

The Joys of Sins Forgiven

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of forgiveness and confession of sins, and the consequences of not doing so, highlighting the happiness and freedom that come from receiving forgiveness from God.

Duration: 34:11

Scripture: Psalm 32:1

Topics: "Forgiveness Of Sins", "Gods Loving Discipline"

Description

This sermon delves into Psalms 32, focusing on the happiness and relief that comes from having transgressions forgiven and sins covered by God. It contrasts the concepts of sin, transgression, and iniquity, emphasizing the importance of confessing and receiving forgiveness to avoid the misery of unconfessed sins. The sermon concludes with a call to rejoice in the Lord for the freedom and joy that forgiveness brings, highlighting the need to avoid stubbornness and embrace God's loving discipline.

Transcript

Tonight we will be studying Psalms 26 through 35. So we encourage you to read them over this afternoon and join with us tonight as we continue our journey through the Bible, Psalms 26 through 35. This morning we'd like to draw your attention to Psalm 32.

It is thought that this is a psalm that was written at the time that we have just read about there in Samuel, where Samuel was faced by the prophet Nathan with his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, and having her husband put to death so that he could marry her to cover his sin. And it was a tragedy in the life of David. It was one of those just bad areas in his life.

And when the prophet said to him, the Lord has forgiven your sin, this psalm, it was thought, was then composed, where David said, blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. The word blessed in the Hebrew is, oh how happy. It's translated blessed, but oh how happy, or the happiness of the man, and it speaks of extreme happiness of the man whose transgression is forgiven.

It's important to note that there is a difference between transgressions and sins and iniquity. We find all three here in our text. Transgression and sin are different.

Sin is really missing the mark. The English word sin is really developed out of an old English contest of archery. Men would go out into an open field with their bows and arrows, and of course the English were

great and known for their archery, and they would go out into the field.

They would set up a pole and a hoop at the top of the pole, and each man would have his required arrows, maybe 10 arrows in his quiver, and the idea was in turn to shoot the arrows through the hoop in the top of the pole. If you missed the hoop, you were called a sinner. That is, you missed the mark, and thus the origin of the word sinner in our English language, missing the mark, and it pretty much describes the Hebrew word for sin, which is missing the mark.

Now it follows that you might be trying your best to hit the mark because you're in this contest with these other fellows shooting your arrows. You want to make sure that you put your arrow through the center of the hoop, but you've missed the mark, and you were called a sinner, and as a result you'd have to set up drinks for the guys that were competing with you. Of course, by the time that they were getting towards the end of the contest, getting a little tipsy, there were a lot of them missing the mark, and so it sort of turned into a drunken orgy in the end with these fellows trying to play this game of sinner.

A transgression is different. A transgression is a deliberate, willful missing of the mark. You may miss the mark because you're a poor shot.

You may be doing your best to hit the mark, but still you missed the mark. Transgression is a little different. A transgression is a deliberate, willful missing of the mark.

You know what you should be doing. You willfully and deliberately fail to do it. That's a transgression.

It's sort of like if someone would, say, put a line here at the of the pulpit and say, now, Chuck, don't go beyond that line. And so, as I'm sharing with you, I get excited, and I want to make a special point, and so I move out to the side to make this point and put it across, and they said, ah, ah, ah, you weren't to go over that line. Oh, sorry, I got so involved in my message, I'm so excited, I just, sorry.

And that's a transgression. Well, that's a sin. That's missing the mark.

A transgression is if you say, here's the mark, don't go beyond that, and I step over there, and I say, okay, what are you going to do about it? That's a transgression. That's willful. That's deliberate.

And it doesn't matter whether it is a transgression or a sin. They're both sins in the sight of God, and they both need to be atoned. And thus, the idea of, oh, how happy is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

But it goes on one further. Oh, how happy is the man to whom God does not impute iniquity. Now, put sin and transgression together, and you have iniquity.

And how happy is the man that God does not impute iniquity. That is, he doesn't put it to your account. Though we have all committed iniquity, if you are a child of God, and you've received the forgiveness of your sins, God doesn't count them anymore.

He doesn't impute them to your account. He doesn't put it down against you, your iniquity. Oh, what a happy place to be, where God doesn't impute or account my iniquity against me any longer.

We probably all remember from childhood the song, Here Comes Santa Claus, Here Comes Santa Claus, Coming Down Santa Claus Lane. And remember the lyric, he's making out a list, he's checking it twice. He's going to find out who's naughty and nice.

Santa Claus is coming to town. And there are many people that sort of think of God, sort of like Santa Claus, in that he's making out a list and checking it twice, going to find out who's naughty and nice. And if you're naughty, you're not going to get anything for Christmas this year, you know.

And so we're all familiar with that concept and idea of Santa Claus. But unfortunately, many people take that over to God. And they think that, well, you know, I've missed the mark.

I have failed. I have transgressed the law. I've committed iniquity.

And therefore, you know, God is really on my trail, and I'm in big trouble. And the wonderful thing about being a child of God is that, though I may miss the mark, he doesn't account that against me. And it doesn't necessarily mean that I have to, every time I miss the mark, say, oh God, I'm sorry.

He just doesn't put it against my account. Oh, how happy is the man to whom God does not impute or put on his account his iniquities. The psalmist goes on here to talk about the misery of unconfessed sins.

He said, when I kept silence, when I did not ask for forgiveness, when I was trying to hide my sin, when I was trying to cover my guilt, and he talks about his condition in his attempt to sort of hide his sin and cover his sin from others. When I kept silence, the result was my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. It was becoming prematurely old.

My bones were waxing old because of their roaring all day long. There was that conscience that was saying, you're guilty, you've done wrong. And I just tried to cover it, didn't confess it, and the effect upon me.

For day and night, your hand was heavy on me. The conviction of sin, the consciousness of sin, couldn't get rid of it. At night, I had a hard time sleeping because it would come into mind, and it would just torment me, my guilt, the torment of guilt.

And, you know, if you can sin, and you don't have any conscious torment of it, you can sin with impunity. It doesn't really bother you. You can just cast it off and say, well, that's too bad, you know.

It really shows where you are in a very dangerous, dangerous place. There is a conviction of God that comes for sin or transgression, and that is a wonderful thing because it drives me to the cross. It drives me to the place of confessing and the forgiveness that I might know the joy and the happiness of having my sins forgiven.

But here he is talking about, you know, trying to keep silent and becoming just sort of weighed down with this, the sin. It's heavy upon me, and my moisture is turned, he said, into the drought of summer. Inside, I'm just becoming dried and shriveled up because of the guilt, and it's plaguing me, and I just can't really do much about it except just feel the heavy hand of God upon me, in absolute misery because of the sin.

But then the psalmist goes on, and he talks about the cure for the guilt of sin. In verse five, he said, I acknowledged my sin unto thee, my iniquity I have not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

It speaks of sort of an instantaneous thing. The moment in my heart, I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord. The moment in my heart, I determined I'm going to confess.

There already the sins were forgiven. In our scripture reading this morning, where we were reading where David was faced with the guilt of his sin, we read there in verse 13, he confessed, I have sinned against the Lord, and Nathan said to David, the Lord has put away your sin, and you shall not die. For David, who had been weighted down with the guilt of feelings of guilt because of what he had done, how beautiful those words must have sounded to him when the prophet said, your sins have been forgiven, you will not die.

He describes it here. Oh, how happy is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. The Bible asserts that all of us have sinned.

We've all of us missed the mark. We've all of us come short of the glory of God, and because we have sinned, the necessity of confessing our sins to the Lord. We have the promise, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

As with David, as soon as the confession is sin is made, the forgiveness is already there, and oh the joy, oh the happiness, no more roaring in the bones, no more drought of summer, but your cup begins to run over, no more heavy hand of guilt plaguing your mind. And so we are told that those that will pray to him, that he might be found, that there is protection. The floods of great waters shall not come near him.

The Lord becomes his hiding place. The Lord will preserve him from trouble. These wonderful results from the having the sins forgiven and the freedom that we have, he will surround me with songs of deliverance, glorious, glorious deliverance from the guilt of sin and the effects of sin in my life.

It's interesting as you get into this third strophe of the psalm, when you get into the verse 8, there's a change of voice. The psalmist is no longer speaking. He has said his part, but in verse 8, God now responds to the psalmist, and in God's response he said, I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go.

I will guide you with my eye, instruct and teach you in the right way, guide you with my eye. And then the Lord said, don't be like a horse or a mule that really doesn't have any understanding whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle lest they come near unto you. Don't be stubborn like a mule where God has to use painful processes to get you in the right path.

When you start to go astray, when you're missing the mark, the Lord wants to just lead you back into the right path, and I will guide you with my eye. You know, he just sort of nods and just says, hey, that way, son, you know, and don't be stubborn. Don't force God to use painful methods in order to get you in the right path.

Now, God loves you so much. If necessary, he will use painful methods, but the exhortation here is don't force God to use painful methods to get you in the right path. Don't be like a horse or a mule.

As you pull on the bridle to direct the mule or the horse, that bridle in his, the bit that is there in his mouth attached to the bridle, you pull, and it pulls the mouth back, and, you know, you turn your head because of the pain, and God said, I don't want it that way. I don't want to have to use pain to get you in the right path. In Lamentations, it says that the Lord does not afflict us willingly.

When I was a child, I, my dad used painful means to get us in line. My dad used to have a razor strap. You younger ones, you never had to face a razor strap, but he'd sharpen his razor with a razor strap, and when we would misbehave or whatever, he would use that razor strap on us.

Today, it would be called, you know, you could be arrested, I suppose, for using a razor strap, but whenever he would use it, he would always say, son, this hurts me worse than you, and I thought, you're a liar, but as I grew up, became a parent, I understood what he was saying. I understand that disciplining is a painful thing for the parent, as well as whatever discipline you're using against the child. I have to confess that I was a very poor disciplinarian as a parent.

I hated to punish my sons. Fortunately, with my daughters, I didn't have to. They were angels, but my sons, they did need a lot of correction, and but as I would go to correct them, they would say, last chance, daddy, last chance, and I'd always give them that last chance.

I just found it difficult to punish them for their infractions of the rules, and so many sorrows, David said, shall be to the wicked, but the Lord, but he that trusts in the Lord, mercy shall come pass him about, and how many last chances the Lord has given to us as his mercy just encircles us. When you're going through a chastisement, when you're going through a heavy experience in life, maybe God is using, and you forced him to use more severe methods to get you on the right path. You know, the feeling that would come upon me after dad would use the razor strap was, he doesn't love me, and you know, that would make me cry, thinking he doesn't love me.

I wouldn't cry because of the pain, just he doesn't love me. If he loved me, how could he do that to me? And you know, we sometimes, I think, take that attitude when God is using discipline upon our lives to get us in line. So often, the idea is, he doesn't love me, he hates me.

As David wrote about this in, or actually not David, Asaph wrote about it in Psalm 73. Asaph said, I was envious of the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. There are no bands in their death.

Their strength is firm. They're not in trouble as other men. Neither are they plagued like other men.

Therefore, pride encircles them like a belt. Violence covers them as a garment. Their eyes bulge out with fatness.

They have more than their heart could wish, yet they are corrupt, and they speak wickedly concerning oppression. They speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth.

And therefore, people turn to them, and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, how does God know? And is their knowledge in the most high? And behold, the psalmist said, these are they, the ungodly, who prosper in the world, and they only seem to increase with riches. It's interesting how that so often we make these kinds of accusations against God, and thinking that, you know, the wicked really have it much better than I, because, you know, they seem to be able to get by with their wickedness, and it doesn't seem to affect them like it does me.

The troubles that I get into when I've done something that is wrong, and yet, on the other hand, you know, the Bible says, don't despise the chastisement of the Lord. Whom he loves, he chastens. And so important to just know that this is a sign that God loves me.

He's not going to let me get by with being on the wrong path or doing wrong things. So here in our text, the last verse, be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous. Shout for joy, ye that are upright in heart.

We have great cause to be glad today. Our transgressions have been forgiven, our sins have been covered, and God is not imputing iniquity to us. It's interesting to me how that this psalm ends, sort of as it begins.

It begins with, oh how happy is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and it ends with, be glad in the Lord and rejoice and shout for joy. In one way, all of us are the same in that we are all sinners, but in another way, we are vastly different. We're divided into two vastly different situations.

All of us are sinners, but some of us are sinners who have been forgiven, whose sins are covered, and the others are sinners who are still to face the consequences for their sins. Sin is like an opiate. There is a dangerous euphoria to sin that masks the true pain of sin.

It's like a person with a deadly cancer that is growing in their body, but they are taking morphine in order that they don't feel the pain, and though the pain is still there, it is masked because of the opiate that they are taking, and so is sin, like an opiate. You don't feel the pain attached to sin immediately, but yet it is there, and it is just being masked or covered. One day, the opiate won't work, and you'll feel the pain of the sin, and it will be multiplied because it's been there and been growing the whole while, and though masked, not felt, yet it doesn't mean that it isn't there.

It's not taken away, and one day the pain of what you've done will hit you, and it will be absolutely devastating. It will be destroying you because of the pain, thinking of what you did, thinking of how could I have done that, and look at the damage, and look at the hurt, and look at the pain that it's brought to others, and you begin to realize the real consequences of your activities. The true nature of sin will be revealed, and, of course, you will die as a result because the wages of sin is death, and it is appointed unto man once to die, but the Bible says, but after that, the judgment.

In other words, you might be able through life to get by with sinning. It might be that you will be able to cover what you've done, and nobody will really know. You won't face the consequences through life, but one day you're going to die, and after that, you say, well, no, death is the end.

No, it isn't the end. After that, after death, then comes the judgment, and you'll have to stand before God. The books will be open, and you'll be judged out of the things that have been written in the books.

Every transgression, every disobedience has been recorded against you. God keeps very honest and correct records of all that is done, and you will have to face God and give an answer. As the Bible says, we must all give an account of ourselves unto God, and as you are giving an account of yourself, there will be no hiding of anything that you've ever done.

Everything will be open and revealed before Him with whom we have to do. God knows what we've done, and in the judgment, we'll have to face the consequences of what we have done unless we've gone through that happy, glorious experience of hearing God say, your sins are covered. Your transgression is forgiven.

The books have been wiped clean, and there is, therefore, now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. So, today, here we are. Some of you have not yet confessed your sins.

Some of you are still under the guilt of your sins, and some of you still are just being dried up because of the iniquity and the sin, and, you know, you're facing, ultimately, the judgment of God. There are others of you, though you have sinned, God has forgiven. God has wiped the slate clean, and when you face God,

the record will be expunged, and here you are in that glorious joy and happiness.

Oh, how happy is the man whose transgression has been forgiven, whose sin is covered. Oh, how happy is the man that God doesn't impute iniquity to, and so be glad in the Lord and rejoice. Ye righteous shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart, because God has given forgiveness and cleansing from every sin and transgression that you have been guilty of.

Father, how thankful we are for the sins forgiven. How happy we are, Lord, that the transgressions have been forgiven, and the sins have been covered, and the pages have been wiped clean. No condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.

What a wonderful, wonderful freedom that we have as a result of what you have done for us, and now, Lord, we pray that for those that are here today, maybe some of them suffering from the guilt complex of what they have done, the hurt that they have brought to others, and the regrets that they have for their activities. Lord, we pray that even today, as we are here, that they might come and confess before you their sins, and Lord, that they might know that they might go from here today with that overwhelming happiness and joy, knowing that the sins have been forgiven, and that the Lord is not holding it against them any longer, that they are righteous in your sight. Thank you, Father, for this wonderful gospel that we have to proclaim, that man doesn't have to suffer the consequences of his sins, the guilt of his sin, or the misery of sin, but he can have that forgiveness and cleansing, and walk in fellowship with you, and know your power and your love working in his life.

And so, Lord, touch, we pray, and minister to your people, and we give thanks to you in Jesus' name. Amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front, and they're here to pray with you, and to pray for you today.

If you'd like to know that happiness of transgressions forgiven, of sins covered, you can. There's no sense of leaving here with your sense of guilt and all. The loaded, your heart and life loaded down and weighted down because of sin.

Today can be your day where you experience that work of God's love in your life, and experience that forgiveness from God for your transgressions. And so, may the Lord just really minister to you in a very special way today, and may you come to know the joy, the fullness, the happiness that David expresses here in his psalm. May the Lord watch over you, keep his hand upon you, fill you with his spirit, and with his love, and cause you to just be enriched in all things in Christ Jesus, for his glory, and for his sake.

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

God bless you.

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