

The title of this morning's sermon is "*Blessed Are Those Whose Sins Are Covered.*"¹

In January, I usually interrupt our verse-by-verse study for a few sermons to begin the new year. Months ago, I started working on a few messages I wanted to preach as we begin 2024. I didn't want to interrupt the parable of the vineyard owner, which is why we are starting them now versus January 7th. So, I will spend a few weeks preaching the sermons that have been on my heart, and then we will be back in Luke.

—
On Wednesday, January 10th, Charis and Chloe baked cookies, walked around our neighborhood, and quickly sold out. Two days later, on Friday the 12th, they wanted to bake and sell more cookies. I knew the big storm was coming, but I told them I would take them around a different neighborhood to support their entrepreneurial efforts.

When we were leaving the house, George wanted to go too. I brought him even though he wasn't dressed warmly, and it should have occurred to me that he didn't know how cold it was or what we were doing. As a two-year-old, he saw people leaving the house and didn't want to miss out.

Plus, I thought he might help us sell cookies. Picture of George: "Wouldn't you want to buy cookies from this little guy? Ignore the fact that it's about 20 degrees outside and that's all he's wearing."

Things were going well until, actually, things were never going well. It was freezing. People didn't seem interested in buying cookies.

Charis and Chloe were walking down different sides of the street, and they wanted me to stay out of sight, which meant it looked to everyone like my kids were by themselves at night in the cold. Everyone who opened the door thought, "*What is this little girl doing outside my door all by herself, selling cookies while there's a National Weather Service warning? Where are her parents? Is that why she's selling cookies, because her parents don't care for her, and she needs the money? And is that a little boy with her?*"

At one point, a man came out of his house to tell Chloe to bring George home. I quickly ran up to explain the situation. I said, "Well, you see, my girls sold out of cookies the other day, and I told them that if they baked more, I would take them out again. I thought I should keep my word even if the weather is bad. I brought my son so my wife could have a break from him because he's busy, and we have nine other kids. Yes, I did say nine, so that makes ten total."

Believe it or not, my story probably didn't convince him I wasn't a foolish father.

And did you know cold weather is hard on car batteries? That was another fun part of the night. I couldn't get the car started when we tried to leave. Fortunately, I had my portable battery charger. Unfortunately, I couldn't get it to work.

Katie called to see where we were because she knew we were only a neighborhood over, and it shouldn't take long to sell eight boxes of cookies. I told her what happened, and she asked, "Do you want me to pick you up in the bus?" This was code for, "I hate my kids being outside when it's freezing, so let me come pick you up in the bus."

I said, "Well, they aren't outside. They are inside the car." Unsurprisingly, that didn't make her feel better because she knew the heat wasn't on. After all, the battery was dead. Nothing really gets by Katie.

She said, "Just let me come pick you up."

I said, "I bought a portable car battery charger, and now I can learn how to use it." This also didn't make Katie feel better because she knows I'm not the handiest with this sort of stuff.

After trying for 5, 10, or 47 minutes, I still couldn't start the car. Katie called again to see how things were going, which really means Katie called again to see if she could pick us up. I reassured her that I was going to get the battery charged. But that didn't really reassure her.

Do you remember that guy who came out of his house to tell us to bring George home? It turns out he's a very nice guy. He came out to see if we needed help. I said, "No, I've got it. You sound like my wife."

Just kidding. I told him that I couldn't get the battery charged. He told me he didn't trust those chargers, which made me feel better because I didn't think it was owner error. But it probably was.

He pulled his truck up next to us to jump the battery, and his fiancée came out with blankets and invited the kids into his truck, which was nice and warm. She also gave the kids hot chocolate and, I think, some microwave popcorn, which, of course, made me appreciate them even more.

Now, why am I sharing all this?

There were numerous times throughout the night that it was obvious I made a bad decision. But it was much easier to cover up my foolishness by saying things such as:

- "Yes, I think George is dressed warmly enough."
- "No, I don't need you to pick me up, and I will get the kids home quicker if you stop calling me."
- "Yes, I can start the car, and it will be quicker if you stop asking me."
- "No, I don't think it was foolish to take my kids out in the middle of the night in freezing temperatures to sell cookies when nobody wants to buy them."

And this brings us to lesson one:

Lesson One: Our flesh tempts us to cover our sins.

Look with me at Genesis 2:25:

Genesis 2:25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

At this moment, Adam and Eve were not experiencing any shame or conviction.

Wouldn't it be great never to experience shame or conviction? And I don't mean because we have a seared conscience or because we resisted the Holy Spirit for so long we have become reprobates or are given over, as Romans 1 describes. I'm talking about the freedom from shame and conviction because we haven't done anything wrong.

We will know what this is like when we receive our glorified bodies. Until then, shame and conviction are common feelings for us.

Adam and Eve started feeling shame and conviction as soon as they sinned. Look at Genesis 3:5.

God told Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but Satan said:

Genesis 3:5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Let me ask a question, and this is not a trick question...

Was Satan telling the truth?

Yes, he was!

As you've probably heard before, Satan deceives people by mixing truth with lies. That's why Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons will always be greater threats than Buddhists or Hindus. They have so much truth mixed into their false religions.

Genesis 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Adam and Eve ate and experienced what Satan said they would. Their eyes were opened to the knowledge of good and evil.

Now that they have this knowledge, they know they did something evil. And when we have knowledge that we did something wrong, or evil, we experience shame. There is at least one version, the New Living Translation, that reads, **"They suddenly felt SHAME at their nakedness."**

So, Adam and Eve moved from being not ashamed to being ashamed, and here's an important point to understand...

They were covering their nakedness, but it is a picture of them trying to cover their shame. Numerous commentaries make this point. Here are just three of them:

- [Ellicott's commentary reads, "Their increased knowledge brought only shame. Their minds were awakened and enlarged, but the price they paid for it was their innocence and peace."](#)
- [Benson's commentary reads, "To cover at least part of their shame one from another, \[they\] made themselves aprons."](#)
- [Gill's commentary reads, "\[trying\] to hide their sin and shame from the all-seeing eye of God."](#)

We looked at these verses largely for this point...

This is a physical picture of a spiritual reality. Adam and Eve physically covered themselves with fig leaves, but it shows what we want to do spiritually when we are ashamed or convicted: cover our sins.

When The Fall took place, they received sinful natures, and this is what our sinful natures tempt us to do: cover our sins instead of confessing them.

They continue to try to cover their sin by hiding from God:

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Isn't this also a perfect physical picture of a spiritual reality?

Even though it isn't possible, when we are ashamed of our sins, we try to hide from God. What does this look like?

- We don't want to pray.
- We don't want to read the Bible.
- We don't want to be in fellowship.

But even when we hide from God, he seeks us out:

Genesis 3:11 He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”

Did God know the answer to these questions?

Yes, but he asked because he was giving Adam the opportunity to stop covering his sin and start confessing his sin.

—
In the next sermon, we will talk about what it looks like to cover our sins. For now, let me say that one of the most common ways we cover our sin is by shifting blame...which is what Adam and Eve did:

Genesis 3:12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”

No confession whatsoever. In one sentence, Adam tried to cover his sin by blaming two different people:

1. He blamed his wife for giving him the fruit.
2. He blamed God for giving him the wife who gave him the fruit.

Now God gives Eve the opportunity to move from trying to cover his sin to confessing his sin:

Genesis 3:13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Eve followed Adam’s example and shifted the blame, too. With nobody left to blame, she blamed the devil. She was the first to say, “The devil made me do it.”

—
Now, let me take what will sound like a detour but it will connect to these verses in a moment.

The Greek word for atone is *kāpār* (pronounced kaw-fair), and it means “To cover.” You have probably heard before that making atonement for sin means covering the sin.

And this brings us to lesson two:

Lesson Two: The word *atone* means “To cover.”

For example, when God told Noah to build the ark, he said:

Genesis 6:14 Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and COVER (this is *kāpār*, the word for atone) it inside and out with pitch.

So, when we talk about substitutionary atonement, we are talking about a substitute cover, or covering, for our sin:

- We are not the ones covering our sins.
- Instead, a substitute is covering our sins for us.

—
Now, let me go a little further...

Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is death.

When there is sin, there must be death.

Because the wages of sin is death, for a substitute to cover or atone for our sins, that substitute must die.

We see this principle throughout the Old Testament with the sacrificial system. Animals died for people's sins, or another way to say it is, animals died in the sinner's place.

Leviticus 1:4 He (the sinner) shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement (*kāpār*) for him.

The sinner even laid his hand on the head of the animal to communicate the transmission of the sin to the animal that was dying in the sinner's place and covering their sin for them.

And you can imagine how this all looked forward to Christ as the lamb of God dying for our sins, in our place, as our substitute, and God covering us with his blood.

—
The reason I'm explaining all this is we see it illustrated with Adam and Eve. Look at Genesis 3:21:

Genesis 3:21 And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

God clothed them with "garments of skins," which means God sacrificed an animal or two animals and used their skins to cover Adam and Eve's sins. This is [substitutionary atonement](#). The animal, or animals, died in Adam and Eve's place.

And make sure you notice this...

God took away Adam and Eve's fig leaves and clothed them himself. In other words, God stopped Adam and Eve from covering themselves, and he covered them.

This is another physical picture of a spiritual reality:

- God doesn't want us to cover our sins.
- He wants to cover our sins for us.

This brings us to lesson three:

Lesson Three: God wants to (Part One) cover our sins.

We are blessed because God has graciously given us someone in Scripture who covered his own sin and then had God cover his sin for him. Turn to Psalm 32.

Here's the context. David committed adultery with Bathsheba. We talk about covering our sins figuratively by shifting blame, making excuses, or justifying. David literally covered his sin by murdering Bathsheba's husband, Uriah.

David continued covering his sin until God sent Nathan, the prophet, to confront him. After that, David wrote this Psalm, in which he did two very fascinating things:

1. In verses one and two, which we will look at this morning, David wrote about the blessedness that came when he confessed his sin, and God covered his sin for him.
2. In verses three through five, which we will look at in the next sermon, David wrote about the misery he experienced while he covered his sin.

Look with me at verse one:

Psalm 32:1 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

David covered his sins for almost a year.

I know what he did was very dark, but it does give him credibility. Who better to write about the blessedness of God covering their sins, and the misery of covering their own sins than someone who experienced both?

—
David wrote that he was blessed because:

- His transgression [was] forgiven.
- [His] sin [was] covered.
- [God counted] no iniquity against [him].

He recognized the greatness of what took place and wanted to share that with others.

—
Notice David mentioned three Old Testament words for offenses against God: sin, transgression, and iniquity, as well as how God deals with these offenses.

We will look at each of them, but first, let's ensure we understand sin.

Romans 3:20 Through the law comes knowledge of sin.

We have talked before that the law gives knowledge of sin. The law is the speed limit sign telling us we're speeding.

But without the law, or without knowledge of sin, God treats sin differently:

Romans 5:13 Sin is not counted where there is no law.

God doesn't count sin against us that we are unaware of, like he counts sin against us that we are aware of.

—
So, here's the question: what does God do with sin that he doesn't count against us

He covers it!

Look back at verse 1. Skip the word transgression for now. We will come back to it:

Psalms 32:1ab Blessed is the one whose...sin is covered (or atoned for).

You have probably heard that sin is an archery term meaning, "miss the mark." Sin is anything less than a bullseye. I doubt many of us have many bullseyes.

Because sin is anything less than perfection, we sin regularly and are unaware of it. We would be in trouble if God expected us to confess sins we committed that we aren't even aware of.

But here's the wonderful blessing for believers: David wrote that God covers sins we are unaware we committed.

—
Now, here's the question...

What about sins we commit that we ARE aware of?

David mentions these sins, too. They are called transgressions:

Psalms 32:1a Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven.

This brings us to lesson three:

Lesson Three: God wants to (Part Two) forgive our transgressions.

When there is knowledge, that is transgression. Transgression is knowing where the line is and deliberately stepping over it. It is knowing what not to do or what the law says not to do but doing it anyway.

David transgressed because he knew the Mosaic Law forbids murder and adultery, but he committed these sins anyway.

—
Listen to this:

Romans 4:15 The law brings wrath, but WHERE THERE IS NO LAW THERE IS NO TRANSGRESSION.

Why does it say there is no transgression without the law?

Because we need the law to tell us something is sinful for it to be a transgression.

—
It blesses me that David said God forgives transgression. If David said that God forgives sin, and I know transgression is a worse type of sin, I could wonder if God forgives the sin I committed knowingly. But David said God forgives transgression, even adultery and murder like he committed.

—
Third, David wrote:

Psalm 32:2a Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity.

This brings us to lesson four:

Lesson Four: God doesn't want (Part One) to count our iniquity against us.

The Hebrew word for iniquity is āvâ (pronounced ah-vaw), and it means to be bent, twisted, or perverted. Iniquity is twisted or perverted behavior. Think of homosexuality or bestiality.

And God forgives this too:

Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity.

Suppose you ever meet people who have committed iniquity – engaged in perverted or twisted behavior – or you have committed iniquity. You can let them know, or you can remind yourself that God forgives those sins too

—
Finally, David said:

Psalm 32:2b Blessed is the man...in whose spirit there is no deceit.

This doesn't seem to fit because deceit is not a category of sin like transgression, trespass, or iniquity. Instead, it is a specific sin like adultery, murder, theft, or idolatry.

So why did David mention deceit here?

I think because it described David so well.

And this brings us to lesson four:

Lesson Four: God doesn't want (Part Two) us living deceitfully.

Consider how deceitful King David was...

First, he wanted Uriah to get drunk so he would go home, sleep with Bathsheba, and think he got her pregnant. David was willing to let Uriah spend his life raising David's child, but thinking it was his own.

Then, when that didn't work, David had Uriah murdered. He took Bathsheba as his wife, brought her into his home, and let the world think he was a compassionate king who cared for the poor, pregnant widow of one of his fallen soldiers. But it was all a big lie, and God sent Nathan to expose it.

David was leading a double life, being one person in public and another in private, which is deceitful.

—
This sets us up for the next sermon because we can't tell in these verses, but we will see in the next three verses that covering David's sin was excruciating for him.

And God doesn't want us to live deceitfully. A huge burden is associated with covering sin, but it is lifted when we repent and live in the open.

—
Let me conclude with this. The longer I preach, the more precise I strive to be. Words are important, and they are even more important, or we could argue they are the most important, when describing spiritual or eternal matters.

I repeatedly said, "When we try to cover our sins," versus, "When we cover our sins," because we can't cover our sins. When we try, we fail. We still see our sin. It is always before us. It plagues us. It hurts us spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and, as we will see in our next sermon, even physically.

But when we confess our sin, and God covers it, it is hidden from sight, never to be seen again.

—
If you've been squirming in your seat this morning, that's called conviction, and you should respond to it. Confess your sins and repent because that is how to have your sins covered by Christ.

Twice, David says, at the beginning of verses 1 and 2, that the man who experiences this is blessed. The Hebrew word for blessed is *ešer* (pronounced eh-share) and it means "to be happy."

According to David in Psalm 32:

Happy is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Happy is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

—
If you have any questions, or I can pray for you in any way, I'll be up front after service, and I'd consider it a privilege to speak with you.

Let's pray.

ⁱ DONE:

- Nelson
- Moody
- JM
- Wiersbe