

Instruction for the Forgiven

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[0:00] Psalm 32 And I liked a lot of them.

And I thought, well, that's not quite it. And after studying through it, I came up with this one. Instruction for the Forgiven. Maybe you can catch me afterward and get a better title. But I think that summarizes the whole psalm.

But let's read the whole psalm as we prepare. Psalm 32, verse 1. Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Selah. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. And you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

[1:24] Selah. Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found. Surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.

You are a hiding place for me. You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.

I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.

Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

A lot in this psalm. A lot in this psalm. A little background as we get into it. You notice in the title it says, A Masculine of David.

[2:22] Well, okay, what's a masculine? Several ideas. Some say a skillful song, a song of instruction, or a contemplative poem. I tend to take the middle one, Song of Instruction.

There's several psalms that use the title Masculine in it, and all of them seem to have more wisdom-oriented terminology in it. So, I tend to lean toward the middle one, but this is, different commentators have different ideas.

This psalm is also used by our Jewish friends at the close of the annual Day of Atonement. Or, I think it falls on Ash Wednesday, if I remember right. Makes sense. Blessed is the one who's transgressing and is forgiven.

By that time in their beliefs, their sins are taken care of for the year. It's the annual ceremony. And this psalm usually is classified as a thanksgiving hymn, but it's also a penitential psalm.

Thanksgiving and that, thank you, Lord, for forgiving me, but also penitential, I confess my sins to you. So, it's kind of a double way of titling it. And then many link this psalm to Psalm 51, since they're both written by David.

[3:26] And it's true that much of the terminology in here fits along with David's experience with the sin of Bathsheba and the following, it was almost a year, they say, that he lived with this inside himself.

So, he knew the pain of having this sin hidden within himself. But it's also better to view this as a general experience of confession of forgiveness from which the believer can be taught.

So, we all can learn from this. A general outline, one of the commentaries, really caught my eye and I wanted to share it with you guys. Verses 1 and 2, they say, a blessing of forgiveness.

Verses 3 through 5, a lesson from experience. 6 through 7, God's protection. And then verse 8, promise of wisdom. And then they double back to another lesson from experience.

Verse 9. Verse 10, God's protection. And then end with rejoicing in forgiveness. So, it really sets apart, what? The promise of wisdom. The promise of wisdom is kind of nestled in the middle of it.

[4:29] And I think it's important to kind of look at it this way. It'll make more sense as we go along. We'll come back to this. Alright, let's get into it. Verse 1 and 2. As you have a little outline there, that's going to fill your main headings.

Blessing of forgiveness. Blessing of forgiveness. The first word we see is what? Blessed. Blessed. Blessed. And it says it twice. It's a two-fold repetition.

And when you think of blessed, usually, what do you think of? Happy is he? Or joyful? Think of it this way. Favored.

Pardoned. Freed. Accepted. Is the one whose transgression is forgiven. It's less about our reaction to it, and more about what God has done for us.

We are blessed because of what He has done. This is the second psalm, chronologically, that uses this term. Psalm 1 is the first one. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, and so forth.

[5:42] Spurgeon really says it best here. Blessedness is not, in this case, ascribed to the man who has been a diligent law keeper, as he was in Psalm 1. For then it would never come to us, but rather to a lawbreaker, who by grace, most rich and free, has been forgiven.

Blessed indeed. Amen. Paul uses these two verses of Psalm 32 in Romans 4, 7, and 8, as he gives his little treatise on grace.

So it's a passage we can go back and forth in the Old Testament and New Testament. There's three terms in here for sin. Threefold explanation for sin. Transgression, sin, and iniquity.

Okay, well, let's kind of define these. Transgression is defined as an act of rebellion and disloyalty.

Sin, an act that misses, some folks go, misses the mark.

This one kind of gets more specific. Often intentionally can miss the mark. God's expressed and revealed will. And then iniquity, a crooked or wrong act often associated with a conscious and deliberate intent to do wrong.

[6:48] And you're thinking, well, some of those kind of cross over, don't they? Yes, they do. Yeah, every one of you intended. It's hard to say because the sin nature, whether you think you do it or not, you intended to do that.

That's kind of hard to wrap your mind around. But they overlap. They're overlapping synonyms. And the idea is that every kind of sin here is included. Nothing's excluded. Every sin has been forgiven. We had a threefold explanation of sin. Now we have a threefold expression of forgiveness. We have the words forgiven, covered. And then in verse 2, it says, Against whom the Lord counts no iniquity and does not count.

It's defined as forgiven. It literally means carried away. Carried away the act of removal of sin, guilt, and the remembrance of sin. Covered, as we said before, the gracious act of atonement.

Just as the blood of the Lamb symbolized covering the sins of the people, Christ has covered us in His blood. He has atoned for our sin. He has covered us. And then does not count.

[8:03] It's God's attitude toward the forgiven. Reconciliation. Reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5, verses 17-19 says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So God is not counting it against us as He forgives us.

And we're thankful for that. Because we have a long list. The last part of verse 2 has this phrase, In whose spirit there is no deceit. Okay, so we've had the two-fold blessing.

We've had the three-fold explanation of sin. We've had the three-fold expression of forgiveness.

And there's almost a condition to this whole thing, In whose spirit there is no deceit.

[9:10] Those who are honest about their sin is what he's talking about. Those who are honest about their sin. This phrase I read, Free from guilt, free from guile. Not that we're totally ever without sin.

We'll never be without this side of heaven. But think about it. If you have confessed your sin to the Lord, the guilt is, and you've been forgiven, the guilt is removed there. Once there's no guilt, you don't have to lie about your sin.

There's no guile. The blessedness of forgiveness is contingent on integrity. Remember the verses in 1 John 1, verses 8 and 10. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in

us.

If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. And many times we'll confess, because we're tired of the consequences of our sin, but there's no repentance.

So this is also, In whose spirit there is no deceit. True repentance, instead of regret for consequences. So this is kind of an idea here. Blessed is the one who is forgiven, because the Lord has dealt with him with his sin, and He's been honest with the Lord about it.

[10 : 20] Alright. Let's move on to the verses 3-5. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away, through my groaning all day long. For day and night, your hand was heavy upon me.

My strength was dried up, as by the heat of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Selah. Well, second in our outline is lesson from experience. Experience of David. This is what he went through, not just with his sin with Bathsheba, but probably many sins.

Starts off, For when I kept silent, and that's what we just talked about, when deceit remained in his heart. I don't have a need to confess to the Lord. Well, yes, he did.

Or when he refused to confess his sin and repent. The phrase is, my bones wasted away, through my groaning all day long, and my strength was dried up, as by the heat of summer.

[11 : 28] He's talking about the weakness, both mental and physical, from laboring to ignore one's guilt. Trying to ignore one's guilt.

It's hard to do. I won't speak for you, but I know for myself, it's hard to ignore it. You try to, something else, something else, something else. You end up wasting away.

The Lord is there waiting for you. You need to confess it to the Lord. Sam Storms described David as, having the inner misery of the lacerated heart. This sounds awful, doesn't it?

It sounds like you're groaning in pain. And that's what he's saying here. My bones wasted away, through my groaning all day long. My bones. The strongest part of me is weakening.

I have no strength. And it's also talking about the growing ineffectiveness of spiritual walk. As Galatians 6, verses 7 and 8 say, Do not be deceived.

[12 : 25] God is not mocked for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. There's the weakness. But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

In this contrast with the imagery given in Psalm 1, where he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose fruit comes in season and its leaf does not wither. Well, over here he's withering.

He's withering away because of his sin. He's not walking in the counsel of the godly, the law of the Lord. And then, For day and night your hand was heavy upon me.

Well, this is the Lord's chastening, right? Broken fellowship with God lays waste the mind of the believer. If we were honest with ourselves, when we're broken in fellowship with the Lord because of our sin, bit by bit, it just eats at you.

And also, on that flip side, God simply will not let His children sin with impunity. Proverbs 3, verses 11 and 12, My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of His reproof, for the Lord reproves Him whom He loves as a father of the Son whom He delights.

[13 : 42] And then David puts a Selah in here. It says, Pause here and meditate on this calamity. Remember your experience where you tried to hide from the Lord.

Remember the effects of harboring sin in your heart. So many times we have a hard time and then as soon as we have relief, well, we forget everything we went through.

Well, we have relief now. Okay, okay, we're fine now. Remember what you went through.

Remember the pain you were in because of this sin. The pain is there for a reason. To help you do better next time.

Don't fall back into that. And then he goes in and says, I acknowledged my sin. I did not cover. I will confess. After experiencing a devastating drought, David came to the Lord in complete honesty.

This does parallel with Psalm 51, verse 4, where he says, Against you and you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

[14 : 51] We're always trying to cover our sins. When we uncover our sin before the Lord, He faithfully covers it from remembrance. 1 John 1, 9.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And as another psalm says, He removes our sin as far as the east is from the west.

He remembers it no more. And we need to confess that to Him. Confess our sin. And also, it's our sin. He says, My sin, My iniquity, My transgressions.

He has complete ownership of this blame. He's not saying, Well, so-and-so did this to me and you better deal with him too. This is me. I did this. As before, the exact nature of sin is not as important as the joy of Yahweh's forgiveness of all sin.

I want you all to think about the best testimony you've ever heard. And you'll probably think of the greatest sinner you've ever known.

[15 : 54] But the idea is not to look at the sin. The glorious part of salvation is not the sin, it's the forgiveness. So the testimony of all of us is the forgiveness that we've received.

And I think that's important here for this psalm. Look at the forgiveness that has been given. Yes, we all are great sinners in the eyes of the Lord. One sin makes you a great sinner. But look at the forgiveness that He's given us.

The last part of that verse, you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Well, that sounds like a double word there. The sin of my sin.

Some commentators think that this is indicating like a virus that prolonged the guilt of the deep-seated cause that has been mercifully pardoned. And again, as before, Selah.

Another pause is necessary. We must not rush by this great truth. We thought about the pain that we were in. Now let's think about the forgiveness we've been given. Take time and think about this.

[16 : 58] An old hymn, Pause my soul, adore and wonder. Ask, oh, why such love to me? Grace has put me in the number of the Savior's family.

Hallelujah. Thanks. Eternal thanks to Thee. Think about the forgiveness of the Lord. verses 6 and 7. let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found. Surely the rush of great waters, they shall not reach Him. You are a hiding place for me.

You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah. And thirdly, we have God's protection. God's protection.

Therefore, let everyone who is godly, let everyone who is godly. David's experience is common to all the faithful. This is not just something that David went through.

[17 : 57] We all go through this. While God teaches us through David's example that reconciliation is to be sought through prayer, the word everyone shows that without exception we all stand in need of His mercy.

Thus, we all need to learn from David's example. It says, Offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found. First, I see here God's children do spend time in prayer.

Just do a personal inventory on yourselves. How often do you pray if you're not counting before meals? Think about it. How often do you pray? How much time do you spend in prayer?

And some may get tripped up at a time when you may be found. It's not that God is not available. God is always willing to meet with us and it is never out of season to seek Him.

Yet, there are critical moments when believers are impressed to seek the Lord. The Lord sometimes will wake you up in the middle of the night and want to tell you something. And you try to go back to sleep.

[19 : 00] He wakes you up again. Like Isaiah 55, 6 and 7 says, Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake His way and the unrighteous man His thoughts.

Let him return to the Lord that He may have compassion on Him and to our God for He will abundantly pardon. And one of my favorite verses from Psalm 27, verse 8, You have said, Seek my face.

My heart says to you, Your face, Lord, do I seek. But there are times where the Lord is wanting to speak to us and we need to be responsive to those times. In this terminology of great waters, the rush of great waters and trouble, adversity seems to be a good occasion for all of us, but adversity is always an occasion for the wise in heart to draw near to the Lord in prayer.

David does this throughout the Psalms. Just pick a song and you'll probably find it in there. I picked Psalm 142, verses 1 and 2. With my voice, I cry out to the Lord. With my voice, I plead for mercy to the Lord.

I pour out my complaint before Him. I tell my trouble before Him. Go to the Lord. And in David's life, although he did receive forgiveness for his sin, the Lord does not always remove the consequences of them.

[20 : 22] And some of this adversity he's talking about here could very well be the things that happened with his children. The consequences of David's sins manifested in his children's grievous actions.

And we remember all those. Amnon, who raped his half-sister Tamar. Then Absalom killed Amnon because he did that. Then Absalom tried to take the kingdom away from David and he was killed by Joab.

Then Adonijah tried to take the scepter from Solomon and he was killed. A lot of adversity David went through watching all of his kids fight amongst each other. Also, the son of Bathsheba that was born died.

The firstborn. So there's a lot of consequences to the sin. He was forgiven. Even in that consequence, the Lord will help you.

It's not like he says, okay, you're going to bear this consequence and I'm over here until you get done with that. No, even in our punishment, he's there lovingly with us. That's the idea here. Even though the waters rage, they shall not reach him.

[21 : 28] You are a hiding place. You surround me. Although evil rages, the Lord protects his children. Although tragedy devastates, the Lord shelters his children.

Although the waters of affliction crash about, the Lord preserves his children. One of my favorite passages from Isaiah 30, verses 18-21, Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you.

For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all those who wait for him. For a people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem. You shall weep no more.

He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teacher will not hide himself anymore.

But your eyes shall see your teacher and your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, this is the way, walk in it, when you turn to the right and when you turn to the left.

[22 : 36] Your eyes will see your teacher as you learn in your lesson. Great passage. And he's also surrounded with shouts of deliverance. And this is representative of God's victorious power.

God wins the victory in this. It also depicts the congregation of the righteous proclaiming the mercies of God. As we do here on Sunday mornings, all of us who have been forgiven lift our voices together.

We are surrounded by shouts of deliverance. Remember, when the child was sick, David was mourning for the child because he knew the child was going to die.

The Lord told him the child was going to die. As soon as the child died, he went to the sanctuary to worship the Lord. He got up and said, I accept this as the Lord's punishment and I still worship my God.

He has forgiven me. Selah. Pause yet again for love so amazing needs to be pondered. And joy so great demands quiet contemplation since language fails to express it.

[23 : 40] In such difficult times, what can you say? What can you say to one another? How can you counsel one another when they've been through so much like David, for instance? How can you reach out to them?

Point them to the Lord, but more than anything else, they need to be silent before the Lord as the Lord teaches them, as the Lord draws them to Himself. Good verses.

Now we come to verse 8. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Well, here's the promise of wisdom.

He says, I will. Well, who says I will? The Lord. The Lord interjects His voice. David's been speaking and then all of a sudden we have the Lord's voice here. He reassures us of His faithfulness.

I will instruct you, teach you in the way you should go, counsel you. God promises to give us understanding, direction, and advice. And we need this to avoid falling back into the same sin.

[24 : 44] Let's go back to Proverbs 3 again. My son, do not lose sight of these. Keep sound wisdom and discretion. And they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck.

Then you will walk on your way securely and your foot will not stumble. And in this whole psalm, He's talking about forgiveness and how we're supposed to operate under that glorious forgiveness. The Lord is teaching us how. That's how this verse sticks out so much. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go, you sinner who needs forgiveness. I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

Let's look at that phrase, with my eye upon you. As our Father, He watches over His children. And we should strive to see life from His perspective.

So many times we try to make sense of things of what God's doing from down here. God has to be doing this because this is what I understand.

[25 : 45] Well, Lord, help me understand what You're saying in all this. As we embrace the assurance of forgiveness and protection, we should readily learn from the wisdom of the Lord.

The instruction for the forgiven. Verse 9, Be not like a horse or mule without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.

And another lesson from experience, Be not like a horse or a mule without understanding. This is kind of a harsh look at it, but when we sin, we often see ourselves as a free man.

I'm free to do this. I'm free to sin. But in the eyes of the Lord, we are acting as animals, as this says. It's kind of a different thought, isn't it? Proverbs 26, 3, A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of fools.

Very similar. We are made in God's image, but when we choose to knowingly rebel against God's law, we descend into what the older translations call acting brutish that modern translations call senseless.

[26 : 52] If we're really thinking about who God is, we all fall here, so I'm putting myself in here too. If we really think about who God is and how He has forgiven us, disobedience just doesn't make sense.

It's senseless. But yet we do it. So sometimes we need a bit and bridle because we won't stay near the Lord. We should freely follow the instruction of the Lord, but at times we need a harsh reminder to take refuge in Him.

As a wandering lamb, we must learn to stay near our shepherd. He may break the leg in order that we stay near Him. Verse 10, Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord.

Again, we see God's protection. Many are the sorrows of the wicked. He starts off with a sobering reminder of the distresses of sin. And just think about that.

That's compounded by the lack of forgiveness for the wicked. Distressed by their sin, and yet because they have not surrendered to the Lord, it's just doubled on them.

[27 : 57] But steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. The wicked may experience endless adversity, whereas the wise will experience the constancy of God's love and protection through adversity.

We can make it through because of the Lord. He surrounds us with His love. And there's a holy trust in the one who forgives our sin. As Psalm 130 says, If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared, that you may be loved, revered, adored. He protects us as we go.

In our last verse tonight, Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy all you upright in heart. Rejoicing in forgiveness.

Start off with the blessing of forgiveness. Now rejoice in your forgiveness. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice. Shout for joy. This is not a vain effort to drum up happiness.

[29 : 03] The mindful who see the forgiveness of the Lord will rejoice. It's almost involuntary. Think about the forgiveness you've been given and you will rejoice, I guarantee you.

His forgiveness is needed. His forgiveness is received. Groanings from sin transform into shouts for joy. Thus rejoicing becomes characteristic of the forgiven.

Are you having a tough time rejoicing? Think about the forgiveness. O righteous, upright in heart. Who are the righteous?

Well, we are, but it's because of God's acceptance of us because of Christ. Christ's righteousness. Christ's work on the cross allows us to worship in His righteousness.

And Christ's forgiveness makes us upright in heart instead of downward turned. A lot to celebrate, a lot to be thankful for. In application, as we close, be quick to honestly confess your sin before the Lord lest you waste away, lest you be ineffective in your witness and serving the Lord.

[30:18] Make time to spend with the Lord in prayer. It's hard to confess your sins if you're not talking to Him. Spend time in prayer and He will reveal things that need work. And it is a blessing.

Be teachable as the Lord gives you counsel through His Word. As verse 8 says, I will instruct you. Be teachable. Learn from Him. And be mindful of the forgiveness you have received and rejoice. Rejoice. Be inclusive and crouching by crouching by crouching Thank you.