

HOW TO HANDLE GUILT

Psalm 32:1-11

January 13, 2008 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. Article in the *San Diego Union*. The scene was the San Diego superior court. Two men were on trial for armed robbery. An eye witness took the stand and the prosecutor got up to begin his questioning. First he asked the eyewitness, "You were at the scene of the robbery?" Yes, answered the witness. "You saw a vehicle leave at a high rate of speed?" Yes. "Did you observe the occupants?" asked the prosecutor. Yes. The prosecutor in a booming prosecutor's voice said, "And are those two men in this courtroom today?" At this point the defendants sealed their fate. They both raised their hand.
1. All of us at some point could raise our hands and honestly say, "I did it".
 2. Today, we're talking about guilt.
- B. Last Sunday we began a series about "Grace". We saw that....
1. Grace is "God's love in action." Further, "its God giving us what we need instead of what we deserve."
 2. Its God's nature to be gracious—Psalms 145:8.
 3. Last week we began at the beginning by examining "Saving Grace". That is, how to be saved.
 4. This week lets se how grace can remove our guilt. We are looking at King David's experience with guilt and how God's grace removed it.

I. WHERE DOES GUILT COME FROM?

- A. Where did David's guilt come from?
1. By his own admission it came from his rebellion against God—1-2 & 51:1.
 2. Some guilt can be good when it motivates us, as in David's case, to seek God.
- B. You see, God created each of us with a conscience designed to feel guilty when we rebel against him.
1. That's a good thing when we respond by asking for God's forgiveness.
 2. Sometimes, though, we can resist our conscience and actually disengage its influence in us-1 Timothy 4:2.
 3. In society there are people who commit horrible crimes and never feel any guilt or remorse. We call them "sociopaths". Its possible for us to become spiritual sociopaths.
 4. The presence and influence of a guilty conscience, then, can be good when it brings us to God.
- C. But what if we have confessed, perhaps several times, but still feel guilty?
1. In such cases perhaps we do not fully understand God's willingness and capacity to forgive us.
 2. In other cases we may not be able to get "past our past". But how can we?

II. SOMETIMES WE DO THE WRONG THING WITH GUILT, LIKE ADAM AND EVE DID (Genesis 3).

- A. First, they felt shame (made clothes for themselves).
1. Shame is feeling embarrassed that our actions have been discovered.
 2. But shame alone doesn't always lead us to God.
- B. Second, they hid from God.
- C. Third, they blamed others.

III. HOW DOES GUILT HURT US?

- A. First, guilt destroys our relationship with God-Adam and Eve hid from God.
- B. Second, guilt destroys our relationship with others-they blamed each other.
- C. Third, guilt destroys our relationship with ourselves-Ps.32:3-4.

IV. WHAT'S THE RIGHT WAY TO HANDLE GUILT? (1 John 1:9)

- A. First, confess it-9a
 - 1. Only two things we can do with sin, cover it up or “face up”.
 - 2. David faced up-5a.
- B. Second, trust God to forgive us-9b.
- C. Third, accept God's forgiveness-9c & Ps 32:5b.

CONCLUSION

- A. Do you feel like you need to raise your hand today and confess, “I did it”. “I'm guilty”.
- B. God wants to forgive you and remove your guilt today-1 John 1:9.