shame as Joseph after many years reveals to them that he is their brother that they sold into slavery. You have Peter running out and crying uncontrollably after denying knowing Jesus three times. Guilt was wreaking havoc on each of these people and in many of these cases the people were actually trying to hide their guilt from others and from God.

As we gather around God's Word today, we have another one of those Bible accounts which talks about guilt and trying to hide our sins from God. Have you ever wondered why the Bible is so full of these type of accounts? Why does God include all these accounts of people hiding their sin and guilt from? The answer is that God wants all of us to recognize that these people from the Bible and all of us gathered here today are the same. We are sinners who have sinned much and deserve God's wrath and punishment. The Bible lets us read how to handle these type of situations of sin and guilt which why we will let God answer our question for today using these words from King David in Psalm 32,

### **Theme: How Can We Survive Sin and Guilt?**

- 1. Confess our sins to God**
- 2. Trust in God's forgiveness**

It must have been hard for David to go into the house of the Lord knowing who he was and what he had done... anointed by a prophet when he was still a ruddy and handsome youth, the hero who slayed the giant Goliath, the great king of God's people saw her bathing on the roof. He had many women, beautiful women. But he wanted this woman. She was married but still he sent for her. "She came to him and he slept with her" Passions satisfied the woman was sent away. But she would return. "I am pregnant" she would tell the king. The fear the king must have felt. He could conceal the guilt of his adultery within his heart but this child would expose him. It would expose his guilt. The king hastily thought of a way to deal with his guilt. I will cover it up he thought in a flash of genius. He sends for the woman's husband and entices him to sleep with his wife. 'That way everyone will think the child is his son', he craftily thought. But the woman's

honor bound husband would not lay with his wife. But the crafty king would not be outwitted. He devised another plan more brilliant than the first. 'I will have him killed in the line of battle', he thought. 'After he is dead I will take his pregnant wife to be my own that way not only will my guilt remain hidden but I will be seen as a merciful king who took in a widow in her time of need.' And that is what the king did.

It worked. No one knew what the king had done. No one knew that he had slept with a married woman. No one knew he had killed a man. No one knew. But he knew... and God knew. It must have been hard for David to go into the house of the Lord knowing who he was and what he had done... Some days it's hard for us too isn't it... it is hard for us to come into this church and sit in those pews knowing the things we have done... knowing that God knows the things we have done.

Sometimes it is hard for me; a man called by God, called by God, held accountable by God to be the Pastor of this congregation to come into this house of the Lord knowing who I am and what I have done. It is not a question whether or not we have guilt. The question is how are you going to survive the guilt? Maybe we have tried to downplay the significance or dismiss the nature of our sin. 'Everybody does it', we tell ourselves. 'Hey nobody's perfect.' Have we ever tried to deal with our guilt by blaming someone else for our sin? 'I don't go to church because of the hypocrites that are there.' or 'my friends convinced me, I am victim of peer pressure.' If all else fails of course we might try to just ignore the sin. Or we can try to survive guilt by getting to the bottom of a bottle.

And at first, like the king it seems to work doesn't it. For some, years go by and guilt is ...dealt with. But it never goes away. It always remains, reminding us, haunting us, tormenting us. We know this to be true. If our sin is such a little thing then why does it crush us so much? Even if we can successfully convince others they are to blame for our problems we know the guilt remains our own. Ignore it all we want but our sin will not go away. As the Proverb says, **"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."** (Proverbs 14:12) Guilt is a relentless weight that will crush us in the end. There is nothing we can do to survive the guilt of our sin.

Guilt is a heavy burden to carry. It crushes... weighs down. Everything we do, every relationship we have is affected by guilt. I think the king described the effects of guilt well. Even though he had hidden his guilt from others he knew he could not hide it from himself he knew he could not hide it from his God. David wrote, **"When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer."** But why am I telling you this? We know what I'm talking about. We know what guilt feels like. We have felt its sapping, crushing, wasting effect.

God knew the king's guilt. He knew his adultery. He knew his murder. God knew the king could not survive under the weight of such guilt. So God sent a prophet to speak to the king. The prophet said, **"You are the man."** and the king's sins were exposed. His murder, his adultery, his guilt was known. No doubt he felt shame, no doubt he was embarrassed, maybe he felt anger, and maybe he was tempted to become defensive. But there was no hiding what had been done. And the king no longer tried. **"Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'— 'I have sinned against the Lord'"** he confessed.

God knows our guilt and he knows mine. He has always known what we must continually learn; we cannot survive the weight and burden of our guilt. So God sends prophets to us as well. People who tell us, "You are the man." "You are the woman". He exposes our sins and he displays our guilt. And maybe we

feel shame or get embarrassed. Maybe we get angry and maybe we get defensive. But at the end of the day we know. We know who we are. We know what we have done. We know there is no hiding our guilt. And if we hope to survive guilt we no longer try. Like King David, we acknowledge our sin to God and do not cover up our iniquity. We confess our transgressions to the Lord. We confess the facts and details of our sin. We are specific, 'I did this thing in this way'. We confess the fault of our sin, 'I did that thing by my fault, by my own fault, by my own grievous fault.' Like the prodigal children we are, we confess the rightness of the punishment we deserve 'I am not worthy to be called your son.' We must confess our guilt with shame and holy blushing, with fear and holy trembling. **"I have sinned against the Lord"**

King David confessed his guilt to the Lord. And with words that breathed new life into the very bones of the king do you know what the prophet Nathan said. **"The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."** How happy! What blessed joy! The weight of his guilt was removed, the sin was not reckoned to the king. The burden of guilt was removed and the king felt alive again. David sings, **"Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit."**

And notice, our God of grace is more ready to be rid of our guilt than we are. Like David we go to great lengths to deal with our guilt, only to learn, on our own we cannot survive its weight. But the moment we confess our sin, the moment we admit our guilt, see how quickly your God forgives you. David said, **"I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"— and you forgave the guilt of my sin"** Just like the Father of the prodigal son who saw his ungrateful, self-centered, self-indulgent, deserter of a son returning home. He saw him when he was still far off because he was looking for him. Filled with compassion he ran to him threw his arms around him kissed him. Before the son's confession is finished the father has forgiven him. What did the father say, when the prodigal son returned, **"Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."** What an encouragement that is for those who are crushed, burdened and sapped by guilt! Having confessed our sin, having admitted our guilt, absent of hoops, and free from strings, without delay, God forgives the guilt of our sin. **"As far as the east is from the west"**, he tells us, **"I will remember your sin no more."** How happy! What blessed joy!

God is able to remove our guilt so quickly and completely because our sin has been paid for long ago. Jesus took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. Jesus was stricken, smitten, afflicted, pierced, crushed and wounded in our place. Jesus paid the punishment of our sin. Jesus took our guilt upon himself. Your sin has been paid for the guilt offering has been made! There is no reason for you to feel the sapping, crushing, wasting effect of sin any longer! Jesus invites you, **"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."** (Matthew 11:28) The message of the cross is foolishness to the world but to those who are unburdened of guilt by it... the cross is the power of God.

King David survived his guilt because his gracious God sent a prophet to expose his guilt providing him an opportunity to confess his guilt so that he would be freed of his guilt. The same is true for us. Our gracious God sends a prophet to expose our guilt, providing us with an opportunity to confess our guilt so that in Jesus we can be freed from our guilt. **"Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered."** Amen