

The Joy of God's Forgiveness

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 May 2025

Preacher: Dov Cohen

[0 : 00] So today, like I mentioned earlier, we are looking at Psalm 32. Psalm 32. The title for today's message is The Joy of God's Forgiveness.

! And the main point is that the joy of God's forgiveness frees us, frees us to spread joy to others. Now, my family and I, we've been reading hymns before dinner, just one hymn before dinnertime recently.

It's been a really sweet thing to do. It's been a blessed time to read a hymn together before heading into our dinnertime conversation. And hymns just capture biblical truth in such a concise and powerful way.

And one hymn that I especially love is Joy to the World. Joy to the World. Christmas hymn, very familiar, and we sing it at Christmastime.

[1 : 10] And I get why we sing it at Christmastime. But I don't get why we only sing it at Christmastime. It's such a great hymn. So I want to read it for you all, because it goes so well with Psalm 32.

And these are familiar but glorious lyrics. So let's just listen afresh this morning to Joy to the World. Joy to the World. The Lord is come. Let earth receive her king.

Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing. Joy to the earth.

The Savior reigns. Our mortal songs employ. While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy.

[2 : 16] No more let sins or sorrows grow. Nor thorns infest the ground.

He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love.

Just glorious. And this morning, we're going to hear of a psalm that reverberates with the joy of that hymn.

It reverberates with the joy of joy to the world. We're going to explore and expose the psalm 32. And this psalm, it expresses the blessing of forgiveness.

[3 : 22] The blessing of forgiveness. It explores, it exposes the path to forgiveness. It gives us an admonition, encouraging immediate confession to experience God's forgiveness.

It gives us instruction. And it tells us the consequences of our choices as it relates to God's forgiveness. Of experiencing either joy or sorrow.

Now, my prayer for this morning is we continue our series in the psalms with the theme, the theme of dominion inside and out, of ruling and subduing ourselves so that we can rule and subdue outside of ourselves.

My prayer for this morning is that this meditation would be freeing. That it would be freeing. Freeing from guilt. Freeing from sin. Freeing to experience and spread the joy of the Lord to our families, throughout our church, in our communities, in our workplaces, and beyond.

And if you can't tell, I'm excited for today. This is a glorious text and certainly one of my favorite psalms. So let's read it. Let's dig in.

[4 : 45] Psalm 32. A moscow of David. 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. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to you and it did not cover my iniquity. I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.

And you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah. Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found.

[5 : 56] 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 count to 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 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. May God, God, would you bless the preaching of your word.

[7 : 13] All right, to start out, let's talk about the context of Psalm 32. What is the context of Psalm 32? Now, a lot of Psalms, you'll know there's a clear historical marker right above where the Psalm is.

With Psalm 32, you'll note in your Bible, there's no clear historical marker for Psalm 32. Some people think it was possibly written after David's experience of Psalm 51, when he had confessed his sin to the Lord, his sin about Uriah and Bathsheba, and ultimately against God himself first and foremost.

Other traditions say that the context is left unknown intentionally. That the Psalm is geared towards an expression of confession and forgiveness.

That's just a general expression of confession and forgiveness. It is considered one of the penitential Psalms. And all to be said, it plays a clear role in the Psalter.

So much of the Psalms are about blessing. And what does a blessed life look like? In meditating on God's word day and night, like in Psalm 1, what does blessing look like?

[8 : 27] Psalm 32 is about the blessing of experiencing God's forgiveness. So, if that's the context of Psalm 32, let's dig for its gold.

Let's dig for its gold. So, point one. Point one for today. There'll be five points. Point one. The blessing of forgiveness. The blessing of forgiveness.

So, Psalm 32 starts out by stating, Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity. Now, it's blessing. Note in verses 1 and 2, the Hebrew is the word ashray.

Ashray. Which means blessed. It means happy. It means full of the joy from being close to God and praising Him.

[9 : 27] Think about the blessing that we felt as we sang to the Lord this morning. That's ashray.

So, what's held out to us from the beginning of this Psalm, what's proclaimed to us, what's promised to us, is blessing.

Full-orbed, deep, abiding happiness. Joy. Joy. Peace. Closeness. To God.

So, how can we be this deeply happy? This joy for this close to the Lord? For our transgression must be forgiven.

So, in thinking about this blessing, let's first consider the relief that David felt in experiencing God's forgiveness.

Remember that God is a holy God. Pure and upright.

[10 : 31] Cut above His creation. Loving, good, and fiercely hating evil.

So, when we read, Asherah, Nesui, Peshach, Kesui, Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven. Words like, Overflowing, Uncontainable, Exuberant joy, Hardly begin to scratch the surface Of what David is experiencing in this psalm, Especially in verse 1.

David had felt, He had felt, His experience of forgiveness. And he had felt, Before the experience of forgiveness, His alienation from God.

God's grieving, Over his sin. And God's fatherly, Discipline. So David felt the relief of forgiveness, The peace, The exuberant joy of a restored relationship with God.

Knowing that the almighty, Holy God of the universe Had forgiven his sin, Had covered his sin, Counts no iniquity against him.

[11 : 54] So Asherah, Asherah, What blessing? A blessing that encompasses closeness to the Lord, A God in whose presence is fullness of joy, And at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore.

So that's the initial experience of blessing That David is expressing in verses 1 and 2. Let's dive a little deeper into the word forgiveness. Forgiveness.

Forgiveness. So the Hebrew for the word forgiven, In Psalm 32 is nasha. Nasha. And it speaks of more than just forgiveness.

It speaks of lifted, Carried, Borne, And forgiven. Nasha is the same Hebrew word That's used in Isaiah 53.12.

When the prophet writes That the suffering servant Bore the sins Of many. The sin that David is singing about In Psalm 32 Is forgiven.

[13 : 07] But there's so much more meaning To this word forgiven. The sin has been lifted Off of him. Has been carried By another. Borne By another.

So he could be Forgiven. And as Isaiah 53 Is such a vivid Prophecy Of our Lord Jesus. Isaiah is referring Back to this language Of Psalm 32 In his prophecy And he's foretelling That Jesus He's connecting That Jesus God's suffering servant Will procure the forgiveness Of our sin By bearing it For By bearing it By Himself For us By lifting it Himself From us By carrying it On Himself Blessed Is the one Whose transgression Is forgiven Blessed Is the man Whose sin Has been carried By Christ Just think about it Jesus Carrying our cross On his back On the way To Gogatha Christ Bearing Our sin As he hangs On the cross Extended between Heaven and earth Carrying Our sin Christ Lifting the sin Off of our hearts And souls And minds And placing it on Himself I think This gives Fresh New Fuller meaning To blessed Is the one Whose transgression Is Forgiven Truly This is a Blessed Forgiveness Alright So if this is such a Glorious Blessed Forgiveness How can we be Forgiven How can we be Forgiven So The path To Forgiveness The path To forgiveness The psalm 32 Gives a vivid Account of how Someone walks The path To an experience

Of God's Forgiveness First How was David Behaving Before his Experience of Forgiveness Well he was Being Deceptive Look at Verses 2 And 3 David recounts The blessing Of having No deceit Before the Lord But later He talks About how Unlike that He kept Silent At first David Didn't Acknowledge His sin Clearly David Experienced The discipline Of the Lord For having A deceptive Spirit So what is Deceit What's a Deceptive Spirit David Was most Likely Parading around Throughout Israel As king Showing an Outward Display Of righteousness Of concealing Unconfessed

Sin Think about it It's Memorial Day weekend And there are Barbecues And hamburgers And hot dogs And Even parades Even parades Just imagine If you went To a Memorial Day parade And you saw A guy Leading the Parade You know He's walking Around He's pumping The baton He's leading The parade As if he's Some patriot As if he loves Our country But imagine If this guy Were really A traitor A spy For another Country But didn't Really love Our country Love America That would Be deceit That would Be a deceptive Spirit That's What David Was like David Was walking Around As king Of Israel As if he's Some godly Guy When he had Unconfessed

[17 : 22] Sin So look at Verse 3 David Kept silent He was not In a place Of admitting His sin Of being Bare Before The Lord David was Hiding his Sin Before the Lord He was Forgetting Or denying The fact That he lives All of his Life Hiram Deo In the face Of God He was Forgetting That dark Is his light To the Lord That David Can go Nowhere Without the Lord Knowing That he Can do Nothing Without the Almighty Lord of Hosts Being Mindful Of him David Was hiding His sin From God Or Trying to But God Was being Kind To David God was Being merciful To David How so?

Look at Verses Three And Four David Kept Silent While his Bones Wasted Away While he Groaned All day Long Surely God's Hand Was heavy Upon David And David's Strength Was dried Up As by The Heat Of Summer And This Is God's Mercy How How can God's Mercy Be about Wasting Away And groaning In a Heavy Hand What led David Back To God It Prompted David It led David It Inclined David To say Enough I can't Take it Anymore Lord I need Your Forgiveness And so As recounted In verse 5 David Acknowledged The sins Of the Lord He did Not Cover His Iniquity He Confesses His Transgression

To God So this Begs The question What is Confession What is Confession Let's linger On that For a Moment Confession Of sin Is exactly As the Psalm Recounts It's An Acknowledgement Of sin It's An Uncovering Of your Soul Before The Lord It's A Verbal Acknowledgement Of sin But it's Not just A verbal Statement It's A Hatred For that Sin A Revulsion For it Let's Hear what Thomas Watson Has to say About this Watson Says Confession Must be Sincere Our hearts Must go Along With our Confessions The hypocrite Confesses Sin But Loves It Like a Thief Who Confesses To Stolen Goods Yet Loves Stealing How many Confess Pride And Covetousness With Their Lips But Roll

Them As Honey Under Their Tongue Augustine Said That Before His Conversion He Confessed Sin And Begged Power Against It But His Heart Whispered Within Him Not Yet Lord He Was Afraid To Leave His Sin Too Soon A good Christian Is more Honest His Heart Keeps Pace With His Tongue He's Convinced Of The Sins He Confesses And Abhors The Sins He Is Convinced Of His Application This Morning Do You Feel God's Hand Heavy Upon You This Morning Do You Have Any Unconfessed Sin Are Your Bones Wasting Away You're Growing All Day Long Or As I'm Speaking At Least Is Your Conscience Pricked Are You Squirming In Your Seat A Little Bit Or Trying Not To I've Got Good News For You I've Got Bad News For You First If You're A Christian And You're Justified Before The Lord Because You're In Christ But You Have Unconfessed Sin Well There's A Distance Between You And God Not A Legal Separation But A Separation In Fellowship A Break In Friendship Attention In Relationship You Know It Your Soul Know It Your Heart Knows It And So You Squirm A Little Bit The Good News Though Is Coming Let's Look at The rest Of Verse Five You Forgave Wise!

[22 : 16] Wise David here is recounting the effect of his confession, the relational restoration that comes to those who confess their sins to the Lord, admitting it, hating it.

God forgives the iniquity of David's sin, and God can forgive the iniquity of our sin as well. How so? Well, remember.

Remember that Jesus has carried our sin, has borne our sin, has lifted our sin all to himself and off of ourselves. And so as we confess our sin to the Lord and trust in Christ, God justly forgives the iniquity of our sin.

So this morning, do you have any unconfessed sin? Is your conscience bothering a little bit? Are you seeking to hide or ignore or suppress it?

Or even live in a sin before the face of God? Well, God sees it. God cares about it for his glory and for our joy.

[23 : 32] And God is calling you today to confess it, to acknowledge it, to be repulsed by it, and to turn from it. So confess your sins to the Lord.

He is good and forgiving. And that is the path to forgiveness. So God will forgive our sin as we confess it to him.

When should we confess it to him? How quickly, how rapidly, how immediately should we confess our sin? Our next point, look at verse 6, is confess your sins now.

Confess your sins now. Let's look at verse 6. Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found. This verse is expressing a number of thoughts.

And if you're hearing my voice today, you can confess your sins to the Lord. Now is the time for confession. We must not take tomorrow, or next week, or even the next five minutes for granted.

[24 : 44] Our lives are a vapor. And God can surely do whatever he wants to do. God can close the book of your life now.

How many heartbeats do you have left? God knows, and you don't. So confess your sins to the Lord now.

And David gives us a wonderfully powerful image to impress upon us the importance of waiting no time to confess our sins to the Lord.

Check out verses 6 and 7. It says, 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. Sell them. So as you read about the rush of great waters, what do you think of?

[25 : 55] There's a lot of images in the Bible about water. One of which we can think of is Noah and the flood. Think about it.

God held up mercy. God held up mercy to the people of Noah's day for a hundred years as Noah built the ark and prophesied to the people with a clear picture that judgment was coming for a hundred years.

And literally, no one else other than Noah and his family listened to the Lord. the door to the ark, the door of salvation, it was open until it was shut.

The earth was not flooded and overflow of many waters did not come until it did. The rush of great waters did not reach Noah and we should learn from his example.

He obeyed God. He trusted God and God saved Noah and his family.

[27 : 16] So hear the voice of the Lord this morning. Repent and confess your sins to the Lord. Trust in Christ.

As Jim Hamilton so powerfully writes, prayer can be made. sin can be confessed. Forgiveness can be experienced. But once the door of the ark is closed, no more opportunity remains. God will preserve you from trouble. God will be a hiding place, an ark of salvation for you. And he will surround you with shouts of deliverance, but you must confess your sins and repent of your sins and trust in him.

So confess your sins to him now. Which brings us to our next point. Counsel from the Lord. Counsel from the Lord.

So let's look at verses 8 and 9. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

[28 : 27] Be not like a horse or a mule without understanding or just be curbed with bit and bridle or will not stay near you. So a few observations from this section of the psalm.

God will teach us. God will instruct us in the way we should go. He is willing to teach us. He's eager to teach us. And he'll do so in the most personal of ways with his eye upon us. So do you ever wonder do you ever wonder if God sees and knows and cares about you personally? No doubt no more.

God sees you personally. God cares about you personally. God knows you and God will be your tutor.

[29 : 32] Think about it. I had a wonderful AP English teacher at 12th grade Miss Biello. Miss Biello and she would teach me how do you structure your five paragraph essay? What do you put in your thesis statement?

How much detail should you use to support your thesis? Things like that. And Miss Biello she'd meet me in the English office at like 7am before school started and she would tutor me personally specifically.

She would spend time with me and counsel me personally. I've never had a teacher like that. Spend time with you personally. Well God will teach us personally.

He will tutor us. He'll instruct us as we draw near to him in the Bible and in prayer and in community. And then second, God wants us to stay near to him. God doesn't want us to be like a horse or a mule that needs a bitter bridle to stay close to him.

[30 : 45] He wants us to stay near to him to experience that! That full orb'd happy joy peace shalom that closeness to him. And God's counsel will help us to do that.

So let's listen to him. Let's listen to him. Which leads to our last point. Our choices outcome. Our choices outcome.

David in Psalm 32 holds before us a choice and really two paths. That of the wicked and that of the righteous.

First, the wicked. Those who don't trust in the Lord. What is their fate? Their fate is sorrow. Think about it for a minute.

Consider the outcome of the wicked. Have you ever felt sorrow? sorrow. There have been a few times in my life where I felt real sorrow.

[31 : 57] When I put my dogs down. If you had a dog, you know what that's like. When my grandmother passed away. When relationships have crumbled and I was utterly alone.

sorrow, deep, true sorrow, it feels like a loss, black and dark.

It feels heavy. It feels like all the hope of the universe has been sucked from your veins. And that is only my weak attempt to try to capture the sorrows, plural, of the wicked.

Jesus spoke of it this way many times, weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you ever wept? Have you ever really wept? Those who have not confessed and forsaken your sin and turn to Christ.

[33 : 18] Just hear these words and know what faith awaits you. And then contrast it with the joy of the righteous.

Just look at verses 10 and 11. Steadfast love surrounding us, gladness, rejoicing, shouting for joy. Truly, this is an explosion of joy.

I got to go on a cruise last May. It was amazing, a wonderful time. 19 of us was my family, my stepfather turned 80, so he took us all on a cruise. It was awesome. And the last night of the cruise, there was a fireworks display.

It's like the only boat in the Caribbean that is allowed to shoot off fireworks. and it was awesome. The explosions, it was just explosion after explosion of burning, vivid color in the sky, exuberant, vibrant explosions of fireworks.

And those fireworks and that display of joy, it was really nothing compared to the overwhelming overpowering, overflowing, limitless joy that awaits the righteous when we meet Christ.

[34 : 46] When we see him and bow down before him and lay our crowns before him and celebrate before his throne. What hope, what peace, what joy, what explosions of blessing, of asherah, that we will experience as we finally are with the Lord and with the Lord all together.

Hear these words afresh. Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

be glad in the Lord and rejoice so righteous and shout for joy all you upright in heart. Our hearts will nearly burst.

That is the joy that awaits us that we can taste and measure now. to trust in the Lord.

Confess your sin, repent of it, and experience the forgiveness of a holy, happy God. God. That's pretty good stuff, but that is not the end.

[36 : 15] Rather, as our sermon series theme suggests, that is just the beginning. For as we trust in the Lord and resolve the guilt of our sin before him, as we rule and seduce our soul's greatest foe, sin and guilt, we'll be free, to then go and spread this joy to others, ruling and subduing outside of ourselves.

Free from sin, free from guilt, reconciled to God, we can now go and love.

And what do we need? The cords of sin and guilt and selfishness have been broken all from us.

And how we can go to our spouses, to our children, to our extended families, to our workplaces, to our community, to the ends of the earth, and spread this message of forgiveness, this message of freedom, this message of joy.

We can live in the good of this blessedness. God will draw others to wonder, what is up with this guy?

What's up with this lady? What's up with this kid? Why are they so different? Why are they so steady? Why are they so joyful?

[37 : 49] Why do they worry like me? Why do they seem to be so free? Why do they get hot and bothered when other people attack them? what explains this?

What explains this, our ability to honor and rule and subdue this world for the Lord is the fact that God has forgiven us.

God has blessed us in blessing beyond measure that God is close to us, near us, with us, even in us.

And so, linger. Every day, linger on your forgiveness. Rejoice that God has saved you, that your name is written in the book of life, that all your sins are washed away.

Linger on that. Let that weigh on your mind more than anything else. When you sin, confess it freely to the Lord.

[39 : 06] Be revolted by it and trust that in Christ God forgives you. Stay close to God in the word and prayer and Christian community as much as you can and walk!

And walk with him throughout your days. And so experience, experience the joy of God, the joy of a holy, happy, glorious, heavenly father.

and then go and rule and subdue and spread this blessing as Isaac Watts put it, as far as the curse is found.

Let's pray. Amen. Dear God, we praise you as you are holy and righteous and that you are also forgiving.

And we thank you that you sent Jesus to be our substitute, to be our surety so that we could be forgiven of our sins and reconciled to you.

[40 : 28] Thank you for that relief. Thank you for that joy. Lord, every day, would you awaken us to the glory of that reality more and more.

Help us to know the joy of our forgiveness every day more and more. We thank you that we can even take communion now in light of it and then sing to you.

So we pray your Holy Spirit would just bless the rest of our time. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. For communion this morning we have a wonderful picture, a wonderful reminder of the forgiveness that we enjoy in Christ.

This bread, as we know, symbolizes the body that was broken for us so we could be forgiven and healed and blessed.

And this wine, it symbolizes the blood that was spilled so we could be washed clean from the penalty and power of sin.

[41 : 39] So come this morning and celebrate. Celebrate our forgiveness that Christ has secured for us. Let's remember his sacrifice, proclaim his death, forgiveness, and experience his forgiveness.

And let's taste the blessedness that we live within each and every day. Come, take the elements, then I'll lead us in enjoying them together.
together.