

3.1.26 2nd Sunday of Lent From the Inside Out: *Tell the Truth*

Psalm 32 The Joy of Forgiveness

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity and in whose spirit
there is no deceit.

While I kept silent, my body wasted away through my groaning all day
long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was
dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah (Sell-ah)*

Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said,
“I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the guilt
of my sin. *Selah*

Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of
distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them. You are a hiding
place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad
cries of deliverance. *Selah*

I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you
with my eye upon you. Do not be like a horse or a mule, without
understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it
will not stay near you. Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast
love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you
upright in heart.

*This is the Word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God!

There is something exhausting about pretending everything is fine.

We polish our answers.

We manage impressions.

We downplay what hurts.

We carry things quietly.

Sometimes the heaviest burden in our lives isn't what we've done.

It's what we're trying to hold together.

Psalm 32 is not written by someone crushed by shame.

It is written by someone who has finally exhaled.

King David whom Jeremiah spoke about on Ash Wed so powerfully,
An imperfect man of God wrote this...teaching or wisdom Psalm.

It begins: “Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven...
Whose sin is covered.”

The Hebrew word that begins this Psalm is *ashrei*. (*AHSH-ray*)

It doesn't just mean happy. It means deeply well.

Flourishing. Blessed. He names it twice here.

And what leads to that kind of deep joy? **Truth.**

The psalm moves into full teaching mode in v. 3 about forgiveness & sin.

David directly names the cost of silence. He says:

“While I kept silent, my body wasted away...
day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.”

Notice how physical this is. Bones aching. Strength evaporating.

Groaning all day long. When we hide long enough, the body keeps score.

Digging a little deeper here, the Hebrew word for sin—*chattah* (khat-taw)
literally means “to miss the mark.”

Not monstrous evil. Not irredeemable failure. No.

You missed the center. That's human.

And when we miss the mark...something inside us knows it.

David felt God's heavy hand night and day...

But God's “heavy hand” here is not punishment.

~It is loving, grace-filled pressure. I equate it to being:

~Like a physician pressing on a wound to heal it.

~Like a physical therapist working a tight muscle so it can move again.

The discomfort isn't rejection.

It's invitation for healing and new growth and well-being.

It's interesting to note that David uses the first of three Selah's (sell-ahs) in this Psalm.

A Selah is considered an intentional pause in the flow of the Psalm. It is a strategic placement for the psalmist.

A sacred pause and resting right after he names the weight of sin.

Selah is the Bible's way of saying—take a breath.

It creates a space between experience and response.

Is it any wonder then that immediately following in verse 5 we get the turning point as David continues:

“Then I acknowledged my sin to you... and you forgave.”

No drama. No groveling.

Just honesty. Truth telling... that's the meaning of confession.

And the miracle is not the confession... The miracle is the response.

“And you forgave.” Immediately. Fully. Without negotiation.

~God is not shocked.

~God is not scandalized.

~God is not tallying.

~Confession does not earn forgiveness... It receives it.

And here again the psalmist places another Selah,

Asing us to take a holy pause,

because truth requires stillness. Healing takes space.

Grace is not rushed. SELAH.

You know this all reminded me of a story in my own life.

My brother and I were horsing around in my grandparents' four-story Brownstone walk-up on Jerome Avenue in the Bronx.

I was six at the time.

Well I crashed into the kitchen table —

and 2 of my grandmother's favorite teacups shattered across the floor.

My older brother, experienced, strategic, and much faster than me... ran immediately into a back bedroom and disappeared.

I was left staring at the broken china.

My grandmother was six feet tall — not a small presence —
and she came running into the tiny kitchen.

Her eyes took in the scene. The broken cups. Me standing there.

“What happened?” she asked.

I put on my most angelic face, shrugged my shoulders,
and said, “I don’t know.”

She didn’t yell. She didn’t scold.

She simply sat down and began gathering the pieces.

I silently helped her.

When we were done, she took my hand and said gently,

“Now Gina... tell the truth.”

I looked into her eyes. They weren’t angry. They were kind.

Her eyes...were seeing me deeply. She waited.

And my own eyes filled with tears. I burst out crying: “I did it!”

And do you know what she did?

She pulled me into her arms and held me close.

When my sobs stopped she said:

“You were so brave to tell the truth, I love you.

Everything is going to be all right.” SELAH.

Yes, I had extra chores. I learned about responsibility.

But what I remember most was this:

Telling the truth didn’t push me away.

It pulled me into love.

A deep, fully embraced, warm hug.

That moment shaped me.

I believe Psalm 32 says the same thing.

~When I stopped hiding...

~When I acknowledged...

~God forgave.

Oh friends, this is the heart of our series: *From the Inside Out*.

Outside-in religion says: Fix yourself first.

Inside-out faith says: Tell the truth first.

Outside-in faith performs.

Inside-out faith trusts.

Psalm 32 shows this amazing shift:

~From silence to honesty.

~From heaviness to relief.

~From isolation to connection.

Vs 2 says: “Happy are those, deeply well are those, flourishing are those,
Blessed are those... in whose spirit there is no deceit.”

- No double life.
- No silent hiding.
- No pretending.
- Just Wholeheartedness.

And here’s what can surprise us I think.

This Psalm about sin, confession, and forgiveness...
this psalm begins and ends with joy.

“Happy are those whose transgressions are forgiven!

And v. 11 concludes: “Be glad and rejoice...shout for joy!”

Oh siblings in Christ, confession...truth-telling leads to joy.

Because joy lives on the other side of honesty.

Deep, settled happiness.

The kind that comes from not hiding, holding back or silence.

So here is the question Lent places before us:

~What are you still desperately trying to hold together?

~What burden, or sin is weighing you down?

~Where are you still saying, “I don’t know,”
when you know exactly what broke?

What would it look like — this week — to stop pretending?

Not dramatic confession. Not public spectacle. Just honest prayer.

“God... I missed the mark.”

“I missed the center.” And then — Selah. Pause.

Let grace meet you there.

Psalm 32 says the blessed life — the ashrei life —

is not the life of perfection. It is the life of integrity.

~No deceit in the spirit.

~No double life.

~No hidden rooms.

I ask you to join me in a Lenten practice for this week:

~Take five minutes each day.

~Sit in silence.

~Ask one simple question:

“Lord, what truth do I need to tell?”

And when it rises — don’t run to the back bedroom.

Stay.

Because the God who sees you...is not standing over you in anger.

The God who sees you is gathering the pieces.

And when you...and I...tell the truth,

we will not be pushed away.

we will be pulled into love.

And how powerful is it, that in a few moments we will be invited
to come to the Lord’s table.

~Not because we are impressive.

~Not because we have fixed ourselves.

~But because we are learning to live from the inside out.

This table is not a reward for the righteous.

It is bread for the honest.

So come. Tell the truth at the communion rail.

Receive mercy through the bread and cup.

Live whole.

Live Blessed.

Live Deeply well.

Amen.