

David: The Miracle of Complete Forgiveness

PSALM 32

Have you ever wondered secretly in the back of your mind if you could be completely forgiven of all your sins? I mean the really bad ones that most or nearly all people don't know about?

COMPLETELY FORGIVEN

What makes complete forgiveness seem even more impossible is if you are someone most people would never even dream of having any kind of struggle with sin. Former drug addicts have a pass, right? They were bad, got saved and are all set. Same for the former alcoholics, the former sexual sinners—but what about 'church going, raised in Christian homes, never really into anything bad' people? What if they fall head long into sin. Other people wonder, are they even saved? Can they be really sure that they are completely forgiven?

That is exactly where David was just before Psalm 32. He has been a living testimony to the grace of God.

As a young shepherd boy he had told the world that he was going to live a pure life (Psalm 132) remember those disciplines he had committed to?

- God ahead of comforts v.3
- Devotions were a holy habit v.4
- Time for God was a priority v.5
- Longing for God was genuine v. 6-7
- He was going to stay pure v.9

Then as he became king of Israel he had laid out his plan for integrity that had become his personal operating system. That was probably the background for his words in Psalm 101. Remember them?

- He was personally committed to a non-hypocritical life of integrity v.1-2
- He made a strong personal pact of purity v.3a
- He wanted to never allow any build up of sin in his life v.3b
- He chose to limit his exposure to sin v.4-5
- He had chosen to only hold to proper heroes v.6-7
- He was following a pattern of regularly cleaning out anything displeasing to the Lord v.8

But as wonderful as all those personal, private, and public choices may have been—he had drifted away and gotten out of touch with the Lord in 2nd Samuel 11. And as we have been seeing, he fell deeply into sin.

And God had exposed him. The initial consequences of guilt and shame had multiplied and he came to the end of himself. David wondered, could it get any worse? David reflected on his sin, how he had one of his most loyal friends murdered, took his wife, angered her family that included two of his most trusted body guards and also one of his most senior advisors—and now he is exposed.

The whole world found out why his baby died, why his loyal friend was killed and what David had been up to when every one else was out of town.

He wanted to be forgiven—but now is all that possible?

Welcome to Psalm 32, a place in your Bible to flee when you wonder, “Can I ever be forgiven completely ?”

The Gospels record just 37 specific miracles that Jesus performed during His earthly ministry. These include sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, life to the dead, health to the sick – and many other tremendous miracles supernaturally performed by Christ.

FORGIVENESS IS THE GREATEST MIRACLE

Which one was the greatest? If you analyze them they were wonderful but ALL were only temporary.

- The paralyzed, lame, mute, and blind that Jesus gave back eyes, fingers, toes, and skin eventually lost them all again when they got sick and died some years later.
- Peter’s mother-in-law was miraculously set free from a fever but years later died of other causes which may also have involved a fever.
- The food miraculously created by Jesus was consumed by the five and four thousands, and used up – and hunger returned the next day.
- The eyes restored to blind Bartimaeus were used, worn out, and dimmed by the time he died.
- The hearing that the deaf received were subject to the natural downward slide of the human body and faded most likely by their death.
- Those dancing feet after Christ's touch that the lame possessed, soon turned to a shuffle and then stopped working altogether as they lay in bed awaiting death many years later.
- Lepers who found fresh new skin and limbs saw them again return to wrinkles, weakness, and finally immobility as circulation, respiration, and digestion all slowly were assaulted by the weight of many years.
- So yes, Jesus performed many miracles – but all of them but one were TEMPORARY.

So, which was the greatest of all Christ's miracles?

The answer is the one that never faded, never aged, never ended. It was the miracle unfaded by time, untouched by health, unaffected by circumstances.

That miracle, the greatest miracle is the one that Jesus Christ is still doing in our midst today. It is the miracle that I have personally experienced. It is the miracle that most of us in this room have also experienced. It is the greatest of all Christ's miracles – **the miracle of complete forgiveness**.

But up until the moments just before Psalm 32, David wasn't so sure.

As we open to Psalm 32, we are listening to David's testimony in song that came to his heart when David received complete forgiveness.

GOD FORGIVES

David experienced what the Scriptures often declare—God is a God who offers His children complete forgiveness. Trace with me again those life giving words in your hearts as I read them to you. You may even want to just close your eyes so that nothing distracts you from hearing these ten verses:

- *"... as far as the east is from the west, **so far has he removed our transgressions from us**". (Psalm 103:12)*
- *"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, **They shall be as white** as snow; Though they are red like crimson, **They shall be** as wool.." (Is. 1:18)*
- *"... But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, For You **have cast all my sins** behind Your back. (Is. 38:17)*
- *"I have **swept away** your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for **I have redeemed** you." (Isaiah 44:22)*
- *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:34b)*
- *"You will ... **hurl all our iniquities** into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:19)*
- *[At the Last Supper, Jesus commanded his own to drink, saying] "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many **for the forgiveness** of sins." (Matthew 26:28)*
- *"She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I **condemn** you; go and sin no more." (John 8:11)*
- *"There is therefore now **no condemnation** to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." (Romans 8:1)*
- *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and **will forgive** us our sins **and purify us** from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

David has just experienced the greatest of all miracles that God does on this planet today.

Please stand with me and listen to David sing his gratefulness for God's complete forgiveness. Psalm 32 Read and Pray.

Psalm 32 is a song sung and recorded by God's Spirit for good people that do bad things and are crushed beneath a load of guilt and shame. Just like Bill Gaither wrote many years ago. Maybe if you know the words you can quietly say them with me--

Shackled by a heavy burden,
'Neath a load of guilt and shame.
Then the Hand of Jesus touched me,
And now I am no longer the same.

Refrain

He touched me,
Oh, He touched me,
And oh the joy that floods my soul.
Something happened and now I know,
He touched me and made me whole.

Since I met the Blessed Savior,
Since He cleansed and made me whole,
I will never cease to Praise Him!
I'll shout it while eternity rolls.

THE MIRACLE OF COMPLETE FORGIVENESS

The Miracle of Complete Forgiveness--A light in a dark place. A hope in a weary land. A promise from the God who cannot lie—neither do I condemn thee, I am willing, you are completely cleansed and forgiven in the Name of Jesus and because of His payment made for your sins.

Look back at Psalm 32, listen to what David literally sang in those first two verses:

"Oh, the happiness of the man whose rebellion has been forgiven, whose record of failures has been erased. How happy is the man on whose account the Lord does not put his crookedness, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." [author's amplified translation]

David had been guilty of each of those sins: David rebelled against God's Law; David failed to meet God's righteous standard; David yielded himself to his crooked nature's control; and David deceitfully covered the whole matter up for a year. So when he received God's complete forgiveness it is so wonderful he sings--

"Total forgiveness is something to celebrate. It is beyond anything positive thinking, therapy, or hypnosis can provide. It is complete, extending to the conscious and unconscious sins in our lives, because God knows all things and because Jesus' blood

is infinite.

And anyone can be forgiven, no matter what their sin is, whether they are the torturous commandant of Auschwitz or a serial killer like John Wayne Gacy or the most immoral (or even the most moral) person in America. Total forgiveness is possible through Christ.”. 1

God’s forgiveness is always based on sin’s penalty being paid. Only an acceptable payment can satisfy God’s holy justice. God required a substitute—a perfect sacrifice to die in the sinner’s place. The chosen substitute—and the only one who qualified—was Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. Salvation during OT or NT times is always based on Christ’s sacrifice. When any sinner comes to God, convicted by the Holy Spirit that he cannot save himself from the deserved penalty of God’s wrath, God’s promise of forgiveness is granted when he believes.

But the modern tragedy is that many Christians are depressed about their sins and failures. They operate under the false notion that God still holds some or all of their sins against them. These misguided believers **forget** the Scriptures we read earlier.

- They forget that because God has taken their sins upon Himself, they are separated from those sins “as far as the east is from the west” (Ps. 103:12).
- They forget God’s promise through Isaiah that one day He would wipe out the transgressions of believers “like a thick cloud” and their “sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me,” He said, “for I have redeemed you” (Isa. 44:22).
- They forget that God looked down the corridors of time even before He made the earth and placed the sins of the world on the head of His Son, the Lamb of God. “...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (Revelation 13:8) At Calvary Jesus took the sins of all who would believe an eternal distance away.
- They forget that hundreds of years before Calvary, Micah proclaimed that the Messiah’s death would provide a way for complete forgiveness--“Who is a God like Thee, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:18–19).
- They forget Christ’s promise to never condemn them. When Jesus comes into our lives as Savior and Lord, He says to us what He said to the woman caught in the act of adultery, “Neither do I condemn you; go your way” (John 8:11). “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death” (Rom. 8:1–2).

1 Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Ephesians—The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1997.

Listen to these profound words expressing the miracle of our complete forgiveness.

"Because we continue to sin, we need the continued forgiveness of cleansing; but we do not need the continued forgiveness of redemption.

Jesus told Peter, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean" (John 13: 10). Even though we continue to sin, Jesus "is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9). He forgives all our sins in the sweeping grace of salvation.

That does not mean we will no longer sin, nor that when we do our sins have no harmful effect. They have a profound effect on our growth, joy, peace, usefulness, and ability to have intimate and rich communion with the Father. Thus the believer is called on to ask for forgiveness daily so that he may enjoy not just the general forgiveness of redemption, but the specific forgiveness of daily cleansing, which brings fellowship and usefulness to their maximum.

There are no second class Christians, no deprived citizens of God's kingdom or children in His family. Every sin of every believer is forgiven forever.

God knows how we were, how we now live, and how we will live the rest of our lives. He sees everything about us in stark-naked reality.

Yet He says, "I am satisfied with you because I am satisfied with My Son, to whom you belong. When I look at you, I see Him, and I am pleased." ²

The greatest miracle is Christ's sacrifice applied to us as believers so we know that in Christ all sins—past, present, and future—are forgiven forever. In Christ all guilt and all penalty are permanently removed. In Him we will stand totally guiltless and holy for the rest of eternity.

And so we confess as one great saints of the past said:

The Bible is a corridor between two eternities down which walks the Christ of God; His invisible steps echo through the Old Testament, but we meet Him face to face in the New; and it is through that Christ alone, crucified for me, that I have found forgiveness for sins and life eternal. The Old Testament is summed up in the word Christ; the New Testament is summed up in the word Jesus; and the summary of the whole Bible is that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.³

² MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, I Corinthians 1:7 in loc, electronic edition, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

³ Adapted from a statement attributed to Bishop Pollak by McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

3McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

When God saves, He ultimately takes away all sin, all guilt, all punishment. How is all that possible? That is what we will see as we study God's Word tonight.

The miracle of complete forgiveness is what Jesus said we are to celebrate every time we come to His table! And complete forgiveness that David experienced is #201 in your hymnbook.

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.
What can avail to wash it away?
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,
Brighter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see his face,
Will you this moment his grace receive?

Refrain:

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our (MY) sin!