

Sermon outline notes: Psalm 32 God's Provision of Forgiveness

Introduction

The great theologian Augustine said that the beginning of knowledge is to know oneself to be a sinner. It is no surprise then that Psalm 32 was a favourite of this brilliant man. As he lay dying, he had it posted next to his bed, so that he could remind himself not only of his need to admit his sin, but be reminded of God's forgiveness.

1) Happiness comes when we have the correct view of ourselves (verses 1-2a).

- The psalm begins with the pronouncement of happiness.
- Three different words are used for 'sin':-
Transgression—to rebel against God's authority.
Sin—a faulty action; individual specific acts of wrongdoing.
Iniquity(v2) -twisted, distorted; a crookedness which leads to an attitude of rebellion against God.
- Forgiven—means to lift or remove.
Covered—means to put out of sight;
Not counted against—the distortion which is at the core of our lives is no longer considered an issue.

2) Happiness comes when we agree with God (v2b).

- In whose spirit there is no deceit means not that we cease to sin, but that we are not deceitful in acknowledging our sin. The key to the Christian life is not our personal holiness but our repentance. It is agreeing with God that we are sinners.

3) Heartache comes when we are silent about our sin (v3-4)

- David's groaning is a word used of a roaring of a wounded animal. The groaning is a consequence of living with guilt and a stifled conscience. We will be affected physically (psychosomatic illnesses) and more importantly also spiritually.
- God will not let our sin go uncontested. Repentance is not an option, it is a necessity.

4) Heartache is removed when guilt is forgiven(v5)

- Rather than silence about our sin, God wants to hear words (see Hosea 14 vv 1-2).
- If we follow David's example in this psalm, we realise that even though we do need to recognise the individual acts of 'sin'

that we've been guilty of the important part is the simple plea "Lord I confess that I am crooked. I am bent at my very core and I need your healing hand deep down in my life." We ask God to work on us at our very core, to cleanse us of the way we are, and to change those things about us that causes us to be that way.

5) God helps through protection (vv 6-7)

- 'Godly' - those who have God's favour on them, those who belong to his covenant people.
- Don't hesitate or delay.

6) God helps through instruction (vv8-11)

- The emphasis in verses 8-9 is on intelligent cooperation. God promises to teach us, to watch over us. His watchful care will tell us how we should live.
- But again there is a warning –Don't reject what God has to say.

Final thought

The forgiveness mentioned in this psalm: on what it is based? It is based on a future act by God. That heavy hand of God on David's shoulder: it can be taken away because there will come another on whose shoulders will lie the full weight of God's heavy hand, the eternal weight of God's wrath on sin: Jesus Christ.

Points to Ponder

- 1) Share reactions to this Psalm. What points particularly spoke to you? What's the punch line of this Psalm for you?
- 2) Why do you think David refused to confess his sin for so long?
- 3) What does Paul try to prove with this Psalm (see Romans 4 vv 7-8)?
- 4) Unconfessed sin sapped David's physical and spiritual strength like the summer heat. Have you ever had this experience? What picture would you use to describe forfeiting God's blessing by failure to confess your own sin?