

# The People Who Are Blessed

Psalm 32:1-11

*Halifax: 14 May 2006*

## **Introduction**

As we move along in our Matthew series (now at Matthew 19:13),

- we come to a section in Matthew that speaks about the people the Lord blesses—
  - included are little children,
  - the lowly,
  - the late comers,
  - those who serve,
  - and the blind.

We will begin this series next week, but to prepare you for it,

- I want to present to you a new “Psalm of focus”— Psalm 32
  - We will sing this Psalm in connection with this series over the next few weeks.
  - It is a Psalm about the blessedness of the people God justifies.

This Psalm was written by David after his great fall into sin—

- when he committed adultery with his neighbour’s wife and then tried to cover it up by killing his neighbour.
- David refers in this Psalm about the struggle he had in confessing his sin,
  - In the record given to us in 2 Samuel 11, it appears that David took at least nine months before he finally confessed his sin to the Lord--
    - We know that it was at least nine months because the child conceived by his adulterous union was already born before he repented.
  - But through all his struggle,
    - David came to have a greater appreciation than ever for the blessing it is to have your sins forgiven...
      - He discovered the depth and the riches of the Lord’s mercy in a fresh new way.
    - And God, through the gracious working of His Spirit, then used David to pen this Psalm for the benefit of the whole church.
      - Here we are instructed about the great blessing of sins forgiven and we are encouraged to gain a fuller appreciation for what God has done.

- It is a sad thing, but there are many among God's people who live with unconfessed sin.
  - There is nothing worse than to belong to the covenant people and refuse to confess your sin,
    - but there are millions in the church who do it...
    - There are millions who in fact have never truly received the forgiveness of their sins though they belong to the church.
    - They do not know the happiness of which David speaks, nor will they ever know it unless they repent.
  
- And sadly again, there are many that are forgiven,
  - but who do not have a full appreciation and joy in what they have!
  - They have not really been gripped with the incomparable blessedness of their condition!
    - Oh brothers and sisters, isn't this true of us all?
    - Is there a one among us who can say that you even come close to grasping what it really means to have your sins forgiven?
      - to have the burning wrath of the eternal God turned into sweet love and favour?
      - Oh that God would help us to lay hold of the marvellous blessedness of our condition!

**Come now, let us drink richly of this Psalm that we might come away refreshed and filled with joy and gratitude for our salvation!**

**I. David begins this Psalm by simply *telling* you how blessed you are if you have been forgiven!**

- . He declares that **anyone** who has been forgiven his sin is blessed:
  - v. 1-2: Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is* forgiven, *Whose* sin *is* covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,
  
- 0. The word **blessed** that he twice repeats here is the same word that we find in Psalm 1:1.
  - . It is with this word that the whole Psalter is begun...and here we have it again.
    - "Blessed is the man!"
    - With these words you are called to take notice of this man...
      - To take a good look at him and see how good he has it!

- To marvel that there is such a blessed man in this fallen sin cursed world!
  - How the very fact that there is such a man magnifies the grace of God!
  - Look at Him—“Blessed is the man!”
- . The translators have sometimes struggled with knowing just how to translate this word...
  - 0) First, they have been challenged because the Hebrew word we translate “blessed” could just as well be translated by the word “happy.”
    - The man can be called “blessed” because he has been given something very excellent and marvellous...
      - God has lavished him with grace upon grace...
    - But at the same time, he can be called happy because he had been given lasting satisfaction through this blessing...
      - He is the blessed-happy man!
  - 0) And there is also second difficulty in translating this word...
    - The Hebrew word translated “blessed” or “happy” is plural.
      - How can “blessed” be rendered in a plural form?
    - It seems that the plural is used to emphasise how great this blessing is!
      - To express the fullness of it!—
        - It is not just blessedness—it is blessedness again and again...
          - Blessing a hundredfold!
    - The Psalter we use handles this very well...
      - It brings out the sense of the plural by adding exclamatory words...
      - I think it really does capture the sense...
        - In verse 32-C, the word “what” is added:
          - Not just “blessedness”,
            - but “**What** blessedness for him whose guilt has all forgiven been...”
        - And in Psalm 1-A, the words “O greatly” are added...
          - Not just “blessed is the man,”
            - but “O **greatly** blessed is the man.”

TRANS> Brothers and sisters, let this soak into very the marrow of your bones!

- If your sins have been forgiven you, you are greatly blessed!
  - How true this is of all who have been justified by God.
  - What blessedness is yours!
- . Just look at how David describes your blessedness
  - 0. He uses three phrases to show that your sins have been completely forgiven...
    - . Look at them...
      - Your transgression is forgiven!
        - “Forgiven” means “lifted away”
      - Your sin is covered...
        - “Covered” means “hidden away”
      - Your iniquities are not imputed.
        - “Not imputed” means they are not charged to you or held against you!
    - . Do you see what this is saying?
      - It is saying that though you are full of transgression, sin, and iniquity,
        - It is now as if you had none of these...
        - Your record has been completely cleared...
      - You know how it is when you do something and then you get caught...
        - and you say, “Oh I wish I had never done that! If only I could go back and try again!”
        - But when God forgives you, it just as though you had never sinned...
          - It is as if you had no original sin and no remaining sin...
          - You are completely cleared!
            - God holds absolutely *nothing* against you!
    - 0. Now my friends, this is a very marvellous thing that God has done for you!
      - . How could it be that you could have:
        - transgression—a revolt against God...
        - sin—a departure from what pleases God...
        - iniquity—a perversion that makes you loathsome in God’s sight...
          - and somehow have all these taken away—just like that!
            - gone, as if they were never yours at all!

TRANS> What happened to them?

- . Well I tell you, this is something that God did!
  - 0) He **lifted away** your transgression and laid it on His only Son Jesus—
    - He is the lamb of God that takes away (or carries away) the sin of the world!
    - He has **borne** our transgressions...He has carried them off for us.

TRANS> And not only that...

- 0) But God has also **covered** your sin...
  - Christ not only takes away, but he also covers it...
    - You are naked and defiled before God, but He clothes you with His very own righteousness...
    - A righteousness that He procured in particular for sinners...
  - God's justice demands a penalty from us—it must be satisfied...
    - And Jesus paid that penalty, He purchased our pardon with His own blood...
    - And He brings that payment and covers us with it so that our sins are hidden away forever...
      - Not merely hidden from sight, but fully atoned for.

TRANS> And so you see that your sin is said to be both taken away and hidden away...

- 0) And because this is so,
  - God does not impure our iniquities to us any more...
    - It is just as if there had never been any iniquity!
    - You are fully accepted through Jesus Christ as if you had never sinned—as if you had always been righteous!
    - That's what the Bible means when it says you have been justified...
      - In Jesus Christ, God has declared you righteous even though you are ungodly.

TRANS> Wow!

- What blessedness for all of you whose sins have been taken away!
  - But David does not stop with the declaration of your blessedness...

- He knows that you still don't grasp the magnitude of what God has done and so he goes on...

**II. He goes on to show how great this blessedness is by showing you how awful it is to be without it.**

- Sometimes, the best way to gain an appreciation for something is to think about what it would be like to be without it!

. David uses his own experience to show you how awful it is to be without forgiveness.

0. Listen to what he says in verse 3-4:

- When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.
- He describes what was perhaps the most awful experience of his life...

. There was this time,

- this long time after David had committed his adultery—that he kept silent...
- What he means by “keeping silent” is that he refused to confess his sin to God.
  - He was silent about it—he tried to pretend that it had never happened!

. And you see what the result was—

- It brought him to grief—
  - It brought him to agony in the extreme!
- He seems to strain for words to describe it...
  - The misery went right to his bones so that they grew old as he groaned deeply within.
  - He felt God's hand of judgement heavily upon him day and night—day after day, night after night.
  - He says his vitality (or literally his sap) was turned into the drought of summer...

0. Oh what misery was David's...

. Do you see what David was trying to do?

- He was trying to do what only God can do!
- He was trying to do the very thing that we just saw that God does for the blessed man...

- He was trying to take away his transgression...
- He was trying to cover his own sin—to hide it from God...
- He was trying not to impute his iniquities to himself... to pretend he had none!
  
- To put it in different language,
  - David was trying to justify himself!

. What futility!

0) You all experience guilt, but the question is, What do you do with your guilt?

- Do you try to take it away?
- Do you try to cover it up?
- Do you try to make it as though you never sinned?
  
- Oh there are a thousand ways to do that...
  - You can try to minimise your sin—to say it is not that bad...
  - You can try to do a lot of good things to cover it up...
  - You can make excuses about why you did what you did...
  
- You can try and try and try...
  - **But you can never make it go away!**
    - You can **never** justify yourself in God's sight!

0) The more David tried to do this,

- the more kept silent about his sin and tried to pretend that it never happened—
  - the more he tried to make it go away...
- the worse it got for him.
  
- His agony was unbearable!

. Now I hope that none of you are puzzled by David's strong reaction...

0. I hope none of you look at it and say,

- "What was all the big fuss about?"
- "What could possibly warrant such a reaction on the part of David?"

0. Oh brothers and sisters, don't you see?

. David's reaction is the reaction that every sinner with unconfessed sin **ought** to have!

- I know that many people don't have such a reaction...

- But that is because they don't really understand their dreadful situation...
  - If they did, they would surely have the same reaction!
- . If your sin is not forgiven—and such was David's clear sense—
  - You have every reason to be overwhelmed with anguish!
    - The Judge of all the earth is against you to judge you with everlasting punishment...
    - His perfect justice weighs down upon you and there is nothing you can do to make it go away.
      - The whole earth trembles when God comes forth to judge...
      - Men will prefer to have mountains fall on them to bear the weight of God's judgement in that day.
  - The wrath that David felt sensed to be upon him was the same that caused one much greater than David to sweat with drops of blood...
    - It was the wrath that fell upon the Lord Jesus when He took our place and caused Him to cry out,
      - "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"
      - It caused the mighty Lion of the tribe of Judah to say:
        - Psalm 22:14-15: "I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death."
  - Oh no, David was not over reacting when he felt God's wrath to be upon him!
    - David knew his God—he knew God's holiness—he knew that he was not right with God...
      - And so he was in this deep distress and agony that penetrated to the very marrow of his bones!
    - No one will think David over reacted when the Day of Judgement comes!
      - The whole earth will shake and tremble, the foundations of the hills will quake and be shaken.
      - Men's hearts will fail them and they will cry out for the mountains to fall upon them!

0. Oh how callous the whole world is! How callous the church is!



- How hard men's hearts who can live before their God with unconfessed sin!
  - The whole world should live in this agony...
- Though it was wrong for David to try to justify himself...
  - It was right for him to be deep agony and distress, knowing that he could not do it.
- You be the judge...
  - Which is better?
    - to have a scarred hand that rests on a hot stove and feels no pain...
    - or to have tender hand that is stung and burned and that is pulled quickly away?
  - To have a hard calloused heart that feels no need to repent...
    - or a heart that can have no rest until you do repent?
- . But now let's go back to the main point...
  0. The point is that the blessedness of forgiveness is not appreciated until you understand the wretchedness of being without forgiveness!
    - You need to see what you have been saved from so you can see the blessing that is yours...
      - To have God who was ready to tear you to pieces fully reconciled!
      - To have your sin taken away as if it never even happened!
  0. David rejoiced when **God** justified him because he knew how much he needed to be justified...
    - There was nothing so desirable to him than to have his sin taken away, to have it covered and not imputed to him.
      - After he was forgiven, he knew without doubt that only God could take away his sin.
- . But how did this great turn around come about?
  0. David tells us in verse 5...
    - . There he was, keeping silent about his sin—trying to pretend that it never happened...
      - And the Lord would not leave him alone...
      - His agony was God's mercy to Him—

- God was determined to restore this man so he made him miserable and overwhelmed...
  - There was David in all this agony trying to hide his sin...
0. And at last he realises that the hiding must stop...
- In verse 5, he tells us that he at last broke his silence and confessed his sin:
    - v. 5: I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
  - At last he stopped trying to justify himself...
    - We have his words in Psalm 51:
      - Psalm 51:3-5: For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin *is* always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done *this* evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, *And* blameless when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.
      - Here was a full confession
        - of his sinful acts...
        - of his ever present sin...
        - of its being directed against God (“against you and you only”-- he does not pretend as so many do that he didn’t mean anything against God)
        - of God’s perfect justice in condemning him for it...
        - and of his sinful state from birth...“In sin did my mother conceive me.”
    - This is the way a confession of sin ought to be!
      - At last he stopped trying to justify himself and acknowledged his sin before the Lord!
0. He tells us the marvelous result at the end of verse 5...
- “And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.”
    - What simple words!
      - You forgave the iniquity of my sin!
    - What marvellous words...
      - That was the end of it—his sin with which he had so long agonised was put away at last!
  - All the covering and all the hiding that David tried to do had utterly failed...
    - But now **God** had justified Him...

- His iniquity was gone forever!
- It was as if it had never happened!

TRANS> How David rejoiced!

- He knew what a tremendous blessing he had been given!

### **III. And so now David has some counsel for you...**

- He tells you two things that you ought to do now that you know all about what God has done for him...

. First, he says, you ought always to confess your sins...

0. This is what verse 6 is saying:

- “For this cause, everyone who is godly shall pray to you in a time when you may be found...”
- David says, “You Godly people—you people of the covenant...
  - When you see how God forgave me when at last I confessed his sin,
    - you will surely follow my example and pray to God concerning your sin.”
  - If you are godly, you will pray in the time when God may be found...
    - In the time when He has laid your desperate condition upon you and shown you that you cannot justify yourself—
      - that you cannot take away your own sin or cover it up...
      - If you are godly you will pray as David prayed.

0. And the result for you will be just as it was for David...

- . As soon as you stop hiding and you start confessing—
  - The terrible raging flood of his judgement will not come near you...
    - You will be forgiven instantly as David was!
    - You will be justified—your sin will be taken away, covered, and not imputed to you.
      - You will be greatly blessed.
- . God who was your angry judge will become your faithful Saviour!
  - David breaks out in a marvellous confession of this change in verse 7 that describes the great turn around...
    - He says:

- **“You** are my hiding place”...
- He tried to hide in other places...
- Now he has a real place to hide! Now he has place of refuge and safety—The Lord will protect him from his own wrath.
- **“You** shall preserve me from trouble”...
- As Noah, he will be spared in the day of judgement.
- **“You** shall surround me with songs of deliverance.”
- Instead of being surrounded with terrors of judgement, he is now surrounded with songs of deliverance!
- He is pictured as Jesus coming from the grave to declare that God has accepted His sacrifice with all the saints around Him singing their songs of deliverance!
- . What a happy exchange occurs when a sinner finally confesses and turns to God for salvation!
  - What blessedness for him whose sins are forgiven!
    - Behold, all things are made new!
    - God Himself ceases to be your judge and becomes your Saviour.

TRANS> Who would not go after such a blessing?

- Surely, everyone!
- But Sadly, the answer is—not many...
  - Many will go on trying to take away their sins, trying to cover them up, trying to shift them off...
- 0. Brothers and sisters, don't be like a horse or a mule!
  - That's what David says in verse 9...
  - . Don't be like a senseless stubborn animal that can only be controlled by force—
    - with a bit and bridle to turn the beast about—to get them to come to you...
    - Don't try to fight against God about this matter!
  - . But this is so common...
    - There are thousands in the church who have never really confessed their sin...
      - You talk to them and they will tell you that they go to church and say their prayers and try to do good in the world...

- But they imagine that they are acceptable in God's sight through their works!
    - They imagine that God is well pleased with them even though they have never yet been justified by **Him**...
    - They have never really come to the place where they can say,
      - "I am all undone! There is nothing good in me. Have mercy on me, Lord, and pardon all my iniquities..."
      - As far as these persons are concerned, Jesus might never have come into the world...
        - Oh yes, he is a good example...
          - but they do not know him as the only one who can take away their sins and provide a covering for them...
- David says, "Don't be like that! Don't be like a mule! Don't be like a stubborn horse! Go on and confess your sins!"
- In verse 10 he warns,
    - "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked..."
- 0) Understand, nice person,
- whoever you are,
  - You are wicked in God's sight until God has
    - forgiven your transgression,
    - covered your sin,
    - and ceased to impute your iniquity to you...
- 0) Until you look to Christ to take away your sin,
- you are wicked in God's sight no matter what you may want to pretend and you will have many sorrows...
  - You will have the sorrows David tasted when he would not repent...
    - Oh yes, you may be callous now... you may not feel your sorrows the way David did...
      - But you will... the day will come that you will feel them...
      - But I pray to God that it will be sooner rather than later...
        - On the day of judgement it will be too late to repent...
        - There will be no way to reverse it...
          - But now is the day of salvation...
          - The door of the ark is still opened and you are invited to come in and be saved from the flood of God's wrath.

TRANS> If you do not, sorrow will be the very air you breathe... the atmosphere in which you live

0) But you will live in a very different atmosphere if you confess your sin...

- Verse 10 says:
  - “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him...”
  - Instead of being surrounded by sorrows, you will be surrounded by God’s mercy...
    - “Mercy” is that wonderful Hebrew word *Hesed*—
      - It refers to His covenant love! His loyal love forever!
      - Instead of sorrow, You will be surrounded by *Hesed*!
      - You will be enveloped by it!
      - It will be the atmosphere in which you will live forever and ever!
- This will be your lot if you will only trust the Lord—
  - if you will stop relying on yourself and start relying on Him...
  - if you will look to Him to take away your sin—to hide it—to take it off your account forever!

TRANS> So confess your sin to the Lord—turn it over to Him...and you will be greatly blessed...

- That is the first thing David instructs you to do when you consider what the Lord has done for him when he confessed his sin...

. Secondly, David instructs you to rejoice!

0. In verse 11, he says:

- Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all *you* upright in heart!
- This is his conclusion to the whole matter

0. This brings us right back to where we began...

. Oh brothers and sisters who trust in the Lord!

- What blessedness belongs to you!
  - God, the eternal judge before whose angry countenance heaven and earth flee away justifies the ungodly!
  - He has turned your circumstances completely around!

- Let the infinite blessedness of your condition soak into your very being!
    - Be gripped, dull and languid soul, with the greatness of what God has done for you!
      - Be glad and rejoice and shout for joy!
      - Your judge has become your Saviour and all things are new!
- . This is why we gather each Lord's Day...
- 0) We gather to give thanks to God's name!
    - We gather to rejoice in how God has accepted Christ's sacrifice for our sins and how we have been set free!
    - We shout our amen's because we are now surrounded with God's mercy!
  - 0) Do you know this mercy?
    - Have you confessed your sins to the Lord and trusted in Him to take them away?
    - Have you begun to grasp the marvellous blessing of sins forgiven?
      - Apprehend it brothers and sisters...
      - This is your life—this is your joy—this is your only hope.