

The blessed man

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[0 : 00] Now friends, shall we turn for a little time to the Old Testament passage that we read together. The book of Psalms, Psalm 32. I'm reading at the beginning.

Psalm 32. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

It is related of John Wesley that he was once traveling in company with an army officer and his batman.

The servant had overlooked something, and the military man was furious, and he began to curse and to swear at the orderly.

And Mr. Wesley sought to restrain him, and he said to the officer, You might forgive him this time, sir.

[1 : 18] I never forgive, thundered the officer. And in gentle tones, the man of God replied, Then, sir, I hope you never sin.

The sinner's great need is forgiveness, to find peace with God. And the psalmist was aware of his need, and he experienced God's forgiveness.

And in the sweetness of that experience, he penned the words of this psalm, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Now then, friends, we might think, first of all, of conviction of sin.

Conviction of sin. At this time, David had fallen into shameful sin.

[2 : 37] He tried to make excuses for himself. He attempted to disguise the facts and to stifle his own conscience.

But Nathan, the prophet of God, was sent to him with a message of personal condemnation. And you remember how skillfully Nathan approached the king and told him the parable of the rich man with his great flocks and his poor neighbor who had only a little yulam.

And how, when guests arrived, the rich man did not take of his own herds, but rather he took the poor man's yulam and he killed it and he killed it and dressed it and offered it for food to his guests. And you remember how the king reacted. He said, who is this man? Where does he live? Give me the details and I will soon see to it that he has dealt with.

And then with unerring finger, Nathan said, thou art the man. Thou art the man.

[4 : 05] And he was rebuked for his shameful sin. And you remember how David was chastised by the hand of God.

The child that was born out of wedlock died and the king repented in sackcloth and ashes.

David wept bitter tears and afterwards the Lord sent the prophet back to him with a message of mercy.

The Lord hath put away thy sin. The Lord hath put away thy sin. God spoke his word of forgiveness and David's soul was healed.

Now in the Gospels time and time again we hear our Lord speaking that word of forgiveness to the impotent man thy sins are forgiven thee.

[5 : 28] To the woman who brought the alabaster box of white to the Pharisee feast thy sins which are many are forgiven thee.

To the man who was sick of the palsy be of good cheer thy sins are forgiven thee.

Now in all these cases there was a connection between personal sin and suffering and in David's case between personal sin and sorrow.

For sin must be dealt with before man can be made right with God. Sin must be dealt with.

the man who never sees himself as a sinner will never see Christ as his savior. for the word of God comes with this personal message to every one of us the message of the faithful prophet to the

guilty king thou art the man thou art the man the man the great men and women of the bible were always conscious of their own sinfulness.

[7 : 06] You see it in Moses in Job in David in the apostle Paul it was true of God's people in every age.

Do you remember how in the pilgrim's progress John Bunyan tells us of Christian groaning with that burden on his back the burden of sin and his longing to be set free and do you remember how he attempts to climb Mount Sinai how he thinks that by the law he can somehow satisfy God but he is frightened by the thunderings and the lightnings until he meets evangelist and he is directed into that narrow way and he beholds the cross and he said I saw one hanging there and as I gazed upon him my burden rolled and rolled away until I saw it no more and then

Christian sang blessed cross blessed sepulcher blessed rather be the man that there was put to shame for me ah the psalmist said blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven whose sin is covered whose burden has been removed you remember the Philippian jailer I remember how he was made aware of his need you remember how he cried out in his anxiety what must I do to be saved man longs to be free from this burden of sin ah yes friends although nowadays there seems to be so much apathy and indifference to spiritual things men and women on every side are aware that there is something wrong we hear the men of the world talk about the present situation they have some sense of their needs although they know not of

Christ they realize that man needs a deliverance from outside himself but they are unaware that only the gospel of Jesus Christ has the remedy to meet their needs but then also friends we see in our text the fact of forgiveness the fact of forgiveness blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven whose sin is covered blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity you do you remember that wonderful answer in our shorter catechism about justification justification is an act of God's free grace wherein he pardons all our sins and accepteth us as righteous in his sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone an act of

God's free grace do you remember how the Lord said of his people through the prophet Micah thou hast cast all their sins into the depths of the sea thou hast cast all their sins into the depths of the sea when God forgives he forgives fully Matthew Henry said that with us when we forget it is because of a failure of memory but when God forgets it is because he does not wish to remember Thomas Watson the Puritan said sin shall not be cast into the sea as a cork which rises up again but as lead which sinks to the bottom and this word forgive in the original means to carry out of sight their sins and their iniquities will

[12 : 43] I remember no more God's forgiveness is high above man's forgiveness for there are occasions when man may forgive but he does not lose sight of the offense for example in the political realm a man may make a wrong statement and afterwards he may give a full apology but his opponents remember his fault and when they find the opportunity they may use that statement against him or for example supposing a bank manager was to embezzle a great sum of money and he is taken to court and he is found guilty and he is sentenced to a long prison term well in the eyes of the law he has exhausted the penalty he has paid for his crime but that man cannot come back to the directors of the bank and say to them will you restore me to my position will you give me a new appointment oh no they would say we trusted you before and you failed us we cannot entrust our funds to you again ah but like everything that

God does his forgiveness is perfect and it is complete the sins that are cast into the sea are completely covered and they shall no more be remembered forever oh what a happy day it must have been in David's experience when the prophet told him the Lord hath put away thy sin the Lord hath put away thy sin now we believe that this psalm was sung by the Israelites every year on the day of atonement when the high priest entered into the holiest of all not without blood to make confession of his own sins and of the sins of the people now the fact that the blood of bulls and of goats was sprinkled on the mercy seat testifies that the sacrifice must be slain before sin can be put away without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin there is no way of drawing near to God God forgives because Christ has died for our sin the gospel is a message of forgiveness because in the cross God is seen to be infinite injustice burning in his hatred of sin and yet laying upon Christ the iniquity of us all and yet the gospel scheme of salvation is infinitely merciful to the sinner for God is just and the justifier of everyone that believeth in Jesus and friend the forgiveness of the text this forgiveness is offered freely to everyone who comes to

Christ and trusts in the saving work of the cross as the only way of salvation the fact of forgiveness blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven whose sin is covered but then the last thing that we would see in our text is the way of peace the way of peace blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity now the word of God tells us that there is not a just man upon the earth who doeth good and sinneth not no not one all have sinned and come short of glory of glory of God and yet the same word speaks to us of transgressions being forgiven of sin being covered of the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity and why why because our guilt has been laid upon another because the great substitute has taken the sinner's place our friend this message this message of peace has been in the world for almost two thousand years you remember how at the birth of the Lord Jesus the angels sang peace on earth and good will to men and yet it is a fact that most men and women are strangers to this inward peace and why because they have no place for [19 : 44] Christ when he came there was no room for him in the inn no room in the inn and without Christ there is no peace for the soul of man there is no way of acceptance with God apart from him a great free churchman of last century Horatius Boner wrote these words the tendency of the world's religion just now is to reject the blood and to glory in a gospel that needs no sacrifice no lamb slain thus they go in the way of cain who refused the blood and came to

God without it he took of the fruits of the earth for a sacrifice while righteous Abel offered the lamb cain and his offering were rejected because cain refused the blood he came to God without it he would not own himself to be a sinner justly condemned to die and needing the death of another to save him this is man's open rejection of God's way of life and the man who was foremost in the rejection of God's way of salvation is the first murderer and he who would not defile the altar with the blood of the lamb polluted the earth with his brother's blood ah friend the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin is the man who is sheltering beneath the cross who is accepted in the beloved to quote Horatius Boner again I hear the words of love I gaze upon the blood I see the mighty sacrifice and I have peace with God his everlasting peace sure as Jehovah's name to stable as his steadfast throne forevermore the same the clouds may come and go and storms may sweep the sky this blood sealed friendship changes not the cross is ever nigh I change he changes not the Christ can never die his love not mine the resting place his truth not mine the tie blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven whose sin is covered now the scriptures teach that a man may know this peace we are to seek assurance of God's love to have a present sense of acceptance in the beloved now the church of Rome denies this doctrine they say that no one can have this sense of acceptance with

God and of the assurance of going to heaven they deny the doctrine that is why they have the teaching of purgatory the so-called intermediate state and they say that the souls of even their great saints must pass through the fires of purgatory before they can be purified how contrary to the word of God how false is such teaching we are to seek this peace the peace of acceptance in the beloved and ah my friend surely that should be an incentive to holiness of life that we may constantly experience this peace in our hearts oh this surely is a reason for our seeking to live near to the

[25 : 25] Lord to be walking with him to be gazing upon him continually to be seeking conformity to his holy will to be made like Christ ah that is the future destiny of the children of God we shall be like him when we shall see him as he is and it is as we seek to walk closely with him that we will possess this peace it is said of a godly minister of last century that he had an elder in his congregation who was working in a lawyer's office and towards the end of his life this good man was troubled he was anxious he was without a sense of assurance and one day his minister called at the office the elder felt that amidst the pressure of his business concerns he was becoming hardened and that he was losing the devotional spirit and he said to his minister have you no word today for an old sinner and putting his arm round his shoulder his pastor replied he delighteth in mercy he delighteth in mercy ah that's it said the elder that's it that's the very word that

I was needing and a few days later the old man passed to his rest and these were his last words he in mercy he delighteth in mercy oh the wonder of his forgiveness ah friend fellow believer should we not be seeking that we would have our first love to see that view of Jesus that was given to us when first we walked with him that we would realize the glory of the cross that we would be able to say with the apostle the things that once were gained to me those I counted loss but Christ yea and I count all things but loss but refuse for the excellency of the knowledge of

Christ Jesus my Lord that I may know him and the fellowship of his sufferings being conformed unto his death oh grant friends may God grant to us that we too on this day set aside for confession of sin when we realize our own unworthiness when we look within may we be enabled thy faith to look to him and to remember to remember this promise blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven whose sin is covered Robert Murray McChain once counseled a man who was troubled about his own inward corruption and he said to him for every look at self take ten looks at

Christ for every look at self take ten looks at Christ blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute sin ah because believer your sin was imputed to your Savior it was laid upon him and he finished transgression and made an end of sin and brought in an everlasting righteousness blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven whose sin is forgiven whose sin is covered blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile may the Lord bless our meditation on his word let us pray

O Lord we marvel at the way of salvation O gracious Lord give us the spiritual mind that as we read and meditate in the word we may admire those means that God devised whereby his banished ones might be restored to his favour and his fellowship and O grant that us we are engaged in the remembrance of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ O grant Lord that we may be reminded of the price that was paid for our redemption ye were redeemed not with corruptible things such as silver and gold but with the precious blood of

[31 : 57] Christ as of alarm without blemish and without spot and we seek Lord for grace to live among men as thy redeemed people O grant Lord through grace and for my soul come thou with us and we will do thee good for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel O Lord continue thy presence with us abide in our midst and make us to abide in thee that our lives may bear much fruit and that our heavenly father may be glorified hide thy face from our unworthiness forgive our shortcomings in thy service and look not upon us as we are in ourselves but rather look upon the face of

Jesus thine own anointed one in whom thou shalt have the glory ever more amen