

God's Forgiveness  
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Psalm 32:1-11

Opening: As we look at Psalm 32, let me tease you with the three thoughts: Clean closets, faraway places, and deep waters. I will explain all three as we work our way through the first eleven verses of this passage. Speaking of "clean closets." Have you experienced the task of cleaning out the home of parents or grandparents? Why is it hard? What words come to mind? [Illustration: Throwing boxes down the basement stairs]. What about our own stuff? Why do we off cleaning it up? [Swedish "death cleaning."]

The point: Use your imagination. What if one day you opened the door to the storage unit, garage, or attic and found that someone had cleaned it out leaving a note: "I took care of this for you!" How would you feel? Now, imagine you had a closet for unconfessed sins. When you missed God's mark you just opened the door, tossed in that sin, and said, "*I'll deal with that later.*" Over time that closet would be cluttered with things you would avoid confronting. Imagine that one day you opened the door for a look and the closet was totally clean with a note reading, "*I took care of all this for you.*" Psalm 32 teaches us those imaginary thoughts are NOT so imaginary.

- Psalm 32 is a natural follow up to what we learned in Psalm 38. Let's review.
- Sin means falling short of God's perfect standard, "missing the mark".
- There are three related biblical terms:
  - Sin (failing God's standard, whether intentional or not),
  - Transgression (willfully crossing God's boundaries), and
  - Iniquity (deep moral corruption with lasting effects)
- Everyone sins (Rom. 3:23) but because God is holy, He can't tolerate sin or anything that is morally impure; His perfect holiness demands justice and righteousness. A price had to be paid for man's sin (Rom. 6:23).
- Jesus, God's sinless Son, paid the price with His death on a Roman cross.

- Psalm 32 was written as a hymn so let's look at it in stanzas.
- The first stanza – The joy of forgiveness

**1** Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! **2** Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!

- "*Joy for those...whose sin is put out of sight!*" When someone decides to run for political office what is the first thing their opponents and the media try to find out?
- The Apostle Paul quoted these verses in **Romans 4:7–8 (NLT)** — **7** "Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. **8** Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin."

- This is the promise of salvation. Last week we quoted **Romans 8:1 (NLT) — 1** ... there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. [Who are saved]
- Before we can rejoice in that reality, we need to understand that we humans are stubborn. Beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden, we don't want to be told we messed up, so we toss our sin in the closet thinking, "*I'll deal with it later!*"
- That is what David described in the second stanza:

**3** When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long.

**4** Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Interlude **5** Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. [THAT is a clean closet!]

- If all my guilt is gone, where did it go? Scripture paints a dramatic picture of that:
- **Psalms 103:12 (NLT) — 12** "He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west." What does that mean?
- Unlike north and south, which meet at the poles, east and west never meet or intersect; you can travel east endlessly and never meet the west.
- Practically, it means, if someone wants to bring up my sins Jesus died for and I have confessed, I can say, "*What sins? Good luck trying to find them! You won't!*"

- How can I enjoy those clean closets and faraway places? Stanza three:

**6** Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment. **7** For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.

- What vivid imagery: "...pray [to God, for salvation] and "*not drown in the floodwaters of judgment.*" David wrote in **Psalms 18:16 (NLT) — 16** He reached down from heaven and rescued me; he drew me out of deep waters.
- When we refer to Jesus as Savior it is a picture of our rescue from the deep waters of sin. "Whew! I'm in the boat but what happened to all that sin?"
- **Micah 7:18–19 (NLT) — 18** Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of his special people? You will not stay angry with your people forever, because you delight in showing unfailing love. **19** Once again you will have compassion on us. You will trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean! [Deep waters!]
- Corrie Ten Boom wrote, "*God buries our sins in the depths of the sea and then puts up a sign that reads, "No fishing."*" [Good luck finding my sins down there!]

- Stanza four: God's instruction and warning.

**8** The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. **9** Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."

- To quote Bing Crosby from our grandparents' generation: "*Would you like to swing on a star, Carry moonbeams home in a jar, And be better off than you are Or would you rather be a mule?*" [Pretty obvious choice, huh?]

- Stanza five: Praise the Lord, I'm forgiven and FREE! That brings JOY!

**10** Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord. **11** So rejoice in the Lord and be glad, all you who obey him! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!

- How can I have a “pure heart?” In Psalm 51 David begged God: *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”* (Ps..51:10)
- Jesus said *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”* (Matt.5:8)
- God promised Israel in **Ezekiel 36:25–27 (ESV)** — **25** I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. **26** And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **27** And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.
- That promise was not only for Old Testament Israel, but for mankind today.
- Because Jesus died to pay for my sin, He will take my sinful heart and make it pure. He is the only One who can do that.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- Clean closets, faraway places, and deep waters. That is how our Heavenly Father deals with our sin if we will trust in Son, Jesus Christ.
- There is an expression people sometimes use when they are grateful. They will say, *“I will be eternally grateful”* or *“I will be forever thankful.”*
- The truth is the only One to whom we CAN be “eternally grateful” is Jesus.
- When we thank God for our blessings, salvation in Christ should be #1!
- As that famous verse about confession, repentance, and forgiveness promises: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:9)
- He will throw our sin as far away as the east is from the west!
- He will cast our sin into the depths of the sea and post a “no fishing” sign!
- His forgiveness means when we look into our imaginary closet of unconfessed sin, we will find it cleaned out with a note: *“I took care of all this for you on the cross.”*
- *“Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!...for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt...”*
- THAT is something to REJOICE about!

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<sup>i</sup> <https://quotefancy.com/quote/789887/Corrie-ten-Boom-God-buries-our-sins-in-the-depths-of-the-sea-and-then-puts-up-a-sign-that>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swinging\\_on\\_a\\_Star](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swinging_on_a_Star)