

"I Will Confess"

Psalm 32

This psalm is believed to have been written after David penned the 51st Psalm and was in response and recognition to the fact that God had forgiven him.

This is the first time we see the term "Maschil" in the title of a psalm. The word occurs a total of 13 times, 6 of those are attributed to David. The term is not entirely clear in its meaning, but most scholars believe it denotes an instructive purpose for the psalm, and that is clearly the case in Psalm 32.

What does it mean to confess? In its use in this psalm, and several other places in the Old Testament, this word means to acknowledge wrongdoing before God, coupled with thanksgiving or praise for His mercy. The word (תְּהִלָּה) is used 114 times and 52 of those it is translated "praise," and 32 by the word "thanks." The basis of the word is to acknowledge who God is and who we are in relation to who He is. In relation to sin or transgression of God's laws, it's to recognize we are sinners and have sinned against those laws and acknowledge that in prayer to God while at the same time acknowledging His mercy and relying on His promise to forgive the sin if it is confessed.

What needs to be remembered in this discussion on confession and forgiveness is the interconnected aspect of forsaking that sin. True biblical repentance (both for the lost coming to Christ in repentance and faith as well as the believer repenting of sin) involves not only acknowledgment of sin (confession) but also turning away from that sin (forsaking). There's a text in the book of Ezekiel that demonstrates this.

[Ezekiel 18:30-32](#)

³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

³¹ Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

³² For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

I. BLESSING OF CONFESSED SIN FORGIVEN - VS. 1-2

A. Vs. 1 - the parallelism here is simple: "transgression" and "sin" are synonymous; and "forgiven" and "covered" are synonymous.

1. "Transgression" - refers to a serious offense or a deliberate act of rebellion against God and/or His word.
2. "Sin" - the Hebrew word here carries the same meaning as the Greek word for "sin" as found in the New Testament - to miss the mark, or to go astray. Romans 3:23 defines it as to "come short" of the glory of God.
3. "Forgiven" - the word means to lift, to carry, to take away. The last definition is how it is used in relation to transgression and sin: our sin is taken away from us and as we find in the New Testament, it was placed on Christ as He bore our sins on the cross.
4. "Covered" - concealed hidden - so covered that it will not appear. "The idea is, that the sin would be, as it were, covered over, hidden, concealed, so that it would no longer come into

the view of either God or man; that is, the offender would be regarded and treated as if he had not sinned, or as if he had no sin" (Barnes). This is the definition of the doctrine of justification.

B. The first part of verse two emphasizes the blessing of having our sins forgiven and that they are no longer reckoned to our account - "imputed" to us.

1. This verse is quoted in relation to that very subject in the book of Romans.

Romans 4:3-8

³ For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

⁴ Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

⁵ But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

⁶ Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

⁷ Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

⁸ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

2. The definition or perfect explanation of the doctrine of imputation is found in the letter to Philemon regarding Onesimus.

Philemon 18

¹⁸ If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;

- C. The second part of verse two describes the person who enjoys this blessing - "in whose spirit there is no guile." That is, their repentance is sincere, without hidden motives or hypocrisy. They are honest before God, as seen in verse one, acknowledging their sin without any attempt to conceal it.**

This applied to us as we came to Christ for salvation and applies to every lost soul coming to Christ. They have to come in sincerity, without an ulterior motive, otherwise their repentance won't be seen as genuine and so then their faith won't be either.

II. BURDEN OF UNCONFESED SIN - VS. 3-4

- A. What is described in these two verses is the chastening of the Lord. I believe, if you were to look for a definition of what chastening is in the life of the child of God, this would be a good place to start.**
- B. As recorded for us in verse 3, David is acknowledging that there was a time when he did not confess his sin, and if this was written after Psalm 51 as an answer to that, the sin and transgression mentioned here was the sin with Bath-Sheba.**

1. The longer he kept silent about that sin (and it was a while according to 2 Sam. 11-12 - upwards to three years lapsed), the heavier the burden grew.
2. The poetical terms used in verse 3 show that the chastening caused real physical pain as well as extreme mental anguish that was a continual daily occurrence.

3. Verse 4 expands on verse 3 in a style of parallelism - the heaviness of the hand of God became so severe that his vitality, his energy to keep going withered and dried up as he kept silent. "The picture here is of the summer heat. When the rains are over, the landscape of Israel becomes parched and dry. This is David; he is limp with exhaustion." (Ogilvie, The Preacher's Commentary)

III. BOLDNESS IN CONFESSING SIN - VS. 5

This verse is a beautiful picture of the freedom the believer has to go boldly to the throne of grace - not just for help in life, but to find mercy and forgiveness.

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

The first part of the verse is the definition of "confess" that was explained in the introduction - to acknowledge our sin. Once acknowledged, without any desire to be deceptive or hide anything, God will forgive "the iniquity of my [our] sin." This speaks of the guilt of the sin. Once confession was made, the Lord forgave the sin and provided peace from the guilt of the sin.

This points back to verse one.

IV. BEAUTY IN CONFESSING SIN – VS. 6-7

A. Vs. 6 - He's always available to hear our prayer of confession but there is an urgency to the need - before time runs out, so to speak.

1. The first line of the verse seems to indicate that there's only certain times when God is available to hear our confession but that's not how it is to be viewed.

The phrase "in a time when thou mayest be found" doesn't mean He's not always available but is an encouragement to the godly, to the believer in this case, to pray to God while we have the opportunity, emphasizing the importance of responding to God's mercy and grace that He gives with chastisement without delay.

2. The second line of the verse speaks of "the floods of great waters," often symbolic of overwhelming trouble or divine judgment. Seeking God during the "time when He may be found" ensures protection and deliverance through the times of trouble that can arise.

Psalm 69:13-15

¹³ But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

¹⁴ Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

¹⁵ Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

Isaiah 43:2

² When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

- B. Verse 7 further describes what the Lord is to us when we come to Him in confession and repentance. What beauty there is in the truth that our sins are forgiven, and we have a God that will not hold them against us again.**

Psalm 103:12

¹² As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Isaiah 43:25

²⁵ I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Jeremiah 31:34

³⁴ And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

1 John 1:7

⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

V. BUILDING UNDERSTANDING ABOUT FORGIVENESS - VS. 8-9

- A. There are two views to these verses:**

1. God is speaking to David in answer to verses 6 and 7 as a way for him to know that help will be there in life to guide him and keep him from following a life of sin.

There is certainly truth to that but that doesn't seem to fit the pattern of this psalm, nor the pattern of similar psalms to this one.

2. I believe it is David continuing to speak but not to God - he seems to be directing his teaching to pupils here as their instructor. Most likely, he's directing them to his own children.

"The psalmist turns to those who need instruction about the way of life, particularly to the young and inexperienced, and urges them to learn the lesson of his mistakes..." (The Interpreter's Bible)

One of the reasons I believe this is David speaking is its apparent close connection to Psalm 51, where, in verse 13, David states, "Then [after his confession and forgiveness to which Psalm 32 speaks] will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." In that psalm, David is clearly the one speaking as being the teacher.

B. Verse 8 is the more challenging verses here - specifically the last line: "I will guide thee with mine eye."

This phrase is literally translated, "I will advise (guide), upon you my eye" - that is, "I will offer advice (guide) with my eye upon you." Here the expression "with my eye" simply means with the deep concern of a friendly teacher.

- C. Verse 9 is a warning to make sure stubbornness, and willful ignorance doesn't hinder them from following his guidance in the issue of confession of sin when it occurs.**

VI. BYPRODUCT OF UNCONFESED AND CONFESSED SIN - vs. 10

- A. For the one that is like the horse and mule of verse 9 that are obstinate and unwilling to confess (referred to as "wicked" here), there will be "many sorrows" for them until they do.**

This can be either for the lost or the saved, but I believe it is referring more to the child of God that is unwilling to repent of his sin. The "many sorrows" is speaking to the chastisement of the Lord, in my view.

- B. For the one who has repented of his sin and has trusted the Lord to forgive him and to help him live like he should, "mercy shall compass him about" - there will be no space for the enemy to get in.**

Conclusion: Verse 11 serves as a conclusion to this psalm. The psalm begins with "blessed" (happy) and concludes with "be glad...rejoice...shout for joy." What a way to end a psalm on forgiveness!

The Devil will do all he can to keep us from being happy in the Lord, from enjoying the peace and joy we have in Christ especially as it relates to our past sins and forgiveness. He is a master at making sure guilt stays in our thoughts and rob us of joy - this psalm shows otherwise.

There is a blessing in forgiveness, a burden if sin is not confessed, a boldness and beauty in confessing, the need

to build an understanding about forgiveness, and a byproduct of both confessed and unconfessed sin.

God lays it all out here in this psalm through the pen of David – sin must be confessed and if it is there is absolute forgiveness and joy because of it.