

A New Year of Forgiveness

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INI - SDG

Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. ² Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Happy is the man who has a warm coat and hot beverage. Considering the weather outside, such a phrase would not normally surprise you. However, if we were on a Caribbean beach, or if it were the middle of August, such a phrase probably would surprise you very much.

If I were to say such a thing to you in 90-degree weather, and if you stopped to think about it, you might realize that there are two possibilities. 1. I'm nuts. 2. I know something you don't.

Similarly, our text this evening presents us with two possibilities. 1. King David is nuts. 2. David knows something that we do not.

Just as a warm coat is only a blessing in winter, so also the covering of sins is only a blessing to those who live in sin. When David says, "blessed is he whose sin is covered," it is clear that David is implying that all people are sinners. Yet it is easier to convince a man on a Caribbean beach that he needs a coat, than it is to convince a man that he needs his sins covered up.

We are all sinners. This is a great mystery, and by mystery we mean a truth which the scriptures reveal but which we would never understand otherwise.

This is a truth which we know in our intellect but which we do not believe in our hearts. We look around at the world around us and think: "These people are not that bad. I'm not that bad."

This is because there is a lie which sits in our hearts, which we do not even know is there. This lie blinds us to the truth of our condition.

David speaks of this lie in verse two when he says, "blessed is the man in whose spirit there is no deceit."

He does not speak of deceit in the mouth or in the mind. We often purposely deceive one another with what we say and what we think. This deceit is in the soul, or we might say in the heart. It is at the very foundation of our being. It is a deceit that we would not even suspect unless God had revealed it.

Have you ever finished washing dishes and drained the water, only to find that you weren't done after all. There was a spoon or fork or something else hiding in the dirty water. It wasn't revealed until the water was drained.

So too the truth of our sinfulness is hidden from our sight until God reveals it to us. In our hearts instead of the truth is this lie that I'm not such a bad person.

This lie causes all kinds of problems in our life. This lie stops us from truly appreciating all that Christ has done for us. This lie leads us to believe that there must be something wrong with God's word. How can God condemn unbelievers? They aren't really very bad people. This lie leads us to believe that we deserve to be treated better. This lie leads us to think the problem isn't me, but everyone else.

David knew the truth of this lie better than most. Knowing this David wrote, "blessed is the man in whose spirit there is no deceit." That is to say when God removes this lie from our hearts, he has given us a great gift.

But first David says, "blessed is the man whose sin is covered." How can we possibly face the truth of our ugliness unless we are first reassured of God's forgiveness and love. Although there is a lie in our hearts there is greater grace from God upon our lives.

The year behind us is a year full of sin, but it is also a year full of God's grace and forgiveness. The year ahead of us will likewise be a year full of sin but also full of God's grace and forgiveness. For this reason, the year behind and ahead are years of great blessing, because our sin is covered in the blood of Jesus. Our relationship with God would be impossible except that God daily and richly "forgives me and all believers." As the prophet said, "God's mercies are new every morning." With each raising of the sun, comes fresh forgiveness from God.

His willingness to forgive us is the only thing that makes a relationship with God possible, so also our willingness to forgive one another is the only thing that makes our relationships possible. David is speaking of God's forgiveness, but one could apply the same principle to human relationships.

Blessed is the man whose sin is covered. That is happy is the person whose spouse/family/friends is willing to forgive.

People always want to know what makes a marriage successful. The answer is simple. The willingness to forgive is what makes a marriage work. Granted sometimes people need a lot of help and a lot of work to forgive, but it is that willingness to forgive that makes the difference.

It is easy to look at other people, and think they have such a good marriage. If only I had a spouse like that. The truth is that the only real difference is a willingness to forgive. Be forgiving and be forgiven and you will have a happy marriage.

At the heart of the problem is that same lie which insists that I'm not the problem they are. Why should I forgive them, they need to change. Such an attitude will never produce happy fruitful relationships.

I speak here mostly about marriage but the same is true about any relationship. Blessed is the one whose child, parents, friends, or family is quick to forgive. Such a one is truly blessed. Blessed is the one who is quick to forgive, such a one is a blessing to others.

If you make a New Years resolution this year, let it be this: "Lord, help me to be more forgiving."

We are truly blessed because God gave his only Son to die for us, through that death he has covered over the sins of the year that is past and the sins of the year that is to come. Rejoicing in that gift let us learn to be as forgiving towards one another. In so doing we will receive deep and meaningful relationships both with God and with one another. Amen.