

“The Seriousness of Sin and the Blessedness of Forgiveness”

29 July 2020

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Woman Praying with Sunrise Background - Psalm 32:1 - 123RF Photo - Used under license

"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." (Psalm 32:1-2)

"Pardoning mercy is of all things in the world most to be prized, for it is the only and sure way to happiness." -- Treasury of David ([Ref. 1](#))

This article teaches the seriousness of transgression, sin, and iniquity from [Psalm 32:1-2](#) as well as the blessedness of forgiveness through the atonement of Christ.

Consider. True happiness comes not from the world, nor through "self help," but from God's forgiveness of our sins through the atonement of Christ.

The Blessedness of Forgiveness

Psalm 32:1 begins with an exclamation in the form of an interjection. The opening phrase could be translated "Oh! How blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven!" (Ref. 2) The Hebrew word for *blessed* is *esher*, which is a forceful interjection that means "*How happy!*" (Ref. 3) David is so joyful that he repeats the exclamation, "Oh! How blessed," again in verse 2. "Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit" (Psalm 32:2). Note that true happiness of forgiveness comes from God, not from man.

The word for "man" in Psalm 32:2 is *adam*, which means *mankind*, including men, women, and children (Ref. 4).

The Threefold Picture of Sin

Psalm 32:1-2 employs three words for sin -- "transgression," "sin," and "iniquity." All three are serious. These words describe the compass of sin and its foulness (Ref. 2). Let's take them in the order described by David, the psalmist.

Transgression. Psalm 32:1 says "Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven." The Hebrew word for *transgression* means *rebellion* (Ref. 5). We commit a transgression against God when we know, or our conscience knows, what God's law teaches, and we go ahead and do the deed anyway.

Sin. The Hebrew word for *sin* written in Psalm 32:1, *chataah*, means *great sin*. *Chataah* occurs only eight times in the Old Testament (Ref. 6, Genesis 20:1-9; Exodus 32:1-4, 19-21).

A similar Hebrew word for *sin*, *chata*, occurs more than 200 times in the Old Testament and means *do wrong*, *commit a mistake*, or *miss the mark or goal* (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Ref. 7, Exodus 20:18-20, Psalm 4:4).

Iniquity. The Hebrew word for iniquity is *avon*, which means *moral evil* (Ref. 8). "'Iniquity' is defined as being wicked or immoral in nature or character. Primarily, it indicates 'not an action, but the character of an action,' and is so distinguished from 'sin'" (Ref. 9). We commit iniquity when we not only rebel against God and miss the mark, but also waver or diverge from the straight path manifest in God's law (Ref. 2).

The Threefold Picture of Forgiveness

Psalm 32 verses one and two describe three aspects of forgiveness - "forgiven," "covered," and "not counted (not imputed)." Let's take each aspect in the order presented.

Forgiven. Psalm 32:1 begins, "Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven ..." When God forgives our sins, he lifts them up and carries them away. The Hebrew word for *forgiven* means *to lift, carry away, and bear* (Ref. 10).

In the Old Testament, on the annual day of atonement, the *scapegoat* (literally, *goat of removal*) carried away the sins of the people into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:7-10, Leviticus 16:29-30, Ref. 11). In the New Testament, Jesus Christ, *the Lamb of God*, is the one who takes away our sin (John 1:29). Jesus Christ takes away our sin not just annually but once and for all time (Hebrews 9:11-12). "He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

Covered. "Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin *is covered*" (Psalm 32:1, italics added). The Hebrew word for *cover* means *to hide or conceal* (Ref. 12). For the believer in Christ, God hides our sin, covers it with a merciful veil, so it no longer comes into his view as evidence against us (Ref. 2). Christ's atonement is the covering for our sin (Ref. 2).

Not Counted (Not Imputed). Psalm 32 verse 2 in the English Standard Version (ESV) begins, "Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity ..." The Hebrew word for *count* means *impute, charge, or reckon* (Ref. 13). Even though our iniquity (*moral evil*) has been ugly, when we

believe in and trust our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, he does not *impute to us* (*charge us for, take into account, or reckon*) that iniquity (Ref. 13).

How Do We Receive The Blessedness of Forgiveness?

The blessedness of forgiveness can be known only through the atonement of Christ.

Isaiah 53:5 - "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed."

1 Peter 1:18-19 - "... knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."

1 John 2:2 - "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

We receive forgiveness by acknowledging our sin and confessing our sin to God.

Psalm 32:5 - "I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' And You forgave the iniquity of my sin."

1 John 1:8-9 - "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

True happiness (blessedness) comes only through the forgiveness and removal of our sin by Christ, not from anything the world provides.

Apply. Do you want to receive the blessedness of forgiveness for your sins? Acknowledge your sins, and confess your sins to Jesus Christ (1 John 1:9). He will lift away the guilt and pain of your sin and will heal you. You will receive the true happiness of knowing by faith that you are pardoned forever by Christ.

References

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