

# Psalm 32

**Introduction** – At the center of the Christian faith, experientially, is the forgiveness of sin. The basic human problem is not how to make God acceptable to man, but how to make man acceptable to God. The topic of this Psalm is the doctrine of sin and forgiveness and how the above problem is solved. The beginning of this Psalm is quoted in Romans 4:7-8 where Paul makes clear that the problem is solved only by God and never by man. There are no works that can justify us before God; there is only faith *“on Him who justifies the ungodly.”* This truth needs to get deep into our bones.

**The Blessings of Forgiveness** (vv1-2) – *“Blessed”* in both verses is actually, *“blessednesses,”* a plural; mounds of blessings. That’s what David declares. There is no real Good News unless we understand and acknowledge the very bad news, which David does with his careful selection of words.

**Three Words for Sin** – What is forgiven? Our transgression (rebellion), our sin (missing the mark), and our iniquity (a perversion or twisting, as of the image of God in us). We ruin the Good News of grace when we refuse to get these sin-words right and honestly embrace them as describing us. But blessednesses fall upon those *“in whose spirit there is no deceit”* (v2). The hardest thing in the world to do is to be honest about your sin and the deceitfulness of your sin – how much and how hard you try to hide your sin, cover your own sin, justify your own sin – before yourself, before others, before God. But this is just what we must do (1 John 1:8-9).

**Three Words for Grace** – David celebrates that, for him, this has all been forgiven (carried away), covered (a picture of propitiation in the substitutionary atonement), and not imputed (reckoned or counted) these sins to us. The New Testament teaches us that God, on the cross, imputed our sins to Christ and, by faith, imputes His righteousness to us. This Psalm is the prayer of those who, standing at the foot of the Cross, renounce all righteousness of their own and entrust their destinies entirely to God’s forgiving mercy abundantly poured out in the sacrificial blood of Christ for our salvation and reconciliation to Him (2 Cor 5:19). And so a high view of sin, without apologies or excuses, creates a high view of forgiveness that lifts and transforms – as David now testifies to in the next verses...

**The Heavy Hand of God** (vv3-5) – David was silent (about his sins) and groaning in anguish (with guilt and conviction). When God’s hand is heavy on you because of unconfessed sins, all spiritual vitality is gone and one often feels it very physically and emotionally. David did not need therapy or drugs. David needed forgiveness and so he needed to open his mouth before God and *“acknowledge”* his sin, his iniquity, and his transgression (same three words) to God. He had to refuse to *cover* his sin (v5 – *“I have not hidden”*) so that God could *cover* them for him.

Some have called this *“severe mercy.”* It is severe because it means the sin has to be brought out into the Light – and this exactly what we hate to do in our flesh (John 3:18-21). So long as we say to God, *“I did not do it,”* we will hear from God, *“Oh, but you did.”* But as soon as we say from the heart, *“I did do it,”* we will then hear from God, *“Oh, but you did not.”* When we refuse to cover our sin, but instead confess it – at just that point we find that God covers our sin for us. This is forgiveness. This is the work of the Cross.

**Hearing the Songs of Deliverance** (vv6-7) – Many want to generalize these verses and apply them to all kinds of situations. But if David hasn’t changed the subject, he is still declaring the glory of confession and forgiveness. In the time when God may be still found, now, today is the day to turn to Him and confess our sins (Psalm 95:7-11). And when we do, we find Him as the place of refuge from the very One we should fear. God is the Deliverer from the wrath of God. God is the One who is just and the One who justifies. Not only that, God is the One who surrounds us with songs of deliverance; He is the One who is surrounding us with singing. He is delighting over His deliverance of us. He is doing this to the praise of the glory of His grace and He is the Lead Singer.

**Instructions in Mercy** (vv8-11) – Yahweh now turns and instructs us (v8). He warns us not to be like a stubborn mule which is just what we are like when we know all of these truths (of God’s unending holiness and God’s unending mercies) and yet refuse to acknowledge our sin. *“Look, you stubborn donkey,”* He says, *“don’t you see that many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but he who trusts in Yahweh, mercy shall surround him”* (v10). Do you see how stubborn and wicked it is to make light of your sin? Do you see how stubborn and wicked it is to try to cover your sin and hide from God? Like the prodigal son, come to your senses before it is too late and you ruin everything.

Your sins are forgiven through Christ. Do you realize what that means? Do you hear the songs of deliverance surrounding you? Are you aware of God’s delight over you and over His great salvation of you? Will you join in the songs; will you sing with Him? The mercy and the songs surround you. He surrounds you. The center of our experienced faith is the forgiveness of sin and Jesus is that forgiveness, for His righteousness has been imputed to you apart from works.