

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2022

PSALMS OF LAMENT

PSALM 32

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO HIDE SOMETHING? I REMEMBER HIDING EASTER EGGS IN THE YARD, AND TRYING TO REMEMBER WHERE EACH ONE WAS, SO THAT WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY "STINKERS" COME JUNE OR JULY. AND HIDING CHRISTMAS PRESENTS SO THE GIRLS WOULDN'T BE TEMPTED TO "PEEK"? I CAN REMEMBER ONE YEAR HIDING SOMETHING SO WELL, THAT I COULDN'T FIND IT. ABOUT TWO YEARS LATER, AS I WAS CLEANING OUT THE GUEST ROOM CLOSET, THERE IT WAS, HIDDEN BEHIND A BIN OF CLOTHING THE KIDS HAD OUTGROWN.

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO HIDE SOMETHING FROM GOD? IF YOU LOOK THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES, YOU WILL FIND YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN THAT REGARD. RIGHT FROM THE START, ADAM AND EVE TRIED TO HIDE FROM GOD, TO COVER THEIR SIN SO HE WOULDN'T NOTICE. THINK ABOUT IT FOR A MINUTE – THEY WALKED IN THIS BEAUTIFUL PLACE THAT GOD HAD PROVIDED FOR THEM DAY AFTER DAY. THEY WERE NAKED EVERY SINGLE DAY AND DIDN'T THINK ANYTHING OF IT. BUT THE MINUTE THEY SINNED AGAINST GOD, THEY COULDN'T STAND BEING SEEN, AND SO THEY COVERED THEIR NAKEDNESS, AND HID FROM GOD. WHEN GOD GOES LOOKING FOR THEM, THEY SAY, "I WAS AFRAID, BECAUSE I WAS NAKED, AND I HID MYSELF." GOD COULD HAVE SAID, "EVERY NIGHT YOU ARE NAKED. IF YOU'RE HIDING BECAUSE YOU ARE NAKED, WHY HAVEN'T YOU HIDDEN BEFORE?" INSTEAD, GOD ASKS "WHO TOLD YOU THAT YOU WERE NAKED?" GOD WAS THE ONE WHO HAD COVERED THEM WITH HIS PROTECTION AND BLESSING. BUT WHEN THEY SINNED, THEY TOOK ON THE TASK OF COVERING THEMSELVES. WHAT GOD WANTS FROM THEM IS THEIR WILLINGNESS TO BE NAKED AGAIN – TO BE VULNERABLE AND TRUST THAT HE WILL PROVIDE – TO SHOW HIM THEIR SIN AND HE WILL COVER THEM ONCE AGAIN WITH HIS LOVE.

PSALM 32 DEALS WITH THIS VERY THING, BECAUSE IT SPEAKS TO OUR INCLINATION TO COVER OUR SINS, TO HIDE THEM FROM GOD, AND HOW GOD IS THE ONE WHO OFFERS TO HIDE OUR SINS FROM US. THE PSALM BEGINS BY TALKING ABOUT THE BLESSINGS WE EXPERIENCE WHEN GOD COVERS OUR SIN. IT THEN SPEAKS TO THE BURDENS WE BEAR WHEN WE TRY TO COVER OUR SINS, AND FINALLY, IT SPEAKS TO THE BENEFITS WE RECEIVE WHEN WE TAKE COVER IN GOD.

THE PSALM STARTS OUT IN VERSES 1 AND 2, “BLESSED IS THE ONE WHOSE TRANSGRESSIONS ARE COVERED. BLESSED IS THE ONE WHOSE SIN THE LORD DOES NOT COUNT AGAINST THEM AND IN WHOSE SPIRIT IS NO DECEIT.” THIS IS THE STATE WE ALL DESIRE DEEP IN OUR HEARTS – TO HAVE A CLEAN SLATE AND A CLEAN HEART.

THIS IS WHAT UNCOVERING OUR SIN IS ALL ABOUT – TO BE FREE FROM THE PAST – TO HAVE A CLEAN SLATE. WE HAVE ALL MADE MISTAKES IN OUR LIVES, AND SOMETIMES THOSE MISTAKES FOLLOW US AROUND AND CLING TO US, WEIGHING US DOWN AND HOLDING US BACK. IT’S CALLED GUILT. AND SOME OF US CARRY GUILT LIKE A PRIZED POSSESSION. WOULDN’T IT BE WONDERFUL TO BE UNBURDENED FROM THAT? “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE TRANSGRESSIONS ARE FORGIVEN.” DAVID SAYS. THAT WORD FOR FORGIVEN LITERALLY MEANS LIFTED UP AND CARRIED AWAY. IN FORGIVENESS, GOD PICKS UP ALL YOUR SINS AND CARRIES THEM FAR AWAY FROM YOU. “ BLESSED ARE YOU WHOSE SINS ARE COVERED,” DAVID SAYS. THAT WORD FOR COVERED MEANS CONCEALED, HIDDEN FROM SIGHT.

SO DAVID IS TELLING US THAT OUR SIN IS BEING TAKEN FAR AWAY FROM US IN FORGIVENESS, AND THE RECORD OF OUR SIN IS BLOTTED OUT AND HIDDEN FROM SIGHT.

HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN? IT’S SIMPLE – GOD SENT HIS SON JESUS TO DIE ON THE CROSS FOR OUR SINS. JESUS TOOK UP OUR SINS AND CARRIED THEM FAR AWAY. HE BORE OUR SINS ON THE CROSS, SO THAT WE MIGHT DIE TO SIN AND LIVE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. HIS BLOOD COVERS OUR SIN AND THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST, WE KNOW THE BLESSING OF A CLEAN HEART.

PROBLEM IS, THAT TOO MANY OF US WALK AROUND WITH HEARTS THAT WEIGH HEAVY UPON US. OUR CONSCIENCE CONDEMNS US, WE FEEL ANYTHING BUT CLEAN. BUT WHEN WE FULLY LAY OUT OUR HEART BEFORE GOD, THERE IS NO MORE DECEIT, NO MORE HIDING, NO MORE COVER-UP. WHEN WE OPEN OUR HEART, MAKING OURSELVES COMPLETELY VULNERABLE BEFORE GOD, GOD SAYS, “I BRING NO CHARGE AGAINST YOU. I LAY NO SIN TO YOUR ACCOUNT. YOU ARE FORGIVEN. YOU ARE FREE.”

I LOVE THAT DAVID SPEAKS **FIRST** OF THE BLESSINGS WE EXPERIENCE WHEN WE SEEK GOD’S FORGIVENESS. HE DOES THIS **BEFORE** HE SPEAKS TO THE BURDENS WE BEAR WHEN WE ATTEMPT TO COVER OUR SIN.

IN VERSES 3-5, NOW DAVID SPEAKS ABOUT THE BURDENS OF COVERING UP SIN, AND HE DOES SO BY WAY OF HIS OWN PERSONAL TESTIMONY. HE GETS PERSONAL HERE AND SHARES HIS OWN EXPERIENCE OF TRYING TO COVER UP SIN.

“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 SAPPED AS IN THE HEAT OF SUMMER. THEN I ACKNOWLEDGED MY SIN TO YOU AND DID NOT COVER UP MY INIQUITY. I SAID, “I WILL CONFESS MY TRANSGRESSIONS TO THE LORD” AND YOU FORGAVE THE GUILT OF MY SIN.”

DAVID WAS CARRYING AROUND THE BURDEN OF TRYING TO COVER UP HIS OWN SIN, OF ALL THE AFTERMATH OF NOT ONLY HIS SIN WITH BATHSHEBA, BUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT AS WELL. FIRST, HE TELLS OF A TIME HE KEPT SILENT BEFORE THE LORD, OF WITHHOLDING HIS CONFESSION OF SIN TO GOD.

AND DON'T WE DO THE SAME – HOLD BACK FROM CONFESSING OUR SIN. PERHAPS IT'S PRIDE – WE SIMPLY DON'T WANT TO ADMIT WE ARE WRONG. PERHAPS DESPAIR KEEPS US SILENT – BEING SO OVERCOME WITH GUILT THAT WE DON'T BELIEVE GOD COULD POSSIBLY FORGIVE US.

DAVID CALLS THIS PERIOD OF SILENCE A WASTEFUL TIME. SEE, UNCONFESSED SIN HAS A CRIPPLING EFFECT ON YOUR LIFE. IT WILL WASTE AWAY YOUR ENERGY PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY. IT WILL COMPLETELY DRAG YOU DOWN.

HE ALSO SPEAKS OF THE WEARINESS OF GUILT. DAY AND NIGHT GOD'S HAND WAS HEAVY UPON HIM – HIS STRENGTH IS SAPPED. GOD IS CONVICTING DAVID OF HIS SIN, AND THE HAND OF CONVICTION IS HEAVY.

SEE, GOD LOVES US TOO MUCH TO LET US CONTINUE IN SIN. HIS SPIRIT CONVICTS US, HE REMINDS US OF HIS LOVE, HE DISCIPLINES US WHEN HE MUST, AND THEN HE DRAWS US BACK TO HIMSELF. IF WE RESPOND QUICKLY, WE REST IN JOY. BUT WHEN WE RESIST GOD'S SPIRIT, WE ARE MISERABLE. AND HERE, DAVID WAS VERY MISERABLE. WASTING AWAY IN SILENCE, WEARY FROM GUILT.

IN VERSE 5 DAVID CONFESSES HIS TRANSGRESSIONS TO THE LORD AND MOVES FROM THE WASTE OF SILENCE AND THE WEARINESS OF GUILT TO THE WONDER OF CONFESSION. HE FINALLY OPENS UP, CONFESSES HIS SIN TO GOD, AND EXPERIENCES THE SWEET RELIEF OF

FORGIVENESS.DAVID DISCOVERED THAT HE COULD NO LONGER COVER HIS SINS. IT WAS SOUL CRUSHING.

THERE WAS THIS CONTRACTOR WHO WAS VISITING A COMPANY AND WAS ABOUT TO MAKE A BID ON A PROJECT. THE EXECUTIVE HE WAS SPEAKING WITH EXCUSED HIMSELF FROM THE ROOM FOR A FEW MINUTES AND WHILE HE WAS GONE, THE CONTRACTOR NOTICED THAT ON HIS DESK WAS A COMPETITOR'S BID SHEET. THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS THAT THE ACTUAL BID AMOUNT WAS COVERED BY THIS LARGE CAN ON THE DESK. THE CONTRACTOR THOUGHT ABOUT IF FOR A BIT, AND THEN HE TOOK THE BAIT. HE LIFTED THE CAN TO SEE THE COMPETING BID. AND WHEN HE LIFTED THE CAN, HUNDREDS OF TINY BALL BEARINGS BEGAN POURING OUT FROM THE OPEN BOTTOM OF THE CAN, AND HE WATCHED IN DISMAY AS THE TINY BEEDS CASCADED ALL OVER THE DESK AND FLOOR. AND JUST AT THAT MOMENT THE EXECUTIVE RETURNED TO THE ROOM AND THE CONTRACTOR WAS BUSTED.

YOU AND I CAN NO MORE COVER UP OUR OWN SINS THAN THAT CONTRACTOR COULD HOPE TO GET ALL THE BALL BEARINGS BACK IN THE CAN BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE RETURNED. COVERING OUR SIN IS BEYOND OUR OWN POWER OR ABILITY. WE WILL EVENTUALLY BE FOUND OUT.

IN THE NEXT FEW VERSES, DAVID MOVES FROM HIS PERSONAL TESTIMONY TO URGING US TO DO THE SAME.

AND NOTICE HIS EXHORTATION IS DIRECTED TO THE GODLY – THE HEBREW IS HASID, REFERRING TO THE SAINTS, THE HOLY ONES, THOSE PEOPLE BELONGING TO GOD. IT IS THEY WHO CONFESS THEIR SIN TO GOD AND CRY OUT FOR DELIVERANCE. HE REMINDS US THAT GOD WILL NOT ONLY COVER UP OUR SINS, BUT WILL COVER US AS WELL, SURROUNDING US WITH HIS PROTECTIVE CARE.

IN VERSES 8-10, WHEN WE MAKE GOD OUR HIDING PLACE, AND LET HIM COVER US, HE WILL SURROUND US WITH HIS UNFAILING LOVE. HE WILL TEACH US, NOT WITH BIT AND BRIDLE USED FOR STUBBORN HORSE OR MULE. BUT WITH HIS UNFAILING LOVE.

VERSE 11 – REJOICE IN THE LORD AND BE GLAD – BECAUSE YOU HAVE A CLEAN HEART – THE SLATE HAS BEEN WIPED CLEAN, NO MORE WEARINESS OF GUILT AND SHAME. WHEN WE CONFESS OUR SIN, WE MOVE FROM “UNDER GOD’S HAND OF DISCIPLINE” TO “IN HIS HANDS” OF LOVE AND PROTECTION. FORGIVENESS IS FOUND IN JESUS CHRIST ALONE. BLESSED ARE WE WHOSE SINS ARE COVERED – IN JESUS CHRIST. AMEN.

IF YOU SO DESIRE, AFTER THE SERVICE, PASTOR SETH AND I WILL BE IN OUR RESPECTIVE OFFICES FOR ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE PRIVATE CONFESSION.