

Psalm 32 – The Joy of Sins Forgiven

There are many things that give us joy.

Luke records in Chapter 10 of his Gospel, an encounter between the Lord Jesus and the seventy-two whom he had sent out ahead of Him and had now returned. They were so excited and said: “*Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name!*” (Verse 17) The Lord responded: “*do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in Heaven.*” (Verse 20)

One thousand years earlier King David had written: “*Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.*” (Psalm 32:1)

We are now in the season of Lent, the six week period leading up to Easter. One of the set readings for to-day is Psalm 32, one of the seven “Penitential” (or sorry) Psalms.

Claiming God’s forgiveness, forgiving others and being forgiven by others is liberating, life-giving and a blessing to all concerned. It is also essential if we expect God to forgive us! After teaching the Disciples “The Lord’s Prayer”, the Lord Jesus added these words “*If you forgive men when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But, if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*” (Matthew 6:14-15)

We all sin! We all need God’s forgiveness! King David knew this fact and did something about it as we see in this Prayer:

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1. DAVID'S CONFESSION: verses 1-7

The prayer begins with a statement about true blessedness coming from being right with God. (1-2)

But David was not right with God and he knew it! Though David was God's appointed King and leader of God's chosen people, David was guilty of the double sin of murder and adultery, as recorded in 2 Samuel Chapters 11 and 12.

In verses 3 and 4 David speaks of his **misery** from being out of fellowship with God.

In verse 5 he speaks about the need for **honesty** before God's grace is given.

He then urges all of God's people to **repent**, seeking God's forgiveness in verse 6.

In verse 7 David expresses **confidence** in God's love and care now that he and God are back in relationship.

2. GOD'S RESPONSE: verses 8-9

God answers David's prayer with an assurance to guide, teach and instruct him in the future.

Using a word picture about a horse or mule, God also warns David not to be obstinate in the future but to follow the Lord's guidance.

3. THE FORGIVEN SINNER'S EXHORTATION TO OTHERS: verses 10-11

David has confessed his sin to the Lord and the Lord has forgiven and restored him.

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Now David speaks of two groups of people: the *wicked* and *the person who trusts in the Lord*:

- *The wicked* are clearly those who do not trust in the Lord. They live life to please themselves. The greatest woe the wicked experience is not being forgiven for their sins but paying the punishment their sins deserve. They live as God's enemies, refusing to submit their lives to Him and refusing to seek His forgiveness.
- *The person who trusts in the Lord* on the other hand, knows the *unfailing love of God*. Such people are God's friends. They are referred to in verse 11 as *you righteous* and *you upright in heart*. They live rightly, according to the Word of the Lord. Their hearts and lives are centred on pleasing the Lord, rather than themselves.

This group have every reason to *rejoice* and *sing*. Why? Because their sins are forgiven! They are on good terms with the Lord.

This is David's personal testimony to the nation for whom he is responsible as leader.

4. LENT 2017:

As we prepare to celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord, we can take time to reflect on our own lives and what our God calls upon us to do.

You may have been a Christian, trusting in Jesus as your Saviour and Lord for many years. Or.....

You might be someone who has been coming to Church for years but uncertain as to your standing before God. Or....

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You might be on the fringe of things seeking the truth, seeking after God.

From this Psalm of David, we might all consider three things:

- There are two groups of people: those who David describes as *wicked*. Now they might be very nice people but they have not yet repented of their sin and trusted in Jesus as their Saviour. The other group are those who have turned to the Lord and are living their lives in a way that pleases Him.
- Great joy comes to those who turn to the Lord, confess their sins and receive God's forgiveness. This joy can be ours only when we humble ourselves and seek God's forgiveness.
- In the New Testament, we know that God's grace, mercy and love surrounds the person who trusts in the Lord Jesus. His death and resurrection make it possible for us to become God's friends, to become Christians. That's why Jesus came and died, to bring us to God. He took our sin upon Himself so that we could be forgiven.

There is no other way of having our sins forgiven except through Jesus. And what great joy that gives!

Do you know that joy? You can!

Has your joy evaporated or become stale? Ask the Lord to refresh your joy.

Remember the last words of the Psalm:

Rejoice in the Lord, and be glad you righteous: sing, all you who are upright in heart.