

Blessed is the One Who Knows They're a Sinner

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Preacher: Wy Plummer

[0 : 01] So good morning. It's a new year. 2025. Before I read the scripture which will come from Psalm 32, I want to briefly introduce myself.

Some of you don't know me. It's been years since I last preached here, which was the last Sunday in 2020. So I ask for your prayer. My name is Y. Plummer, and I'm not an elder at this church, but I am a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church in America for about, I think it's about 30 years now.

And I work for Mission to North America as a cross-cultural consultant. So with that, I would ask you to look at God's Word from Psalm 32, a mescal of David, as I read his Word for us today.

Hear God's Word. Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity and whose spirit there is no deceit.

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.

[1 : 34] 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.

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. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.

I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like the horse or a mule without understanding, which must be curbed by bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.

Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but the steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

[2 : 52] This is the word of God. Amen. Let's pray. Our gracious Heavenly Father, our God, our King, we thank you for this precious word that you have given us this morning.

It is your word breathed out by you to your servant who were able to pen it and write it for our edification and for our good.

I pray, Lord, this morning that you would use this word to change us, to help us to draw closer to you, to understand what it means to draw near and to be blessed in the Lord because of all your precious gifts to us.

We pray these things in the name of our precious Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who had died for our sins. Amen.

You may be seated. Let me ask you a personal question.

[4 : 02] Are you a sinner? That question is going to make some of you a little uncomfortable.

And some of you might even say, no, I'm not a sinner. I know a pastor in Baltimore, whose name I won't mention, to this day says that he's not a sinner.

He makes mistakes to be sure, but he's no sinner. But if you're a member of this church or any PCA church, you have already acknowledged yourself to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving his displeasure and without hope, save in his sovereign mercy.

You've already acknowledged it. And although we acknowledge ourselves to be sinners, it's often hard to live as a sinner. However, we tend to live like the world wants us to live.

We say, you know, everything's okay. We live as if sin is kind of normal. It's just kind of nobody's perfect, we say. The world teaches us to hide our flaws and justify our actions and to project an image of okayness, perfection.

[5 : 25] The world believes that this is the road to happiness. This is how you find happiness. Make money, have a good job, get married, whatever. The picket fence.

Well, that was many years ago. I'm dating myself here. No picket fence. Forget the picket fence. But that's the road to happiness. But the scriptures teach us something radically different.

The scriptures teach us that true joy and blessing begin when we commit ourselves and admit that we are sinners and turn to God for his grace.

Psalms 32 is David's personal testimony about the joy of forgiveness and the freedom that comes from acknowledging that we are sinners. We all know the story, don't we?

The story of David and Bathsheba from Samuel 11 and 12. From 2 Samuel 11 and 12. The story goes that in the spring when the time when kings go off to war David remains in Jerusalem.

[6 : 33] One evening David sees a beautiful woman. He inquires about who she is and he finds out that she is Bathsheba the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of David's mighty men.

David sends word for her and commits adultery. But sometimes later Bathsheba sends word to David telling him that she's pregnant.

So David sends for Uriah ostensibly for the purpose of getting information about the fighting but secretly planning to get Uriah to go home and to be with his wife.

David tells Uriah to go home. Wash your feet. Relax. Go home. Be with your wife. But Uriah didn't go. David sends for him and asks him, why didn't you go home to be with your wife?

And Uriah didn't think it was right for him to be on leave when his men were camped out in the open field sleeping on hard ground.

[7 : 34] Why should he be comfortable? David's plan doesn't seem to work so he decides to try something different. He invites Uriah to the palace and gets him drunk.

And David assumes that now Uriah will go home in his drunken state. But Uriah has more integrity drunk than David has sober and he doesn't go home.

David sends Uriah back to the field except with a note this time for Joab, the commander of the army.

And the note reads, put Uriah in the front where the fighting is fiercest and then withdraw from him so that he will be struck down and die. It's interesting that he didn't read the note.

Joab did as instructed and Uriah the Hittite was killed. And Joab follows orders and lets David know that Uriah is gone.

[8 : 43] And when David gets word that Uriah was dead, he took Bathsheba as his wife. And we read in 2 Samuel 11, 27 what has got to be one of the most understated statements in the scripture that the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

Months pass and David thinks everything is okay. But one day, Nathan the prophet comes to David with a story. about two men who had land.

One was rich and one was poor. The rich man had many large number of sheep and cattle. But the poor man had one little ewe lamb. A traveler comes to the rich man and instead of the rich man taking some of his many sheep to slaughter, he takes the one little ewe lamb from the poor farmer and prepares a meal for his guests.

And Nathan says, what do you think ought to be done to that man? And we know what David says. David burns with anger and he says, as the Lord lives, this man has done this thing that's displeasing.

And Nathan points to David and says, you are the man. Nathan goes on to describe what the consequences of David's actions are.

[10 : 26] And after that, David confesses, I have sinned against the Lord. and it's out of this crushing acknowledgement that David experiences God's grace, God's forgiveness, and God's joy.

And most commentators believe that David writes Psalm 51 about his experience of confession after this time. But sometimes later, after reflection, David wants others to understand what he had experienced and he writes Psalm 32 in a desire to teach others and us about the experience of confession.

Psalm 32 is called a mascal, which means it was written to impart wisdom and insight. So let's look at this psalm and see what it has to teach us about the joy and the blessedness when your sins are forgiven.

Verse 1 and 2, the blessedness of forgiveness. 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. one commentator paraphrased these verses this way.

[11 : 59] He says, how abundantly, richly, overflowing with happiness is he whose transgressions are forgiven. Blessing is much more than happiness.

Blessing is the root of the joy that we experience in who we are in God. But why is forgiveness a key to this freedom, this joy that we need, we want to experience is due to the nature and the seriousness of sin.

You see, sin is something more than wrongdoing. It's more than a mistake. Sin has to do with an offense against a holy, righteous God of the universe.

It's against the God in whom we live and move and have our being. sin is a cosmic offense because it's against God first.

In Psalm 51, David says, against you and you only have I sinned. Now David had surely sinned against Bathsheba. He had sinned against Uriah.

[13 : 15] He had sinned against his people. But he sinned first against God. All sin is first and foremost against God.

David uses three words to describe his sin. He uses the words transgressions, sin, and iniquity.

The word transgression comes from the Hebrew word Pasha. It's a deliberate rebellion against God. It's something in us that says, I'm not going to do it just because you told me to do it.

The great Augustine tells the story in his confessions about stealing pears. And as he reflects on this experience, he realizes that he didn't need the pears and he wasn't even hungry.

But there was something in him that wanted to do it just because he could do it. Just for the adventure of it. There's something in us that just wants to rebel.

[14 : 18] You tell somebody to do something and they don't want to do it and they do the opposite. The best way to get somebody to do something is tell them it's forbidden and they don't want to do it.

And that's transgression. The next word he uses is sin. Sin. And sin is basically missing the mark. It's kind of going off course.

Slowly but surely. Think about a little lie that you tell. And then you realize that you have to tell another lie in order to cover up that lie.

And you're slowly going off course. That's the word he uses as sin. Hatah. The next word is avon.

It's iniquity. And that's the moral corruption and the twistedness of our hearts. Our hearts are deceitful. Who can understand it? And as David uses three words to describe sin, he also uses three words to describe what God does about sin.

[15 : 31] God forgives, God covers, and God does not count our sin against us. God forgives our transgressions.

How do you forgive a rebel who's rebelling? We depend on God for our very breath. And he forgives our rebellion.

He lifts the heavy burden of guilt from us and forgives us immediately. And it says, as far as the east is from the west, so I have thrown your sin, I've forgiven you. But God covers our sin too.

He's able to forgive because he covers our sin. Our sin is not in his sight. And this, think about, when you think about covering, think about what Adam and Eve did after they sinned.

How they tried to cover themselves. perhaps with fig leaves or whatever it was. And think about the inadequacy of that covering.

[16 : 38] And think about our own inadequacies when we try to hide our sin from God and other people. But we know that that covering was inadequate and God provides animal hides for them to cover.

God needs to provide a covering covering for us. And we know that animals were not going to be the ultimate covering for us.

We know that we needed to be covered by something far more great than an animal. Since this is a universal sin that needed a universal covering.

And the universal covering came in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who gave his very life to cover us with his blood. he forgives because he covers.

But not only that he doesn't count our sin against us. Think about taking a final exam.

[17 : 45] Think about an exam that's so important and you fail it. And what would you think if the professor came and said you know we're not going to count that.

You can do it over again. But you know God does something better than that. God not only tells us we're covered and we're forgiven he gives us an A plus.

How is the God of the universe able to do this? God he does this because he sent his son into the world in our place to live the perfect life that we couldn't live and he forgives our sins past present and future but not only that he gives us Jesus perfect record.

You see Jesus not only died for our sins because the wages of sin is death but Jesus lived the perfect life. And so God takes his record and he gives it to us and God takes our miserable record and he gives it to Jesus.

This is the gospel. Something so powerful words so powerful that Paul repeats this psalm in Romans 4 6 and 8 when he says David speaks of the blessedness of the one whom God credits righteous.

- [19 : 24] We are righteous because of Christ apart from anything that we do. Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never take into account. This is the good news of the gospel.

this is the best news there is in the world. But although this is the best news in the world we tend to be very much like David.

After committing his sin David went for a month and said nothing. He paints a picture of how he felt during those months in verses 3 and 4.

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.

- [20 : 28] See there's a course to hiding sin. David describes it as physical emotional and a spiritual told on unconfessed sin. He said his bones wasted away.

You see sin impacts not only our soul but our very bodies as well. Some believe that these illnesses and the sicknesses that were going on in Corinth were due to this heaviness when they were sitting against the Lord's table.

He said your hand was heavy upon me. God disciplines us. He presses on us because he wants to bring us back not because he wants to punish us because the punishment is in Jesus already.

Why does hiding sin lead to such pain? Because silence about sin separates us from God. It distorts our relationship with him and it robs us of the joy, the source of joy in who is God himself.

Sin left unconfessed eats away at us like acid slowly and we don't feel it right away. We don't feel the effects right away but slowly it gets into our bones and it affects us and God lovingly disciplines us.

- [21 : 55] He does it for our good. We don't always believe that when the pain comes. You remember when you were a kid and you were disciplined? I come from the old school when we were disciplined heavily with belts.

And sometimes our parents discipline us out of frustration. They don't always do it for our good. They do it for their good because they're frustrated but God disciplines us.

He brings upon us his heavy hand on us for our good. Don't ever think you're being punished. If you are in Christ Jesus your sins have been forgiven.

The heaviness is discipline. He wants to wake you up. And God is always in the process of drawing us to himself because he wants us to repent.

He wants us to turn to him for healing. And so he brings pain into our life. You know one of the most painful scriptures I used to read and it just brought me pain was Deuteronomy 8.3 where it says he humbled you and let you go hungry.

- [23 : 11] You remember the children of Israel when he took them out of Egypt and he brings them into the wilderness? He let them go hungry. How do you let your kids go hungry?

No, he did feed them. But why did he do that? The scriptures tell us that you might know that man does not live by bread alone but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

There's nothing more important than following the word of God. Every word that proceeds out of his mouth. But you know God not only uses pain and difficulty and discipline he actually uses kindness.

Romans 2:4 says do you presume upon the riches and the kindness of God and his forbearance not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

The good stuff should lead us to repentance. It should lead us to God. We should be thankful. I can breathe. I can see. The good stuff should lead us to God.

[24 : 27] Our problem is that we tend to take the good stuff for granted. We assume that the good stuff this is what life is all about. And when the difficulties then we're frustrated.

How could you let this happen to me? Not realize that we deserve death. The good stuff praise the Lord. The bad stuff turn to God and praise God.

God wants us to repent. He wants us to turn to him for healing and refreshment and joy. Blessed is the person who knows they are a sinner because they are in the perfect position to receive God's mercy.

How? By confession. Verse 5. He says, David did three things.

It seems like everything is coming in threes. He acknowledges his sin to God. He stopped covering his iniquity and he confessed his transgressions to the Lord and he was forgiven.

[25 : 44] David agrees with God. When God said that he has sinned, he acknowledges his sin to God. We need to acknowledge our sin to God because it's against him first.

And confession means agreeing with God about the seriousness of sin. 1 John 1:10 says, if we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

Begins with agreement. Secondly, David stopped covering his iniquity. I did not cover my iniquity. He stopped covering up. How do you cover up adultery and murder?

By just not saying anything. And that's how we cover up our sin. We just don't say anything. We just assume that everything is okay.

I'm okay. You're okay. Very old book. No. We stopped covering up. And then he confessed.

[26 : 54] He confessed. He stopped covering. He said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. And what does God do? He forgave him. There was no punishment. There was no recrimination.

There was no anger. Just forgiveness. this. You remember the story of the prodigal? How he takes the inheritance from his father before the father dies and he goes and he spends it in while living him.

But then he comes to himself as he sees how he's living and he's preparing a confession. He's preparing a speech and he goes back to his father. And the father is not standing at the door with his tapping his.

But the father is ready to embrace him. And before he can even get the confession out, the father embraces him. That's our father.

That's a picture of our heavenly father who is ready to embrace us if we would just confess, if we would just fess up. He is ready to forgive us.

[28 : 04] He's not ready to beat us up. That's not what it's all about. It's about turning back to our maker. You've heard the expression confession is good for the soul or for the heart.

It's a biblical. It comes from the Bible. 1 John 1:9 says if we confess he is faithful and just and will forgive us of our sins. James 5:16 confess your sins to one another.

I would love to see us begin to confess our sins to one another. Proverbs 28:13 whoever conceals their sin does not prosper but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

But for some reason and we probably know confession is hard isn't it? Why is confession so hard? Confession is hard because we fear exposure.

What will people think? We tend to be far more concerned with what other people think than what God knows. My whole struggle with rumination is because I'm so concerned with what people think.

[29 : 35] How do I know what people think? I can't read their mind but I know what God knows because he has told us in his word and I know that I am blessed through him. That's what I need to live in.

That's what we need to live in. The reality of what God has said and promised already. Another reason why confession is hard is because we can't see our sin.

You know David went for months. Adultery, murder, lying and he didn't say anything. You can't always see your sin. And when somebody comes to you and tells you about it what do we tend to do?

Justify ourselves. It wasn't that bad. Who are you talking to? How dare you? We create defensive behavior. Confession is hard because we can't see it.

And confession is hard because we justify our actions. Everybody's doing it. It's not that big a sin. It's not. We often play the sin game.

[30 : 41] I call it. Where we go, do you think it's a sin to gamble on Sunday? Why do we go there?

Why do we play these games? Are we trying to build fences that make sure we don't go over that fence? Let's be real.

If you think it's a sin, it's a sin. It may not be, but just take it to the Lord and the Lord may true sin, not sin, true guilt, not guilt.

Take it before the Lord. Asking somebody else's opinion, that doesn't help. Take it to the scriptures, let the scriptures answer whether it's a sin or not.

You know, another reason why confession is hard is because we don't trust what God may ask us to do. I want to make a personal confession here.

[31 : 48] It's a good story. I had someone do some work on my house once and they gave me a verbal quote of what it was going to cost.

And after they finished the work, basically the quote was they gave me a bill and the bill was twice what the quote was. I was so angry that I did something I haven't done since before I became a Christian.

I cussed them out. I used profanity that I was shocked came out of my mouth. I told them to get them out of my house.

and then he left. He was pretty upset. He left. But I felt bad.

I said, I'm a Christian. I'm not supposed to do that. And I called them up in meeting and I apologized. But I still felt like I was taken. again.

[32 : 56] And so I called them back again and said, I think you cheated me. But I couldn't sleep that night.

And then I called a friend the next day and I said, you know, this is what I did, but this is what he did. And my friend said, why, you're going to have to repent and call him.

You've insulted, you've cursed a brother. I said, I don't know if he's a Christian or not. Well, that's even worse. wife is not. You're a bad witness. I was convicted.

And I immediately called and I repented truly from my heart and I confessed. And it wasn't, I discovered that it wasn't about the money.

The money was secondary. God lifted that burden from me because my sin was against the Lord first, secondly, against this person.

[34 : 06] And I had to ask the Lord for forgiveness and then he freed me up. Blessed is the person who confesses their sin because they know the joy and the freedom of forgiveness.

Freedom leads to repentance, which leads to the Lord, which leads to joy. Verse 6 and 7, therefore.

And therefore is therefore because of everything that proceeds. Let everyone who is godly offer prayers to you at a time when you may be found. Surely in the rush of waters they shall not reach you.

You are my hiding place for me. You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts of deliverance.

Repentance is for everyone. Repentance is not just for people who have committed large sins or just for new believers. But a repentant life is how we need to live every day of our life.

[35 : 16] It's not hard. It's not beating yourself up. It's coming before the Lord saying, I confess Lord, He already knows you're a sinner. You're not telling Him anything He doesn't know.

He wants you because He loves you. He's a safe refuge. When we repent, we discover that God has been waiting for us.

Not to condemn, but to protect and preserve. He says, you are my hiding place for me. We find all kinds of places to hide in except for God.

But God is the true hiding place for us. He tells us that He's going to guide us as we come to Him.

Verses 8 through 10. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like the horse or mule without understanding which must be curbed with bit and bridle or it will not stay near you.

[36 : 30] Stay near you. God wants us to be near Him. And He guides us with His eye. Yeah, His eyes are but you know this is a singular eye.

Have your parents ever guided you? You can just kind of look at their eye and you know what they want. That's how we should be our relationship with God. We're so intimate with His Word that we understand.

Oh, God He got the eye on me. Yeah, yes, let's Lord. He tells us not to be like the horse or a mule.

Sometimes I feel that way. See, God is going to lead you to Him. If you belong to Him, He's going to lead you one way or another. Why don't you make your life easier?

Why don't you abide in His Word, listen to His Word, and let Him guide you with His eye? Don't be like the horse and mule with no understanding.

[37 : 27] You understand, so you don't need that kick. You don't need that push. I keep reflecting on the fact that it's taken me four years to get back in the pulpit.

And God proud of me, proud of me, proud of me. Every time the pulpit's open, Kevin has asked me, and I keep saying, no, no. And I've been avoiding this because of the pain of preparation. Sermon prep is so hard.

But I'm also realizing that that's about caring about what y'all think of me. Instead of knowing what I already am in Christ Jesus. Repentance restores our relationship with God, turning groaning into rejoicing.

Last verse. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

That's our destiny. Chief and of men, to glorify God and enjoy him forever. We're designed, we're here to give glory to God through worship.

[38 : 39] worship. And knowing you're forgiven leads to a life of praise and gratitude. Not a life of introspection and wondering and beating yourself up, but to a life of joy in the Lord.

Lord. So, in conclusion, the world says, hide your flaws, pretend that all is okay, but Psalm 32 tells us the truth.

Joy and blessing come when we acknowledge our sins and receive God's forgiveness. Blessed is the person who knows they're a sinner.

I was afraid to make that the title. because they will find joy. And we are so much better off than David. You know, David knew that God was merciful, but we know so much more.

We know that Jesus bore the full weight of our sins on the cross. And because of Christ, we can say with confidence, blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

[39 : 54] sin is and so I invite you today to repent. I invite you today to confess your sins, perhaps to one another, but even now to God.

Knowing your sinner isn't the end. It's the beginning. It's the beginning of joy in the Lord. important. And so as you go through this week, even as you go through this day, I pray that you would remember Psalm 32 as a blessing to you.

God, it invites you to come to him. Let's pray. Our gracious Heavenly Father, our God, our King, we thank you for this great psalm.

we thank you for what it teaches us about you, about who you are, about the blessing that comes from confession.

I pray, Lord Jesus, if there's anyone here who has not professed faith, that you would bring them to yourself, that you would use this word to bring them to yourself.

[41 : 20] I pray, Lord Jesus, if there's any who out here who are like prodigals, who have moved away from the faith, who are in the far country, I pray that they would know that you welcome them back with open arms.

I pray for my brothers and sisters here, like myself, who just struggle each day with sin and issues and that you would teach us to bring our sins, our concerns, to you moment by moment, day by day, and realize that repentance isn't a heavy thing.

But there's a lightness to it because we know who's at the end of it. And we know that they're the blessed arms of our Lord who welcomes us.

Thank you, Jesus. In your name I pray. Amen.