

The Blessing of Sins Forgiven

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Date: 26 October 2008

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[0:00] The 32nd Psalm. If you have ever experienced an overwhelming sense of sin and guilt, You know what a burden it is.

! You know what John Bunyan was talking about when he describes pilgrim or Christian as carrying a physical burden on his back. Such that when he falls into the slough of despond, he could not get out because of the burden that was on his back.

Financially, it would be like carrying around a high interest debt that you could not pay. It affects everything else, every part of your life. Any extra money that you have goes to paying towards the interest on the debt.

Trying to keep up with the payments. It drains away from other necessities and wants. It consumes your budget and soon it consumes your whole life. It can be crippling. It buries you.

You start to fall behind with things that are necessities. And then you start to fall behind on paying it off. And you go into debt in other areas and the creditor comes knocking on your door.

[1:08] Calling your phone. You're harassed and troubled. It keeps you awake at night. You fear for yourself, for your family. Being consumed with these things, you begin to neglect your family.

You snap at them. The debt has overtaken you. It can cripple you. It can incapacitate you. And so it can be with sin.

And the guilt that follows from it. And we want to think about sin and guilt tonight. We want to think about that and how it weighs on us. And the burden that it creates upon our shoulders.

Don't worry, we're not going to stop there. We're not going to stay in the slough of despond tonight. We want to talk about forgiveness. And then the blessing that flows from that. But we begin with sin and guilt.

And you all know what sin is. And you know what guilt is because you've experienced it. You've felt that guilt. Sin is simply breaking God's law. Doing what He says not to do.

[2:06] And not doing what He says we should do. And it's not just something that really bad people have done. Every person here tonight has sinned. Every person here tonight is a sinner against a holy God.

And so every person here tonight is deserving of punishment. We are guilty. There is no one righteous. Not even one. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

That's the reality that confronts us tonight. And that sin is against a holy God. Even when we sin against our brothers and sisters. Or against other people.

That sin is first and foremost against a holy God. When David sinned against Uriah and Bathsheba. And against his own family. He says in Psalm 51. Against you. He's talking to God. And he says against you.

And you only have I sinned. That's how much our sin is primarily against a holy God. David sinned grievously against those other people. But first it was against God. He demands that we obey Him perfectly.

[3:07] Such a high standard. As soon as we look at it. We don't. Or we know that we've fallen short. He's the lawgiver. And we by nature are law breakers. Sinners. And even if we think we're really pretty good people.

And maybe just one or two commands I've broken. And maybe just one or two times. James tells us. James 2 and verse 10. For whoever keeps the whole law and stumbles at just one point. Is guilty of breaking all of it.

We sin against God. We also do sin against our fellow men. We treat them poorly. We lie to them. We don't keep our promises. We're unfaithful to covenants and commitments that we've made.

Instead of rejoicing with our neighbors. We covet what they have. Instead of blessing. We curse. Instead of encouraging. We discourage. We've sinned against God. We don't worship Him. We don't love Him like we ought. And we sin against our fellow men. We are guilty. We have guilt. We've done what we're accused of.

[4:07] And we deserve the punishment that's coming. The wages of sin. Is death. And that guilt that comes. The knowledge that you've done wrong.

And deserve judgment. And have caused others pain. That guilt can be overwhelming. Have you ever experienced that? I'm not talking about financial debt now. But now guilt. Guilt that can rack your physical body.

Guilt that can keep you awake at night. It can make you sick to your stomach. If you have experienced that. You know something about that burden.

That Christian carried on his back. Proverbs 28. 17. A man tormented by the guilt of murder. Will be a fugitive till death. Let no one support him.

You know what it is to be tormented by guilt. You read. Crime and punishment sometimes. It's a novel. A Russian.

[5:02] Dostoevsky. But it's a fascinating. And very sad portrayal. Of a man that's tormented. By the guilt of having murdered two women. Being eaten alive by that guilt.

It's what David speaks of here in Psalm 32. Look at verses. Three and four with me. 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 sapped. As in the heat of summer. You experienced that heavy hand of God upon you.

Had your physical strength sapped. Because of guilt. Guilt has physiological effects. But the way we feel. When we're guilty. Is the least of our problems.

Our guilt means that we're going to receive the punishment. That our sins deserve. And that punishment is. Eternal suffering and death. It's a bleak picture.

[6:03] And there are two ways that people have. Of dealing with that guilt. That overwhelming sense of oppression. That physical feeling that comes with it.

And one is that many try to suppress it. They try to pretend that it's not there. They bury it. And foolishly so. They continue in their sin. Becoming harder and harder in their sinful ways.

And eventually. Their consciences become seared. To where they no longer feel guilt. And that feels better. Because to feel guilty is to feel miserable. And so many people will suppress it.

Until they don't feel it anymore. Because they don't like that feeling. They become insensitive to the pangs of guilt. That once plagued them. Make no mistake.

If that describes you. You are still guilty. Even though you don't feel that way. You're still guilty.

Judgment is still coming. You'll still be held accountable. You just don't feel it so much anymore.

[6:59] You can do that with your. This financial debt that we've spoken of. You can pretend it's not there. You can stop paying. You can ignore the creditors. And pretend like it will go away. But it won't do you any good in the long run.

They will find you. They will come after you. They will get everything that you have. Or they will take away the thing that you owe so much money on. And so too ignoring your guilt will do you no good in the long run.

It will catch up with you. You will be punished. You are still guilty. Even if you don't feel that way. So one way people deal with it is to suppress it.

But praise God that there is another way to deal with our guilt. The way that he has provided. And so we talk about sin and guilt. But secondly we want to speak of forgiveness tonight.

We can't leave Christian in the slough of despond. We can't leave you there tonight. Not as we gather around the Lord's table. Because forgiveness comes through Christ. The one who is suffering in death that we remember tonight.

[7:59] Eventually in Pilgrim's Progress. And you know what happens. So I'm not really stealing anybody's thunder for Sunday school. But eventually he gets to the cross doesn't he? And that's where we must go if we would be free of guilt.

We need our sins forgiven through the work of Christ. And that's what we remember tonight. We remember the death of Christ. Because it was there that the one that had no guilt.

The guiltless one. He took our sin. And guilt. And suffered in our place. He had never sinned. And therefore he wasn't guilty.

And even Pilate could recognize this. Then Pilate announced to the chief priest in the crowd. I find no basis for a charge against this man. Or you could translate it. Or I find no guilt in this man. Right. Because there wasn't any. He wasn't guilty. He hadn't sinned. But he was counted guilty for us. Our sins were put on him.

[9:02] And God judged his own son to be guilty. In our place. He was sacrificed for us. Hebrews 9.22 The law requires that everything be cleansed with blood. And without the shedding of blood.

There is no forgiveness. And so the blood of Jesus was shed. So that our sin might be forgiven. So that the guilt might be taken away from us.

And Jesus understood that didn't he? When he instituted the very ordinance that we remember tonight. What did he say? This is my blood of the covenant.

Which is poured out for many. For the forgiveness of sins. He knew his blood had to be shed. So that our sins might be forgiven. And so Paul can say in Colossians 1.13-14.

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness. And brought us into the kingdom of the son he loves. In whom we have redemption. The forgiveness of sins. In whom is our redemption?

[9:59] Where is our forgiveness of sins? In Christ. In him alone. The one that we remember tonight. In his suffering and death. And so we come to him in repentance and faith. And that burden of sin and guilt can be removed.

As far as the east is from the west. I love that language. As far as the east. You start going in that direction. And I'll start going in this direction. And on earth we'll meet. But pretend like earth is flat. You never meet. And that's as far as Jesus has removed our sin from us. And he's buried it in the depths of the ocean. Never to be seen again. Not to be remembered.

Or counted against us. And so. 1 John 1.9 If we confess our sins. He is faithful. And just. And will forgive us our sins. And cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Jesus is the solution to our problem tonight.

Sin and guilt. There's an overwhelming burden that many people have borne. But if you found the cross. That burden is tumbled away. Fallen into the grave. As it did for Christian.

[11:04] And that brings us to Psalm 32. The first two verses tonight. Blessed is he. 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 there is no deceit. This is the passage I wanted to preach on. And we finally get here tonight.

But it seemed that we would appreciate the blessing of being forgiven more. If we thought about our sin. And our guilt. And just how it is that we've been forgiven. How this forgiveness comes to us. It's through Christ. And so we are indeed blessed. If you know Jesus tonight. Your sins have been forgiven. Then you are blessed. Beyond words.

Beyond anything that we could describe. The freedom and joy that comes to us. Because of sins forgiven. Is yours tonight. If you are in Christ. Do you remember that crushing debt that we spoke of.

[12:07] Financial debt. You imagine that you find out someone had gone to your bank or creditor. And paid that debt for you. It's no longer there. And all of a sudden this thing that has consumed your life.

And consumed your budget. And everything about you is gone. It's been taken away. And all of a sudden there's cash flow again. There's money that's available to do things that you've never been able to do before.

And it's like a load has been lifted off your back. That crippling influence in every part of your life. So it is when we find ourselves forgiven. Our sins not counted against us.

There's no longer that inner wasting away that David speaks of here. That silent suffering. That overwhelming guilt. What a great thing it is to not hide our sins any longer. But to confess and forsake them.

Proverbs 28.13. He who conceals his sin does not prosper. But whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Oh, we're blessed, dear people. Our sins are forgiven.

[13:04] We don't dread eternity anymore. An eternity of suffering. No, it's a glorious prospect of an eternity in heaven. We're blessed.

Listen to how Bunyan describes the freedom that Christian found when his burden rolled away. Then was Christian glad and lightsome. The burden's gone. He's light.

And he said, With a merry heart he hath given me rest by his sorrow and life by his death. Then Christian gave three leaps for joy. He couldn't leap when that burden was on his back. There was no joy in his life when he carried that burden.

Haven't you found that joy? That you could leap for joy even. Well, Christian did three leaps for joy. And he went on singing. Thus far did I come laden with my sin.

Nor could I ease the grief that I was in. Till I came hither. What a place is this? Must here be the beginning of my bliss? Must here the burden fall from off my back?

[14:01] Must here the strings that bound it to me crack? Blessed cross. Blessed sepulcher. Blessed rather be. The man that there was put to shame for me.

Blessed be Jesus who was put to shame at the cross for you and for me. Is there any greater blessing, people of God, than the work of Christ and the sins forgiven?

We're now free. Free to live our lives without that burden. Free to be joyful in Christ. Free to live for Christ. Free to sleep soundly at night with no fear of coming wrath.

Free to praise and honor the God who's granted us this sweet freedom. Blessed indeed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven. Whose sins are covered. The ones against whom the Lord does not count their sin.

If you are in Christ tonight, that is you. Is there any greater gift that comes down from the Father of the heavenly lights who gives every good and perfect gift to his children?

[15:08] Praise God if you're trusting Christ tonight. No more burden. We're free. And so tonight, as we remember the work of Christ by which our sins are forgiven, it's a glorious sacrifice.

Blessed Savior, how unworthy we are of such immeasurable blessing. And how foolish we are when we begin to doubt God's goodness.

When we begin to think we deserve better than we're receiving in this life. We don't get what we think we deserve. Life isn't fair. I haven't been treated fairly. My kids haven't been treated fairly. I'm a good person.

I deserve better. No. No. That's foolish thinking. That's thinking that's devoid of the cross. It's thinking that's forgetting that what we deserve is judgment and punishment.

But we don't get what we deserve because of what Christ has done. And so can a few bumps along the way in our lives really make us question God and talk about what we deserve?

[16:09] No. Praise God rather that we haven't received what we deserve. Look at the last verse of Psalm 32. This ought to be our response to sins forgiven.

Rejoice in the Lord and be glad you righteous. Sing all you who are upright in heart. A response of praise. A response of joy. Thanksgiving. Praise to the God who has so graciously delivered us.

Let us remember this great blessing as we partake of the Lord's Supper tonight. As we think on the body and blood of Christ. Let us remember that it's by that that we have forgiveness of sins.

That we are a blessed, a joyous, a free people. But maybe some are under a crushing burden of guilt tonight. Your burden hasn't rolled away.

You can have it roll away just like it did for Christian. And for many other Christians sitting around you tonight. Come to Christ and have that weight lifted.

[17:13] Confess and forsake your sins. And He will forgive you. He will cleanse you from all unrighteousness. And trusting Christ and that burden that is so crippling will roll away.

You will be free. But maybe there are some here tonight that are guilty. But you don't feel it anymore. You've suppressed it.

And you like it that way. You didn't like the feeling and you're glad that it's gone. But you haven't dealt with those sins. You haven't come to the cross. You're still carrying the burden. You just don't recognize it.

Pray that God would soften your heart. That He would make you to see your sin. And feel the weight of your guilt before a holy God. And that it would send you running to Jesus. The Savior of sinners.

The one who can lift that burden. The one who can set you free. Otherwise, you're going to go walking headlong into hell. Happy as you can be. Deceived as you can be.

[18:16] But still headed for hell. God save you. God deliver you from your delusions of innocence. And show you your guilt. What a blessed thing tonight, dear people.

Sin's forgiven. And blessing. 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. Praise God that it can be so for us tonight.