

Psalm 32 – Confession and Forgiveness

Today we are going to take a look at sin, confession, repentance and forgiveness in the context of Psalm 32. I believe that David wrote Psalm 32 several years after he wrote Psalm 51. In Peter's sermon on the Feast of Weeks, *Feast of Firstfruits* or Feast of Pentecost, he stated:

Acts 2:36-39— "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission [*aphesis*] of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Peter reminded the audience that they have had a part in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Repent means to change your mind, to quit doing what you were doing, to confess the sin to God and then receive the forgiveness of God. Peter understood what David had written in:

Psalm 51:4— Against You, You only, have I sinned [*chatta'ah*], and done this evil in Your sight — That You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.

Eventually David realized that God's forgiveness was a big blessing to him.

Psalm 32:1-2— Blessed is he whose transgression [*pesha'*] is forgiven [*nasa'*], whose sin [*chatta'ah*] is covered [*ka'sa*]. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity [*'avon*], and in whose spirit there is no deceit [*remiyah*].

David uses several synonyms for sin in Psalms 32 and 51, each with its own flavor:

- Hebrew word *Strong's* <06588> [*pesha'*], "transgressions." Meaning transgression in the sense of rebellion or revolt, designating those who reject God's authority.
- Hebrew word *Strong's* <05771> [*'avon*], "iniquity." Meaning perversion, perversity, wickedness, infraction, crooked behavior, iniquity or fault. From a root that means "to bend, twist or distort."
- Hebrew word *Strong's* <02401> [*chatta'ah*], "sin." Meaning to miss the mark or miss the way. All essentially imply deviating from a standard—that is, from God's standard.
- Hebrew word *Strong's* <07423> [*remiyah*], "deceit" or "guile" (KJV). Meaning "laxness, slackness, slackening, guile, deceit, treachery, and fraud."

David also uses a pair of synonyms for "forgiveness" in Psalm 32:1-2.

- Hebrew word *Strong's* <05375> [*nasa'*], "forgiven." This word literally means: to lift up (a burden), to carry, to bear up. Here the emphasis is on "taking away, forgiveness, or pardon of sin, iniquity and transgression."
- Hebrew word *Strong's* <03680> [*ka'sa*], "covered." Meaning "to cover, conceal, hide." It is probably the meaning of "hide" that leads to the sense "forgive."

So analyzing what David is saying in Psalm 32:1-2:

Psalm 32:1-2— Blessed is he whose *rebellion, revolt and rejection of God's authority* in his life [*pesha'*] is *taken away and pardoned* [*nasa'*], whose *missing the mark and deviating from God's standards* [*chatta'ah*] is *concealed and hidden* [*ka'sa*]. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute *perversity, wickedness, infraction, crooked behavior, iniquity or fault* [*'avon*], and in whose spirit there is no *guile, slackness, deceit, laxness, treachery or fraud* [*remiyah*].

When you don't confess, you are silent. David knew the cost of being silent:

Psalm 32:3— When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long.

Keeping the sin bottled up and not confessing hurts the bones, they waste away and groan.

Psalm 32:4— For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. *Selah*

Next, let's see the benefit of confession: *Forgiveness*.

Psalm 32:5— I acknowledged my sin [*chatta'ah*] to You, and my iniquity [*'avon*] I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions [*pesha'*] to the LORD," and You forgave [*nasa'*] the iniquity [*'avon*] of my sin [*chatta'ah*]. *Selah*

God's response was that He forgave David, and David speaks wells of God for His forgiveness.

Psalm 32:6— 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.

Mercy, lovingkindness and forgiveness are enough reasons why everyone who is godly shall pray to Him and avoid great waters, as in a flood.

Psalm 32:6— 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.

Let me quote a couple of other verses that may give another insight into this thought.

Psalm 103:10-11— He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; . . .

Notice, he recognizes that sin deserves judgment, and he asks that God spare him that judgment.

Psalm 130:3-4— If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.

True confession accepts total responsibility for sin.

Psalm 51:3— "For I acknowledge my transgressions [*pesha'*], and my sin [*chatta'ah*] is ever before me."

David does not blame anybody but Himself. You take the responsibility for your own sin.

Psalm 32:7— You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. *Selah*

David discusses the value of having a positive relationship with God based on trust.

Psalm 32:8— I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with my eye.

David wrote many of his insights into God's ways in the Psalms.

Psalms 119:18— Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.

The eyes of David were open to see the wonders of God in His word. Remember:

Psalm 19:7— The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple . . .

There's no way we can improve on perfect. God's ways pay off in this life.

Psalm 32:9— 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.

If we trust God, we will have mercy and lovingkindness.

Psalm 32:10— Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the LORD, mercy [*hesed*] shall surround him.

Psalm 32:11— Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

My prayer is that we might go before God with a broken and a contrite spirit, confess our sins and be blessed with forgiveness.

The theme of this Psalm is about David's confession of his sins and being forgiven by God.

Outline of Psalm 32:

A. The Joy of Forgiveness — Psalm 32:1-2.

Psalm 32— « *A Psalm of David. A Contemplation.* »

- a. The blessed man has his transgressions forgiven, his sins covered and not imputed iniquity.

Psalm 32:1-2— Blessed is he whose transgression [*pasha'*] is forgiven, whose sin [*chatta'ah*] is covered [*ka'sa*]. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity [*'avon*], and in whose spirit there is no deceit [*remiyah*].

- b. The guileless man has a spirit with no deceit — for he has nothing to hide!

Psalm 32:2— Blessed is the man . . . in whose spirit there is no deceit [*remiyah*].

B. The Curse of Silence — Psalm 32:3-4.

- a. Suffering the effects of sin: Bones wasting away and groaning.

Psalm 32:3— When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long.

- b. Experiencing the heavy hand of the Lord and the sapping of strength.

Psalm 32:4— For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. *Selah*

C. The Benefit of Confession: *Forgiveness* — Psalm 32:5-7.

- a. David acknowledged his sins, no longer hiding them and confessed his transgressions.

Psalm 32:5— I acknowledged my sin [*chatta'ah*] to You, and my iniquity [*'avon*] I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions [*pasha'*] to the LORD," and You forgave [*nasa'*] the iniquity [*'avon*] of my sin [*chatta'ah*]. *Selah*

- b. The Lord forgave, and David speaks wells of God for His forgiveness.

Psalm 32:5-6— . . . You forgave [*nasa'*] the iniquity [*'avon*] of my sin [*chatta'ah*]. For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You . . .

- c. For this reason everyone who is godly shall pray to Him and avoid great waters.

Psalm 32:6— 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.

- d. God is the hiding place of the godly. God shall preserve him from trouble and surround him with songs of deliverance.

Psalm 32:7— You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. *Selah*

D. The Value of Trust: *Mercy and Gladness* — Psalm 32:8-11.

- a. David proposes to instruct the reader on the way he should go and guide him with David's eye or perspective.

Psalm 32:8— I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with my eye.

- b. David cautions not to be like the horse or mule which have no understanding which has to be harnessed, or they will not come near.

Psalm 32:9— 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.

- c. David instructs on the value of trusting the Lord: sorrows to the wicked and mercy will surround the one who trusts in the Lord.

Psalm 32:10— Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the LORD, mercy [*hesed*] shall surround him.

- d. David encourages the righteous to be glad in the Lord, rejoice and shout for joy.

Psalm 32:11— Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Hebrew Words

English Word	Hebrew Noun	Meaning	Hebrew Verb	Meaning
Transgression	PESHA'	"Transgression in the sense of rebellion or revolt, designating those who reject God's authority"	PASHA'	"Transgression with rebellion or revolt, to rebel, transgress, revolt, to transgress, to be rebelled against "
Iniquity	'AVON	"perversion, perversity, wickedness, infraction, crooked behavior, iniquity or fault, depravity, guilt or punishment of iniquity"	`AVAH	"to bend, twist or distort, to do perversely, commit iniquity, do wrong, to pervert"
Sin	CHATTA'AH	"to miss the mark or miss the way, morally wrong, deviating from a standard — God's standard"	CHATA'	"to sin, miss, miss the way, go wrong, incur guilt, incur penalty by sin, forfeit"
Evil	RA'	"evil (hurtful), bad, unkind (vicious in disposition), wicked, calamity, bad, wrong, mischief"	RA'A'	"to be bad, be evil, be wicked, to do an injury or hurt, to do evil or wickedly, to break, shatter"
Guile	REMIYAH	"laxness, slackness, slackening, guile, deceit, treachery, and fraud."	RAMAH	"to beguile, deceive, mislead, deal treacherously, to trick, to betray "
Stray, Sin	SHAGAGAH	"sin, sin of error or inadvertence, inadvertent sin, error, unaware sin"	SHAGAH	"to go astray (morally), to commit sin of ignorance or inadvertence, to err (ignorantly), to lead astray (morally)"
Error	TOW`AH	"error, wandering, impiety, perversions, errors (in morals and religion) confusion, disturbance"	TA`AH	"to cause to err, mislead (mentally and morally), wander, go astray, stagger, seduce"