

¹ *A Psalm of David. A Contemplation. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.* ² *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.* ³ *When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long.* ⁴ *For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer.* ⁵ *I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.* ⁶ *For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him.* ⁷ *You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.* ⁸ *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.* ⁹ *Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.* ¹⁰ *Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.* ¹¹ *Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*

Text: Psalm 32 A 9-6-26 Isaiah 55:1-9 Luke 15:11-32 Psalm 57 Responsive Psalm: 130
Hymns: 363, 324 (1-4), 324 (5-8), 371

THE JOY OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

David had committed his terrible sins of adultery and murder. He was sorry for what he had done, and God had forgiven him. In this Psalm, David tells us what it was like before he repented, and what it was like after he repented and God forgave him.

We're told that the person who has repented and received God's forgiveness is "*Blessed*," which also means "*Happy*." A repentant sinner who has received God's forgiveness is "*blessed*" and "*happy*." As Jesus tells us, "*Be happy, your sins are forgiven.*" (Mt. 9:2)

We're told, "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.*" The word for "*transgression*" here in the original is literally, "*rebellion*." God tells us in His Word what's right and what's wrong. Every time we sin, in effect we're rebelling against God. By nature we rebel against God. We are sinners. Sometimes we know we shouldn't do something, but we do it anyway. That's "*transgression*" – "*rebellion*."

"*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.*" "*Forgiven*" in the original is literally, "*pardoned*." If we were guilty of something and standing before a judge, it would be a miracle if he pardoned us. We are guilty sinners. Yet when we tell God we're sorry, miraculously, He forgives us. Our sins had to be punished. But we aren't the ones who were punished. Jesus was punished for our sins in our place on the cross. "*Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon*

Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Is. 53:4-5). That’s amazing. That’s miraculous. “Happy is he whose rebellion is pardoned.”

We’re told, *“Blessed is he ... whose sin is covered.”* The word for “sin” here in the original is literally, *“missing the mark.”* No matter how hard we try, no matter how sincere we are, we can’t keep God’s commands and Commandments as we should. We *“miss the mark.”* We sin. But God for Jesus’ sake *“[covers]”* our sin. It doesn’t mean that God pretends that we haven’t sinned. He knows we have. But when we sin and tell God we’re sorry, He forgives us. As far as God is concerned, our sin is forgiven and forgotten. God tells us in Isaiah 43:25, *“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.”*

The word “LORD” appears four times in our text. “LORD” is “Jehovah,” the God of the covenant, the God who promised and sent His Son to die for our sin on the cross, the God who forgives us for Jesus’ sake. “LORD” – “Jehovah” – is the God who saves us.

“Happy is the man ... to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity.” “Iniquity” in the original refers to something twisted: *“perversity, depravity.”* *“Happy is the man ... to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity.”* When we sin and repent, God doesn’t hold our sins against us, but forgives us. The psalmist says, *“[God] has not dealt with us according to our sins”* – God has not treated us as we deserve because of our sins – *“nor punished us according to our iniquities”* (Ps. 103:10).

We’re told, *“Happy is the man ... in whose spirit there is no deceit.”* When we sin, we need to be honest with ourselves, and honest with God. We’re not fooling God if we make excuses for ourselves. God doesn’t want to hear excuses. God wants to hear, “I did wrong, and I’m sorry.”

“When I kept silent” – when I didn’t repent of my sins – *“my bones grew old”* (from the original, *“my bones wore out,”* *“I felt exhausted”*) – *“through my groaning”* (literally from the original, *“through my roaring”*) *“all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me.”* David is talking about how he felt when he didn’t repent of his sins. Unrepented sin brings a guilty conscience that weighs heavily on us. We’re not at peace with God, so we can’t be at peace with ourselves.

We’re told, *“My vitality was turned”* (literally from the original, *“my vitality was overturned”*) *“into the drought of summer.”* Not repenting of our sins, we don’t have God’s forgiveness. Instead we face only God’s anger. Unrepented sin takes happiness away from us.

“I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity” (*“my perversity, my depravity”*) *“I have not hidden.”* When we sin we need to face up to it and confess it to God. *“I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions’”* (*“my rebellions, my revolts”*) *“to the LORD, and You forgave”* (*“You pardoned”*) *“the iniquity”* (*“the perversity, the depravity”*) *“of my sin”* (*“my missing the mark”*). John says, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in*

us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 Jn. 1:8-9)

When David was confronted with his sins of adultery and murder he confessed, *“I have sinned against the LORD.”* Immediately David was assured, *“The LORD also has put away your sin”* (2 Sam. 12:13). When we sin and repent, God immediately, unconditionally forgives us for Jesus’ sake. We say with the psalmist, *“If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared”* – that You may be *“held in awe”* (Ps. 130:3-4; see also Ps. 33:8). We repentant sinners stand in awe of God’s immediate, complete, unconditional forgiveness!

We’re told, *“everyone who is godly shall pray to You....”* When we sin and repent, God forgives us and covers us with Jesus’ perfect righteousness. Forgiven and with Jesus’ righteousness covering us, we’re *“godly”* God in God’s eyes.

We’re told, *“For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him.”* The last part of this verse seems to say that, even in the face of life’s troubles, with God’s forgiveness and help we can stand strong. Isaiah tells us, *“Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”* (Is. 55:6-7). We say with the psalmist, *“Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth”* (Ps. 124:8)

We’re told, *“You are my hiding place.”* God doesn’t make everything easy and comfortable for us in life. Jesus has told us, *“In the world you will have tribulation”* (Jn. 16:33). The twenty-third Psalm says, *“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies”* (v. 5, my emphasis). Jesus promises us, *“I am with you always”* (Mt. 28:20). In the midst of life’s troubles, God is our safe place to go to for peace and strength. *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”* – Psalm 46:1.

We’re told, *“You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.”* *“Trouble”* in the original is literally, *“narrowness.”* When our sin, our troubles and our problems press in on us, God forgives our sins, and He’s with us to see us safely through our troubles and problems. *“The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation”* – Psalm 118:14.

God assures us, *“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.”* God is constantly watching over us. The psalmist says, *“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”* (Ps. 119:105). Through His Word God shows us the right way, the good way to go in life.

God warns us, *“Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.”* Fighting God and rebelling against Him only brings trouble. God adds, *“Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.”* Those who don’t know Jesus as their Savior don’t have God’s love and forgiveness to calm their troubled conscience. They face life without God’s forgiveness, help, and guidance. As Paul says, they have *“no hope and [are] without God in the world.”* (Eph. 2:12)

We’re told, *“he who trusts in the LORD,”* in the forgiving God, *“mercy shall surround him.”* The word *“mercy”* in the original is rich in meaning, like the word *“grace.”* Trusting in Jesus, we’re blessed with God’s *“goodness, kindness, faithfulness, favor,”* and *“grace.”*

“Be glad in the LORD and rejoice” (from the original, *“shriek ecstatically”*) *“you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!”* *“Be glad”* and *“shout for joy”* are commands, not suggestions. Paul urges us, *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”* (Philip. 4:4). Think about God’s forgiveness and all of His other blessings to us undeserving sinners. God deserves our heart-felt thanks and praise.

God calls us *“righteous”* and *“upright in heart.”* We know that we’re sinners. Jesus forgives us and covers us with His righteousness. God doesn’t look at our sins, He looks at Jesus’ righteousness covering us. For Jesus’ sake God declares us to be *“righteous.”* For Jesus’ sake, you and I are *“upright in heart”* in God’s eyes.

When we think of David’s terrible sins of adultery and murder, we realize that it caused Jesus terrible suffering to pay for those sins. When we think of our sins, we realize that they also caused Jesus terrible suffering. Jesus declared on the cross, *“It is finished!”* (Jn. 19:30). Jesus paid for every sin of every sinner. Jesus paid for all of our sins. That’s **THE JOY OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS**. “Thank You, thank You, thank You, Jesus!” Amen.