

God Cares for the Sinner

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Psalm 32, 1 John 1:9

God loves the sinner. However, God's love never leaves the sinner basking in the pleasure of sin. God always leads us to confession and repentance because sin is harmful to us. For many, love of the sinner means endorsing the activity of sin. Can you say you love cancer? Sin is no less a killer. Sin is destructive. Look at what David's sin did to his family and kingdom, even though God forgave him. Yet, it does good for Christians to love sinners enough to speak truth to them and offer God's love and truth just as Nathan did to David.

NIVO **Psalm 32:1** Of David. A *maskil*. Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

² Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. *Selah*

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah*

⁶ Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.

⁷ You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. *Selah*

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

¹¹ Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart! (Ps. 32:1-11 NIVO)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

(Ps. 51:1-3 NIVO)

Psalm 51 is David's Psalm asking for forgiveness for his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah in an effort to hide his sin. The prophet Nathan brought God's confrontation to David. What David did in secret was not secret to God.

We do not have any indication of the sin which David had in mind when he wrote Psalm 32. It might have been the same sin or something else. Whatever the nature of the sin, it bore a deep hole in David's soul. It was a giant weight bending him down in a soul-crushing darkness. As long as he kept the sin a secret in his soul, it remained a dark cage around him. However, this Psalm is a rejoicing over the freedom from guilt that came upon his confessing of sin.

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

1. God pursues us to lead us to confession of our sins.

God came after David. He came after David more than once, because David sinned more than once.

After David sinned in the affair with Bathsheba, God came in the voice of the prophet Nathan. However, in Psalm 32, there is no other person who seems to bring David to awareness of his sin. Instead, David is loaded down with a deep burden of soul that will not go away.

Sometimes God's pursuit of us is not directly, or overtly. Sometimes God merely removes the joy of His presence. It is like God withdraws. When light withdraws, darkness takes its place.

God is light. In Him is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:5

So, God may not leave us as in losing salvation. However, He does from time to time leave us caged up in the prison of our guilt and shame until we will come to Him and confess our sin.

Why is confession so important?

What is it that God wants?

Confession means to agree with God. God is holy, just, and righteous. He never entertains evil. When we allow our sinful pride to entertain evil and choose to do what is wrong, we allow our heart to move outside of God's kingdom. God wants us to confess because He wants us to embody the kingdom of God, not the world of darkness around us.

When we sin, we have allowed our hearts to embrace the realm of darkness. We have danced with the devil and it has left us dirty and damaged.

Notice how David acknowledges his state of darkness under the weight of his guilt. He is weighed down. He feels his bones being crushed. The joy of the Lord was gone. He knew no fellowship with God.

God may come to you in a prophet, a friend who helps you see how you have wandered from the truth. God may come to you in a sermon, through conviction from His Holy Word that cuts to the bone. Or, God may come to you in the silence of shame and guilt to lead you out of the darkness of your cage.

Because God cares for you, He will speak to you about sin.

This is one of the real differences between those who practice religion and those who walk with God. Those who practice religion look to rites to cleanse their slate each week so they can keep on filling up the slate with more sin. They see religion as a way to keep their sin slate wiped clean, so they may continue to live in the realm of darkness.

Yet, God did not save us for us to remain in sin.

As John says, if any of us sin (continue in sin, present tense) we lie, and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:6.

Christ died to cover our sin. When we are born again in faith, we are removed from the kingdom of darkness and brought into His kingdom of light.

¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col. 1:13-14 NIVO)

God does not want you to live under the power of the devil's domain. Because He loves you, He pursues you to bring you out of darkness and into His glorious light.

2. Confession of sin leads to restoration.

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 Jn. 1:9 NIVO)

The word, confess in the Greek *homologoō*, means to say the same thing, to agree, and profess. Confession is not telling God what He does not know. God already knows. The point of confession is to bring us to the point we come to agreement with God as to the nature of our sin condition.

Confession brings release!

When we confess, we are making known the **truth about us**.

We are also coming to a place in which we see ourselves and our actions in light of who God is and His holy nature. It is not the Law to which we compare our sin. Our sin is identified in the Law to point us toward heaven's holy nature. Our sin condition is a departure from God. Sin is a real separation from God, not merely a dirty slate.

Sin is also a power that seeks to control us. It binds us into the darkness of our wayward condition. We find we are in the dark cage, and we don't want to expose it, for exposing it means we have to leave it. We prefer to excuse our sin, justify it, and make it less than what it is. Yet, doing so, also keeps us under its power.

Confession releases us from the power of hiddenness. We expose it to the Lord. Then, in love, the Lord cleanses us and makes us free from its power over us.

AA they confess: "I am an alcoholic"
Celebrate Recovery: "I struggle with addiction."

Francis Frangipane: Confess quickly. The devil wants us to defend our sinful condition. He does so because it keeps us tied up in the

power of the hidden darkness. Yet, if we quickly run to Jesus. We find that Jesus does not condemn us. No! He does not want our excuse. He wants to release us from the bondage and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Confess quickly and be free.

Confession also restores fellowship with God's presence.

Because sin is unholy, it creates a barrier to God's fellowship. Fellowship with God is the chief aim of the soul. To know Him is to embrace His love and peace. So, sin rips a divide in our heart and keeps us at a distance from God.

Confession is also the means by which we open the cage of darkness that enshrouds our soul, so God's light can enter and wash us clean. In speaking the truth to God, we open ourselves up and expose our filth to the Savior so He can wash our iniquity.

Pride wants to keep the gate closed. Yet, as David said, as long as we remain silent, the darkness closes in around us and it pulls us down in destruction. When we humble ourselves before God, it is then we confess – speaking out of our sin – and it is in the speaking that we embrace not sin, but God Himself!

When we confess, God cleanses us. He restores us to fellowship with His Holy Spirit. It is then we sense the joy of the washing of God.

⁷ You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

The songs of deliverance come from repentance and confession. God cares for you. He wants you to be free from the darkness of sin. He loves you and wants to lead you into fellowship with Him. He calls you to confess your sin so you can be free and alive in Him.

3. God pursues us, but He does not force us to repent.

God pursues the sinner because God loves us. He cares for us, even when we fail in sin. Yet, in the Psalm, God reminds us that He will not force us to repent.

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

After David repented of sin, after he made his confession to God and received God's forgiveness, God spoke to him. God told David He would lead him and watch over him. However, David was not to have a stubborn heart and be like a horse or mule, who will only come to you when you have them on a harness.

God will not drag you kicking and screaming to the altar! God draws people. He sends His Holy Spirit into the world to call to hearts that they should repent and seek God. His Spirit goes out as we pray for people to leave sin. His Spirit seeks to draw the lost to hear the message of Christ's salvation.

Hear the Gospel.

God sent Jesus into our world to die on the cross as a holy sacrifice for sins. On the cross in the holy life of Jesus, the Lamb of God, God covered sin – all sin – once for all.

If you are saved, you confess sin to renew fellowship with God. However, if you are not saved, you are outside of God. Christ is not in you and you do not have life in God. The Scripture says you must believe in Jesus as God's Son and in His atonement by his death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead, then call on His name and you will be saved.

⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:

⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

¹¹ As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Rom. 10:8-13 NIVO)

Don't wait until it is too late. Turn to Jesus. Confess your sin and be saved.

A Limb at a Time

There was a man I was asked to visit many years ago. He was having health issues. He was not a believer. The first time I visited him, he told me that if it were a sunny day, he would rather go fishing than go to church. "No offense, preacher, but I am going to tell you that way it is." Sharp and to the point. He had not room for God. I smiled and replied. "No offense taken. I hope you don't die out there without Christ."

Sometime later, I was asked to go and pray for him. He diabetic and they had to amputate one of his legs. So, I went and prayed for him. And I talked with him about turning his heart over to God. He believed in God, he just didn't have any room for God. No. He was not interested. I prayed for his healing and went my way.

About a year later, I was summoned to pray for him again. This time I looked at him. Now, both legs were amputated. I am not usually real aggressive with folks, but God gave it to me to speak directly

with this man. He had been so free to speak directly to me. I told him. "You know what is happening? I have presented the gospel of salvation to you, and you keep rejecting it. Now, God is taking you a limb at a time. Are you going to keep waiting until there is nothing left at all?" This time, the man began weeping. He was broken in spirit and yielded his stubborn heart to Christ. He did so, just in time. He died shortly after.

God cares for us, even when we are in sin! God loves us. Yet, His love for us does not mean he condones sin! Sin is a dark place away from God. So, God calls us to confess our sin and be freed in forgiveness.

That forgiveness comes in Jesus because Jesus secured our forgiveness on the cross.

Yet, God does not force us to respond. He will not make you call on His name. You must choose to believe and confess Jesus as your savior.