

**May 17, 2026**

## **Psalm 32**

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. <sup>2</sup> Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. <sup>3</sup> For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. <sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah <sup>5</sup>

I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

<sup>6</sup> Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. <sup>7</sup> You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah

<sup>8</sup> I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. <sup>9</sup> Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you. <sup>10</sup> Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Scriptures for further study:

Hebrews 10:1-3, 11

Hebrews 10:12-14



## The Joy of God's Forgiveness Psalm 32

"The longer we defer our repentance, the more we multiply our sorrows."

-Matthew Henry

"We can never know too much about our sin, nor too much about our Savior."

-J. I. Packer

"Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace."

-Jerry Bridges

**BIG IDEA:** Because hidden sin is disastrous, let regular and honest confession lead us to the joy of God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Or to say it more simply - Hidden sin leads to misery but confessed sin leads to joy.

### OUTLINE

1. The Blessing of Forgiveness (vv. 1-2)
2. The Misery of Hidden Sin (vv. 3-4)
3. The Freedom of Confession (v. 5)
4. The Joy of the Forgiven Life (vv. 6-11)

## DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. What is it about a landmine that makes it a tactical deterrent in warfare? What makes unconfessed sin a similar kind of danger in the life of a Christian?
2. Read verses 1–2. How can honesty and authenticity about your sin actually become a source of blessing?
3. Read verses 3–4. How does knowing and owning your sin lead to a clearer vision of the beauty and sufficiency of Christ? If you find it difficult to identify your sin, spend time in prayer and in the Word, asking the Lord to reveal it to you.
4. Read verses 5 and 9. What freedom is released through the act of confession? How does the warning of verse 9 give urgency to that freedom?
5. Read verses 6–7. What are the effects of forgiveness described here? How do these effects show up in a person’s daily life?
6. Read verse 8. What does the Lord promise to do for the one who has been forgiven? How does this promise change the way you approach decisions, struggles, and your walk with God?
7. Looking at Psalm 32 as a whole, what is one concrete way you can apply its teaching to your daily life this week?

“The Lord here speaks...He will not leave the pardoned soul without guidance.”

-Charles Spurgeon

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Psalm 32 is classified as a thanksgiving hymn, in which the worshiper gives thanks to God for the joy of having sins forgiven. It is one of seven Penitential Psalms recognized by the church and was especially treasured by Augustine, who reportedly had it written on his wall as he lay dying. The psalm moves from the weight of unconfessed sin (vv. 3–4) to the relief of honest confession (v. 5) and concludes with an invitation for all the godly to rejoice in God’s steadfast love.

-ESV Study Bible

***Praise to Jesus*** – Praise the Lord! Jesus our perfect High Priest has entered the world and offered the ultimate sacrifice — his own life — dealing with sin once and for all and securing for us the blessing of full forgiveness. We say with David: “Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart! (Psalm 32:1, 10–11)

***Repent through Jesus*** –Heavenly Father, we confess that we have harbored unconfessed sin and hidden it from you and from others. We have pretended to be more than we are and denied our need for your grace. Forgive us for the silence that has become a burden and grant us the courage to be honest before you and others. We repent of our pride and our self-sufficiency, and we turn to you.

***Consecration for Jesus*** –Because hidden sin is disastrous and honest confession is life-giving, we consecrate ourselves to a pattern of regular and transparent confession before God and trusted brothers and sisters. May the joy of forgiveness — secured for us in Jesus Christ — be the fuel of our obedience, our fellowship, and our worship.

## FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. When we do something wrong, we are tempted to cover it up or not talk about it. What does David say in this psalm that we should do when we sin? (David said that we are “Blessed” when we confess our sins and are forgiven by God.)
2. If you have older children, then talk with them about how David used three words to describe sin. He used “transgression,” “sin,” and “iniquity.” (Transgression means doing something wrong. Sin means missing the mark or failure to meet an ideal. Iniquity means that we are sinful in our hearts. Thanks be to God that Jesus’ death atones for our sin and gives us a new heart.)
3. What is the connection between the repentance and forgiveness in verses 1-7 and the Lord teaching us the way we should go in verses 8-9? (When the Holy Spirit leads us to repent, then we have a humble heart that is responsive to the Lord’s leading. When we refuse to repent or confess our sin, then we are not open to the Lord’s teaching. The example in verse 9 is of a horse or a mule that must be forced to obey. But when we are led by the Spirit, then we have a desire and a power to follow Jesus.)
4. How does the forgiveness of our sins by God lead to the call in verse 11 to “Rejoice in the LORD?” (We can rejoice because God made a way for us to be forgiven through the person and work of Jesus Christ. God shows us His grace and mercy by providing a way unto salvation that we don’t deserve. The more we realize that, then the more we will rejoice in the LORD.)
5. How can we be part of the “righteous” that David addresses in verse 11? (We are made right with God or righteous through our faith and trust in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.)

Scriptures for further study:

1 John 1:7-9

Luke 7:36-50

## FOR STUDENTS

Scriptures for further study:

1 John 1:7–9

Romans 8:1

Hebrews 4:14–16

Luke 7:36–50

James 5:16

Romans 6:1–2

1. David opens the Psalm with "Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven." In your experience, is confession something that feels like relief or like dread? What does your honest answer tell you about how you actually view God?

2. David describes what it felt like to stay silent about his sin: his bones wasting away, strength draining out. Have you ever carried something unconfessed for a long time? What did that actually do to you emotionally, spiritually, in your relationships?

3. The turning point of the whole psalm is a single act: "I acknowledged my sin to you." (v. 5) David stopped hiding. Is there something right now you are still hiding from God? What is keeping you from confessing it?

4. Forgiveness doesn't just clear a record, David says it becomes a hiding place, a surrounding of protection, a song. How does that picture of forgiveness differ from the way you normally think about it? What would change in your daily life if you actually lived like the forgiven person David describes?

5. After confession comes instruction. God promises to teach, counsel, and watch over the one who has come clean. What is the connection between a humble, confessing heart and actually being able to hear and follow God's direction? Where in your life are you hardest to lead right now?

6. The psalm ends with a direct contrast: sorrow for the wicked, steadfast love surrounding those who trust in God. Not just forgiveness; surrounding love. Does that description match how you experience your relationship with God day to day? What would it take for it to?

## FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. The Bible says that our response to God's free gift of salvation is essentially twofold: repent and believe. When we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, Psalm 32:1-2 pictures that our sins are both lifted and covered.

Question: Have you truly confessed to God that you are a sinner, and believed in him alone for your salvation?

2. In this "penitential psalm" (Psalm 32), we are also encouraged to confess our sins on a daily basis (as well as when we first repent and believe in Jesus).

Question: In addition to experiencing God's forgiveness, why else does this psalm tell us it will benefit us to give our sins over to God? (see vv.3-5)

3. Being forgiven does not mean we are free to continue in our sin. (Read Romans 6:1-2.) Living righteously involves not just turning from the wrong path of sin, but also turning to God and walking in his ways. (see verse 8)

Question: What are some specific things you need to turn from, and what would it look like instead for you to walk towards God in these areas?

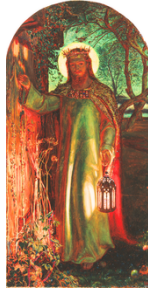
Question: One commentator said, forgiveness is good but fellowship is even better. What do you think he means by this?

4. How and why does being forgiven result in real blessedness (v.1) and a truly joyful heart? (v.11)

5. Verse 6 presses us to consider the urgency of praying to God "while he may be found," and before danger comes ("mighty waters rise").

Question: Are you prepared right now to confess your sins and seek the salvation that only God provides? What are you waiting for?

# The Blessed Life: A Study of the Psalms



*"The Light of the World" (1851-1853) by William Holman Hunt*

## **Psalms Introduction**

The Book of Psalms is the sacred place where the living God meets His people in the most intimate and personal of ways. He invites them to know Him not merely as an idea, but as their refuge, portion, shepherd, and King. From the opening doorway of blessedness in Psalm 1 to the climactic Hallelujahs of Psalm 150, the Psalter reveals that the truly happy life is one rooted in the person and work of Almighty God, whose steadfast love holds His people through every season of the soul. As the Psalter moves from anguish to adoration, from darkness to dawn, it becomes a mirror of the Christian life itself. It teaches us to pray honestly, to hope stubbornly, and to sing faithfully, even when night seems long. In the deepest valleys, the Psalms give voice to the church's groan; on the highest heights, they train the church's doxology. And in every line, every cry, and every hallelujah, Christ Himself comes near, revealing the light of the world in the dark night of the soul and leading His people into the blessedness that only His grace can give.

– Pastor Bill

## **About the artwork and artist.**

The Light of the World, 1851-1853, is an iconic allegorical painting by William Holman Hunt. The painting depicts Jesus Christ as a regal figure in flowing robes, wearing a crown of thorns, holding a glowing lantern, and preparing to knock on a weed-overgrown wooden door with no external handle. This illustrates Revelation 3:20 from the Bible: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." The artist William Holman Hunt is showing us that Jesus is the divine door to the living God who meets His people in the most intimate and personal ways. The closed, overgrown door → representing the human soul or "obstinately shut mind" that has long ignored spiritual calling. There is no handle on the outside → the door can only be opened from within, emphasizing free will and personal invitation to faith. The lantern → Christ as the light of the world (John 8:12), illuminating darkness and offering salvation. The work marked Hunt's deepening Christian faith (from earlier agnosticism) and became one of the most reproduced and devotional images of the Victorian era, inspiring oratorios, hymns, and widespread popular piety. It's often called a visual sermon on personal salvation.