

The Five Robbers

by Edgar F. Parkyns

The sermon explores the significance of Psalm 1 and Psalm 32, highlighting the importance of forgiveness, repentance, and brokenness in receiving God's pardon and experiencing the benefits of salvation.

Duration: 1:03:08

Scripture: Psalm 32:1-2, Acts 13:38-39, Romans 3:23-24, Romans 8:1, Ephesians 1:7

Topics: "Evil Company", "Godly Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells a story about a group of thieves who were successful in their burglaries until one night when they were caught. One of the thieves fell and injured himself, causing paralysis to spread throughout his body. The preacher uses this story to emphasize the importance of avoiding evil company and following the teachings of the Lord. He quotes from the book of Psalms, specifically Psalm 1, which encourages delighting in the law of the Lord and meditating on it day and night. The sermon emphasizes the idea that those who follow God's teachings will prosper and be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.

Transcript

...my student too, if you turn with me to the Book of Psalms. And notice too, Blessed Man. Psalm 1. Blessed is the man, that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law, and he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, and bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly. Before I turn to the second view, to take a little note of Psalm 2. For Psalm 2 is one of the great recognized messages, and it refers to God's King.

Psalm 2 is God's exalted King. Two aspects of the same person. Is there anyone here, Do you know anybody? But if I recognize that Psalm 2 belongs to Jesus as God's King, then Psalm 1 belongs to Jesus as God's man.

For Jesus did qualify. He was that man, who walked not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful. His delight was in the law of the Lord.

In his law he did meditate day and night. He is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, who brings forth his fruit in this season. His leaf also shall not wither, he is the tree of life, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Jesus fully qualifies to fulfill Psalm 1 as he qualifies. Moreover, if you look at Psalm 1, you will notice that the blessed man is a solitary man. But the ungodly are a whole company.

See that? Both Psalms belong to one man only. His name is Jesus. But of course if you grow in him, you begin to get a share in both.

A share in his reigning, and a share in his living. But that's not the ground. Now look at Psalm 32.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the law imputed, not iniquity, and in his spirit there is no dying. I suggest to you that we all come under the transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the law imputed. So when you look at Psalm 1 with its high holy standards, you recognize the rightness of it, see it as belonging to the only man who truly fulfilled it. It is his.

And only yours has you share his life. But Psalm 32 with its equal blessing is open to every needy sinner. So why sort of spend all your time trying to be the only one who's really done it when Psalm 2 offers you your blessings for men.

When Paul picks up this theme in Romans 4, he talks about the blessing as being a positive reality. Not just a little pat on the back, but cometh this blessedness on the circumcision only is something solid. Having its outworkings in every sort of life, the blessedness of the forgiven man is a solid thing.

It's not being on parole. It is the solid kind of blessing he gave to his son. Can I say the prodigal father gave to his prodigal son? He didn't say, well son, we'll accept you if this, this, this, this.

He just flung his arms around the land and held him tightly, dirty and smelly, no doubt. Transgression is forgiven. Sin is covered.

Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord in his spirit has no power. Luther is said to have had three favorite psalms and he wasn't ashamed. One was Psalm 51, the other was Psalm 32, and the third was Psalm 130.

For Luther was one of those few men who made the breakthrough into this area of forgiveness. He didn't see the whole of New Testament truth, but he cracked open the impossible prison of guilt when God opened to his desperately needy soul the secret of a total forgiveness in Jesus Christ. The blessed assurance that my justified one lives by faith, that he that believeth hath.

He cracked open that awful prison of religious guilt which was holding everybody In his desperation, he found a way through and when he discovered it, it changed his life and liberation. It is the basis of all Christian function. So if someone is a little bit unfamiliar, the story is familiar to us all.

And there's a little note there, no doubt, to the chief musician. When David was a lad, he wrote the Lord is my shepherd. In his youth, he knew and loved the Lord.

In the early days of his struggle and adversity, he got to know his Lord more and more, escaping from Saul, running from one hiding place to another, avoiding killing any Israelite, but quite merciless to the Philistines. In all those years of trial, he was growing in God. And after he had gained the throne and gained riches and wives and concubines and began to live in comfort and ease, a king like the other heathen kings around him, he began to lose out until that sad day came and Joab took the armies out to war across Jordan and up in Rabbath and fought the battles for a king while David on a canny camel.

And it was then that this man, whom we saw in the neighboring courtyard, the young king, he could have him, and fairly sure that he could have him, he let him join forces with his lust and he sent for her, took her, until the news came that she was David's wife. Jeremiah, very tight, he wasn't, but he had really been converted over to the side of the Lord, servant of David. And David sent a message.

And sure enough, that stalwart soldier came back hot-foot from the campaign and presented himself. But Uriah was strangely loyal and strangely stubborn. And he went not down to his house.

And David said, Camest thou not from thy journey? Why then didst thou not go down to thy house? Uriah said, The ark, and Israel, and Judah abide in Thames. And my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord are encamped in open fields. Shall I then go into my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? Let's not live this.

Let my soul live. I will not do this. David said, No, no, you just stay there.

And so Uriah was prying with drink until he was still. I am a servant of the king and insisted on staying there. And King David realized that he sent Uriah back with a sealed note.

And in when the battle is hot, withdraw from him. That he may die. Possibly they went up to the gate of Adam.

Those eastern gates are an absolute trap where you come into and probably to some place like that. A battle at the gate that poor Uriah was engaged in. And Joab sent a messenger back to David and said, We had a tough battle, the Adamites.

And Joab said to the messenger, If David is angry with you. And David said, That's all right. Then it was that the prophet Nathan came to the king.

Brave man. Stood before him and told him the story. Now note the king.

There are two men in one city. One rich, the other poor. And he grew up together with him and with his children and ate his meat.

And they came a traveller. He spared to take of his own. He took the neighbors, the poor man's lamb and dressed that for the man.

David leaned forward in his throne, angry. And he said, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the land fourfold because he did this thing and because he had no pity.

And Nathan to the king, Thou art. Thus said the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel. I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul.

I gave thee thy master's house and thy master's wives into my bosom. Gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah. And if that had been too little, I would moreover have given thee such and such more.

Therefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight. Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword and hast taken his wife to be thy wife and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. And then God went on to foretell the judgments that would overtake him.

And we thank God that David broke. And in his breaking and in his compassion Saul lived. And here it is.

Oh, this man. He had known the favor of God. He had known such blessing.

He had known it all. He had known the Spirit of God moving through him. And now the double sin of murder was on him and all his guilt and horror.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. Blot out my transgressions. Wash me truly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified and thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, thou has shaper iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward part. In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. David had often seen the priest take the little bunch of hyssop and tie it with scarlet wool onto a cedar handle and use it to dip in the sacrificial blood and cleanse the leper with it. O God, he said, I've seen the sign, but I want you to purge me with hyssop, you to sprinkle the blood upon me and I shall be clean.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. I can't be content just with a priest's administration. My God, I must have cleansing from the throne.

Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me live in joy and gladness that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Hide thy face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. Yea, create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors my ways and sinners shall be converted. Deliver me from blood to guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy mercy.

O Lord, open thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice, else I would give it. Thou delightest not in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God. Thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto sine.

Build thou the walls of Jerusalem, then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice. With burnt offering and whole burnt offering, then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar. Oh, what a prayer! To come out of such a man, he would have wound him out of God's book forever.

But God let him cry for mercy. Verse 17 says, The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God. Thou wilt not despise.

If we compare the rest of David's prophetic writings, we may see that it is not merely his own broken spirit that he sees as a sacrifice. He sees something more, isn't it? And he, our sacrifice, was our pioneer in repentance on behalf of the whole race. He took our place and stepped in before his God with the sacrifices of a broken heart and his own shed blood on behalf of a guilty world.

Hallelujah! And I believe that David saw something more than his own broken heart. He saw prophetically the broken heart of his great Redeemer whom he had understood by the Spirit. And you know, God heard him.

He knew the thing that this privileged man who knew the movings of the Holy Ghost, now that we come to the blessing, here he is, looking back upon his experience. If you've lost much, war and trouble come to his house, there are some aspects all but with the Lord's mercy. And here is David's psalm of rejoicing where he describes his own experience.

Blessed is he whose transgression is sins covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputed not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile. Often a sense of guilt is there because he that hideth this but there is such a thing as being right.

When I kept silence. Oh, that was in those intervening months when he sat there on his throne with business as usual, wiped his lips after his adultery and murder and pretended it was nothing. Underneath, this is what really happened to him.

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.

There are some men who can commit sin with impunity. But when the Holy Ghost has touched your life, it's going to cost you a fearful price. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledge my sin unto thee and mine iniquity have I not hid.

I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. David, you treacherous man, you blood guilty man, you adulterer, you murderer, dare you look up into the face of God and say he's forgiven you? Yeah, blessed, blessed, blessed man. The forgiven man has a bigger blessing for the moral man is only deceiving himself.

But the forgiven man has found the ground of truth. Hallelujah. Oh, and a way of peace.

Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sins. And then he begins to reach out to others. And he knows that what has happened to him, although it's so horrible, God can, in the infinite alchemy of his eternal plans, turn to blessing.

Look, there may be someone, I don't know who I'm talking to here, but there may be someone here weighed down with a sense of guilt and a feeling that you have done things in the past which can never be thoroughly remedied. And within limits, that's possibly true. But God has a way.

When we get right with him and enter into the sweet fullness of his forgiveness, God has a way of taking the very worst things that we have done and somehow making them into a blessing. Hallelujah. I don't understand the prodigal mercy of God.

For not only did he forgive David, but he forgave Bathsheba as well. And not only did he forgive them, but if you'll find them mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the royal house of David, through whom Christ came, blessed be God forever, came into being through the union of David and Bathsheba. I don't understand it.

It doesn't add up to me. I won't comment on it. But thousands of sin-burdened men and women have found Psalm 51 bound to their souls.

And Psalm 32, restoration. Hallelujah. And Paul was able to reach right into this thing and pull it out of its Old Testament background and put it into the New Testament to establish forever that even to this day real blessing belongs to the forgiven sinner.

And all God's blessing is focused in that direction for this fallen human race. Hallelujah. Thank God for the thousands and millions who have read these two Psalms and into the sunshine of divine favor.

Glory to God. Oh, David, man, if you had kept silent forever. Glory to God.

For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found. Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place.

Thou shalt preserve me from trouble. Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. God, the awful God who has searched him out, God who would have been normally just waiting to bring divine vengeance upon this man for defiling his name.

God, the terrible, the righteous, the awful, the inescapable. David had the stench not to run out. Hallelujah.

Oh, if there's anything like guilt hanging around. Run to the God who rightly accuses you. Thou art my hiding place.

Thou shalt preserve me from sneering at you for ages. Songs of deliverance. In seed form.

Long then the Lord speaks. Thou says, I will instruct thee and teach thee the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Forgive of me. Who having come back home to God are now submitting.

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye. Be not as the horse or the mule which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near to thee.

A half-broken wall horse is a dangerous creature. It won't always behave. It has to be held in.

It won't respond to the gentle touch of a rider. It has to be held in with bit and bridle. Don't be like that, says the Lord.

I don't want to be continually pulling at you, correcting you, spoiling your plans, holding you back, keeping you under control. I want to guide you as you yield to me. You forgive of me.

Forgive of me. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

You forgiven men and women, like me, says David, shout for joy. For God has set you free from your iniquity, from covering your guilt. He's set you free from the whole beastly thing.

And he's brought you back to himself. He's blotted out your iniquities. He's restored you to favor.

Shout for joy. Your uprightness is not founded upon the fact that you never sinned, but that God has mercy on you in his dear Son. Hallelujah.

Oh, I wish I could shout it. I wish I could get it home to every heart of mine. Who's a pardoning God, like so rich.

Oh, come ye sinners to the Lord. In Christ to paradise restored. His proper benefits embrace the plenitude of gospel grace.

A pardon written with his blood. The favor and the peace of God. The seeing eye, the feeling sense, the mystic joys of penitence.

Do you know them? Hallelujah. My, do you know the blessing of being broken before the Lord? The blessing of knowing that you have been forgiven by grace and grace alone. Not because of your little vows, but because of the blood which Jesus shed.

The mystic joys of penitence. The godly grief. The pleasing smart.

The meltings of a broken heart. The tears that tell your sins forgiven. The sighs that lift your soul to heaven.

The guiltless shame. The sweet distress. The unutterable tenderness.

The genuine meek humility. The wonder why such love to me. The overwhelming power of saving grace.

The sight that veils the seraph's face. The speechless awe that dares not move. And all the silent heaven of love.

Wesley, do you know it? Glory to God. That sweet brokenness in the presence of the Holy God. When you... Leave Psalm 1 for a little while to Jesus.

And when you've thoroughly digested and received your rites in Psalm 32, come back to see your Lord Jesus there. God's King in Psalm 2. And you are complete in. I want to tell you a story.

I make a lot of sales, I know it's good. A gang of thieves. House bandits.

Expert at their work. Who knew precisely how to break and enter without disturbing the occupants. They were quite prosperous in their business.

Sometimes they would operate under Capernaum. Sometimes even risk a night raid in Tiberius. But Tiberius was a dangerous place for them.

Because that was a Roman resort. And if you got caught by the Romans, they'd probably crucify you. Or at least cut your hand off.

But if you got caught by the Jews, well, you'd be up before the elders and they'd give you a good lecture and fine you. But tell you not to break the law again. They did fairly well.

I don't know quite how many, but at least five of them. And one of them, a bit younger than the others, less experienced, was the lad who sort of carried the bag. The jammie and the rope and the sack and the gear.

He had parents. Godly parents. Father and mother who feared the law.

And they used to wonder where their boy was getting at night time. They knew he was in bad company. Father would shake his head and read a bit out of the Old Testament for him about obeying your parents, about fearing the law.

And the boy would listen and wait his chance to get out again and give it off with his gang. And they'd drink in their local inn and laugh over their exploits and the successful way they made their escapes. But one night they weren't successful.

And alarms roused and they fled from housetop to housetop. The lad, the younger man, carrying the bag, hurrying along behind the others in the uncertain moonlight. And he would cry behind them, but they knew the way through the town over the loop.

He slipped and plummeted into a dark alley. In desperate pain, he dragged himself into shelter and shadow and the chase passed him by. A long time after, his friends came back for him.

And as soon as they tried to touch him, he had difficulty in suppressing a scream. They didn't know quite what to do with him, but somehow they managed to get him back in tremendous pain. And in the morning when he didn't get up, his mother was there, What's the matter with you, son? You're lying there, pallid, in fearful agony.

The feeling was going out of his limbs. Paralysis creeping up from his feet, section after section of the body, becoming lifeless. My boy, I told you, said his father.

I warned you, didn't I read Proverbs to you? Didn't Solomon warn you about evil company? I know you haven't been up to good, and see now how God has judged you in your sin. And mother wept and prayed, but little by little his life was going. The sense of guilt was heavy on him.

He knew he deserved what he had got. And then there was excitement in the area. The news of a healing campaign, as we would say in this our day, of the prophet of Nazareth bringing life and health and restoration to many and preaching the good news of the kingdom.

And even his parents got excited and went off to the meeting in the big house in the middle of the town. No sooner had they gone than his four friends turned up. All had got with excitement.

And they said we've had an awful job getting them to see you. Your father wouldn't let us see you any time, but we've got some gold. So we know we're all right.

We're taking you with us. Come on, they called each other. And they got in a swing on a stretcher before they realized what was happening.

And soon they were swinging down the street toward the big meeting. How horrible it was. Bad enough to be guilty.

Bad enough to be dying. But then to be exposed to the gaze of everybody. This was worse than ever.

And he begged them to let him go, but they would insist on getting him there. He said no one is like this man. We've seen him heal the sick and give sight to the blind.

He can heal you. And the wretched man was unable to silence them or answer them. He lay there in his misery.

He knew nothing could happen to him. They sat him down outside the great crowd. They said, excuse us, excuse us, we have a sick man here.

But no one would move. The whole place was top of the block. They said, be quiet, be quiet.

We're listening to the man inside. Come on, let's go this way. And down the back street they went up an alley.

And then up somebody's stairway onto a roof. And the wretched sick man was sprung across from one roof to the other. Nobody in the great court yard knew.

And silently, cunningly those experts at housebreaking, only experts can do that. Weird, great guy. Guilty.

God can't heal me. He can heal other people. But he can't heal me.

But they took no notice. They peered down at the priest. There was a priest with faces of He was at the feet of the prophet.

And he looked up in despair. He knew that nothing would happen. And then Jesus.

And he saw this poor eager man up there. Oh my. Looking down with such confidence in him.

So sure he could handle the situation. He drank of him the unexpected word. He was expecting a lecture about the judgment of God.

And he heard exactly the other side. As though the man before whom he lay knew all that else is past. Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

And peace came over his tormented soul. And in his spirit he could have shouted for joy. In his spirit he could have danced.

Only his body was inert. And the Pharisees said one to another. Who can forgive sins but God only.

This man is speaking blasphemy. And Jesus knew what they were muttering. But he looked round on them and he said well.

Which is the easier. To say thy sins be forgiven thee. Or to say rise up and walk.

It was easy. The guilt had gone. Rise take up thy bed.

Go to thy house. He picked up his own padded bed. Rolled it up.

Put it on his shoulder. And the crowd which wouldn't let him come to the Saviour. Stood back.

Somehow. I don't believe there is a problem. That cannot be met.

When once the ground of forgiveness is fully established. Between you and your Lord. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.

And whose sin is covered. Comes this blessedness. It's real.

It's concrete. It's solid. It produces results.

It released this man. It brought him back into normal living. Oh glory to God.

It's a real blessedness. Come in this blessedness. On the circumcision.

The Jews only on the uncircumcision. Says Paul. And going back to Abraham.

He proves it. Evil belongs to the uncircumcision. Evil to the outside.

Do this say Jesus. In remembrance of me. This is my body which is broken for you.

This is my blood which is shed for you. For the remission of sins. I want you always to remember this.

And be liberated by it. And be brought into functional service in God who loves you. Oh to be brought to the fullness of God's purposes in your life.

For his purposes in redemption are mightier than anything he had in creation. Glory to God. There's a change for many many who are here.

Lots of us have a hangover of guilt. In general we are forgiven. But often there are little secret areas where there's a hangover of guilt.

And this guiltiness feels we're not quite good enough yet to receive the full blessings. The whole Bible. The most of sins.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. When Paul was preaching to Sidio Antioch Luke gave us a record of his key points.

It's his standard synagogue sermon. Be it known. Verse 38.

Be it known unto you therefore men brethren that through this man Jesus is preached unto you that forgiveness. Guilt is real. Judgment is real.

The terror of the Lord. No need to remain in twilight. Half forgiven.

No need to remain half in and half out. By him all that believe are justified from all things. Thank you Jesus.

We take a promise of needed forgiveness of my faults and sins. I need forgiveness for every lack of faith I have in Jesus. Oh my.

The Lord is mercy. And with him is penitence redemption. Lord thank you Jesus.

Is there anybody else in all the Bible who ever broke They were the biggest rogues in town. But I have a power difference. Amen.

This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. Amen. If we are in this sweet forgiveness we are in a place.

Some of us have found that Satan's strongholds are built up. So built up over the years. It looks almost impossible.

If there is anything in your life in which Satan has built a stronghold sometimes these things occur in a marriage relationship. Dastardly work of Satan to forgive a man as he shares the authority to forgive all my iniquities and heal all my diseases. All sorts of things can fall before the simple authority of those who are forgiven.

Glory. Hallelujah. Let all the good fortune come to you.

Let all the thought come to you. Hallelujah. The power of your kingdom.

All in earth Let the drive to anything in your life will be back. Hallelujah my name. My kingdom come.

Mine will be done. In earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name our daily bread.

We, the Great Plains, have been given a small constant to deliver us from evil.

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