

Text: Psalm 32

Title: What God's Grace Does for You, Part 2

Truth: God's grace forgives, cleanses, and restores.

Date/Location: Sunday September 26, 2021 at FBC

Introduction

We learned in our last study of Jeremiah 18 and Psalm 51 that God's rich favor is a restoring grace and a forgiving and cleansing grace. But there is more to the riches of God's grace. As one famous little booklet stated, it is "All of Grace." What is "it?" Everything good in creation, life, salvation, godliness, Heaven.

Turn to Psalm 32 and revel in God's grace some more.

III. God's Grace is a Blessed Grace

To understand the blessing of the grace of God, however, there are a couple of preliminary steps.

- A. Your misery: When you realize your guilt before God, life is miserable, as David expresses in verses 3-4. Even if you *do not* recognize your sin and guilt, you may well be miserable, and you should be. Look at the massive physical effects of sin because of what it does to your conscience:
1. Your bones grow old. That may seem to be a strange phrase, but we have similar ones. "I've got to get these weary bones moving." It is a reference to the entire body because the bones are the foundation of the body, its super-structure. When you are in sin's misery, you feel old and aged and slow and weak and stiff and unable to serve God the right way.
 2. You groan all day. Depression weighs you down constantly. You know you are not doing right. You are living in the contradiction of saying you are a person of God but demonstrating otherwise in action. You worry you will be found out, and what will happen if you are found out, and what relationships will be strained or broken. Besides that, you may know that you have done wrong, but are powerless to fix it.

3. You sense God's hand is heavy on you all the time. You may feel God's heavy hand as a frowning providence where everything seems to be wrong in your life. There is nothing to be joyful about. You may justify that your problems are God's fault, not your own. That cannot be right, however, because nothing is God's *fault*. Sin and its effects are humanity's fault. You might feel often that you are not sure if you are doing the right thing and that you do not know what is right to do. You are in a "heavy" instead of a "light" situation.
4. Your vitality is turned to drought. Life is dry, lethargic; it feels useless at times to go on. You know why? You are like Psalm 1:4, not like Psalm 1:1-3. Chaff is light, dry, like a drought. You do not have nourishing, joy-giving flow of God's Spirit in you. You are dirty, clogged up, distant from God's grace. "What if I am a believer?" you ask. Yes, EVEN then, if you are living in sin and not confessing and repenting, then you will be functionally like an unbeliever in a lot of ways during that time.

By the way, did you notice how we had to unpack the phrases of poetry here to understand what they mean? Think of how David "packed" them when he wrote the text originally. Genius!

B. Your awakening: Banish deceit and acknowledge sin, v. 2, 5

1. Stop trying to deceive others, including yourself. There is no hiding that you are a sinner, although sinners often try to do that! What a relief not to have to hide all that garbage anymore to try to "look good" (self-righteousness), or to "redefine" your sin into something acceptable for your conscience (self-deception) or for others. The blessed man is one in whose spirit there is no deceit, neither toward himself nor toward others.

Prov. 28:13 He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.

2. Acknowledge your sin. No more silence (v. 3a)! That silence was the silence of not confessing, of trying to hide sin from God and from other people as well. That silence is because it is difficult to admit that you are wrong, that you do not measure up, that you need something that you do not have and cannot get on

your own. Maybe you need someone's forgiveness, but you cannot get that on your own. For sure you need God's forgiveness, and you cannot cajole that out of God! If you are a real individualist, that premise is hard to agree with, isn't it—that you have to admit you are wrong and that you *cannot*? But the path to blessing from God is paradoxically through the doorway of acknowledgement that you have *not* been pleasing to God, nor worthy of blessing from God. The road back to godliness is to admit you have not been godly!

By the way, I am targeting what I am saying here to a particular audience: those people who are now sensitized to the problem they have. If on the other hand, you are hard-hearted and love your sin and think that I'm full of trash as I try to describe your life, I have nothing to say except this: you will face God someday and be sorry you did not listen today. If my words do not move you to consider your ways, maybe the certainty of coming judgment will.

C. God's saving: God forgives, v. 1-2, 5

1. Sin is forgiven. This means that the sin and its guilt is no longer held against you. God "lifts it up" or "carries away" the sins of this blessed person. The idea of forgiveness is closely connected to the meaning of "pardoned." You are pardoned! Your eternal sentence is commuted *entirely*.

David also writes "transgression." This is a specific word for sin which is the violation of a known commandment. Even though we know God's commands, we too often break them. Those breakings are pardoned.

The parallel phrase in David's poetic expression says that the person is blessed "whose sin is covered." We discussed at some length the idea of sin being covered in another message. What I said, in summary, was that "covering" is an inadequate concept if by it all you mean is "hidden" or "put under something so as not to be visible until later." Something way more was happening for the Old Testament saint than mere concealing or "papering over" sin. Instead, think of "cover" as a parallel to forgive. That is how it is used here by David. Or, think of it as

when someone pays for your meal at a restaurant and the server says, “Your meal has been *covered* by a generous donor.” In that usage, *covered* means *taken care of*. *Blessed is the man whose sins are taken care of*. Who has taken care of them? Obviously God has done so.

Think about what that means for you, if you are in Jesus, that means your sins are taken care of. They are no longer an issue that withholds God’s blessing. Thinking on that topic is a real encouragement to me, and I hope it is for you also.

2. Sin is not imputed. This means that God does not “think” or “reckon” your sin against you any longer. He does not “charge” it to you in the legal sense of charging a crime. 2 Cor. 5:19-21 teaches us that, ultimately, God did this through the mechanism of imputing our sins to Jesus Christ and imputing His righteousness to us. A substitute sin-taker and a substitute righteousness-provider are provided in Jesus.

When you experience God’s forgiving and cleansing grace, life is not only bearable, but it is joyful. Even in suffering, as a partaker of God’s grace of salvation, you have the deep-seated knowledge that your eternal home is secure and you have nothing to worry about.

D. Then your part again: An overflow of praise to God and passing on wisdom to others, v. 6-11

1. The king says that because of all this, he is going to pray to God, no doubt to offer thanks. There is a question here about whether this is speaking of a person who is a believer (“everyone who is godly”) praying during some window of opportunity, or whether this is a call for unbelievers to acknowledge sin before the day of judgment comes (“in a time when You may be found”). Certainly both thoughts are true. But David is writing the Psalm as a believer, and with the “limiter” of those who are godly, I take the first option to be accurate. There are in sometimes windows of opportunity where sin can be dealt with before it gets more serious in terms of departure from God or in terms of consequences. Remember God chastises some people to the point of death (1 Cor. 11:30).

Before that or other things happen, make it your point to repent and acknowledge sin. Trust God to keep you in the midst of whatever comes your way (6a-7).

2. We should then pass the wisdom we have learned to others. Offer guidance (v. 8). For example, here is a good piece of guidance in verse 9: do not be stubborn like a horse or mule. If you are like David, you can say, “I was stubborn. What did it get me? Nothing—except misery!” Then tell them. Help them learn from your experience so they do not have to repeat your experience again.
3. Another piece of wisdom (v. 10): people who sin will have great sorrows. Better to trust in the Lord and experience God’s mercy. Look! If you are admitting your sin, you need to trust in the Lord as you do that because some consequences may come to you! But regardless, if you trust in the Lord, God will be merciful.
4. Finally, back to praise (v. 11). All of this calls for songs of loudest praise: the people of God should be glad and rejoice and shout for joy. Thank you Lord for saving my soul.

Conclusion

Psalm 32 explains the results of confession and cleansing that are experienced by a sinner who repents—the first time or the thousandth. God’s mercy and grace continue ever.

Romans 6 asks the question that will come to some minds: if God’s grace is so rich, why not sin more so that grace can do even more of its wonderful work? That seems reasonable, no, if we can do more of what we want to do and God can do more of what He does? The short answer is this: no, because that is ridiculous. The longer answer is this: because God’s grace is so rich that it can train you to *not sin in the first place*. It can make you pure, and make you to see the abundant riches of a holy life--and that is what God’s intention with it is! And *that* brings us full circle back to Titus which taught us that the grace of God that brings salvation has taught us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly and righteously and godly in this evil age.