

The Counsel of a Forgiven Man

Psalm 32

Introduction

1. One of the great blessings God provides us in His word is total transparency. The people recorded in scripture are not perfect (save the Lord).
 2. There are countless examples of God's servants failing in dramatic ways. These accounts provide warning, but they also provide confidence in the depths of God's grace and mercy.
 3. **Psalm 32** provides invaluable counsel for those who find themselves in sin.
- I. His Contemplation (**vv. 1-4**)
 - A. The Blessing of Forgiveness (**vv. 1-2**)
 - a. Blessed – a state of happiness, but not one that is superficial. It describes one's condition of wholeness and wellness, rather than a fleeting circumstance.
 - b. The blessed state is realized only after the cursed state of sin is realized:
 - i. Sin is an affront to God – **Proverbs 6:16** – hates, abomination. (cf. **1 Peter 1:16** – holy)
 - ii. Sin is an affront to man – **Romans 13:9-10** – sin is lawlessness (cf. **1 John 4:3**) – affects and harms others.
 - iii. Sin separates you from all that is good – **Isaiah 59:1-2** (cf. **James 1:18** – every good and perfect gift)
 1. Not always immediately perceived.
 2. **Ezekiel 18:20** – death.
 - c. The blessed state is realized when God's forgiveness is understood:
 - i. Cost – **Leviticus 17:11; 1 Corinthians 6:20**
 - ii. Effectiveness – **Jeremiah 31:34; Psalm 103:12**
 - d. "And in whose spirit there is no deceit"**
 - i. Forgetting the man he was – **James 1:22-24**
 - ii. Thinking the rule can be suspended – **Galatians 6:7-8**
 - iii. Deceitfulness of sin – **Hebrews 3:12-13; 2 Peter 3:19** (liberty, comfort, escape, etc.)
 - B. The Despair of Guilt (**vv. 3-4**)
 - a. Guilt is meant to be unbearable – God wants us to feel the weight of His wrath and disappointment so we can escape it through His grace and mercy.
 - b. Sin is shameful, and the exposure is meant to make us uncomfortable – **Ephesians 5:11-13**

- c. ***“be sure your sin will find you out.” (Numbers 32:23)***
 - d. A Psalm of David – how miserable must he have felt living with his guilt, and seeking to cover up his sin?
- II. His Conversion **(vv. 5-7)**
- A. The Return to God **(v. 5)**
 - a. ***“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).***
 - i. Repent – turn away from sin, a change of heart leading to a change of action.
 - ii. Convert – to turn to, not merely away from, but to God!
 - iii. Times of refreshing – contrast – **Psalm 32:3-4**
 - b. God wants us to turn away from our terrible sin, but He wants more than that! God wants us to turn to Him because He loves us and wants us to be released from the pain of sin and guilt.
 - c. Confession – **Proverbs 28:13** – the only way to prosper.
 - i. Owning the problem – if I don’t I will hold on to it.
 - ii. Acting on faith – God already knows, but confession is a faithful action in humility and trust that He is merciful and loving.
 - iii. **1 John 1:9** – faithful and just.
 - B. The Renewed Perspective **(vv. 6-7)**
 - a. ***“everyone who is godly”*** – confession of sin and pursuit of forgiveness is a godly thing – **1 John 1:7, 9**
 - i. Concealing it from others and God is a superficial act of vanity – it is pretended godliness and righteousness, but you can’t fool God, and you can’t fool others for long.
 - ii. **1 Peter 2:3** – you’ve tasted the Lord is gracious before, He is gracious still.
 - b. ***“In a time when You may be found”*** – time is not unlimited (**cf. Isaiah 55:6-7**)
 - i. The time we have is for repentance – **2 Peter 3:9**
 - ii. He may not be found – hardness of heart, end of life, judgment.
 - c. **(vv. 6b-7)** – He is a refuge!
 - i. Contrast with **(v. 2b)** – don’t deceive self about sin – is there release there? Safety? Happiness? Wellness? Fulfillment?
 - ii. All the difficulties of life under the sun do not find their solution in the passing pleasures of sin, but in God!

III. His Counsel **(vv. 8-11)**

A. Do Not Be Stubborn (vv. 8-9)

- a. (v. 8) – this is the Psalmist’s words to the reader – based on his experience with sin, and the Lord’s unmatched grace and mercy, he counsels us to humble ourselves before God.
- b. (v. 9) – do not be like a stubborn animal who doesn’t know their master means them no harm, but only good.
 - i. Proverbs 26:3 – rather than fight against the Lord’s chastening, why not embrace it and come to Him for healing?
 - ii. Proverbs 12:1-3 – Loving instruction, gaining favor, rooted and grounded.
 - iii. Proverbs 3:11-12 – the chastening of the Lord is evidence of His love.
 - iv. Christ’s words to Saul should ring in the ears of the one harboring sin and guilt – *“It is hard for you to kick against the goads” (Acts 26:14).*
 - v. *“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” (James 4:10)*

B. Trust in the Lord (vv. 10-11)

- a. (v. 10a) – the one who holds on to their sin and does not give it to God will only multiply their sorrows.
- b. (vv. 10b-11) – it takes great trust to confess our sins before God and vulnerably yield ourselves to Him to do with us what He pleases, but what He pleases is to rescue us!
- c. Matthew 11:28-30; 12:20 – He is gentle and lowly, offering rest, mending, and fanning the flame.

Conclusion

1. Sin is awful on many levels and deserving of the greatest punishment.
2. However, the awfulness of sin is no match for the wonderful grace of God.
3. Rather than hiding our sin or being swallowed by our guilt, God wants us to come to Him for forgiveness, healing, and transformation.