

Psalm 32:1

- Blessed is he

whose transgressions are forgiven -

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Introduction

- ❖ Psalm 32 is about the restored communion of the sinner with God. Communion with God is the highest attainable for humans. It is a gift by grace.
- ❖ It is a blessing when a believer can acknowledge his sins. He is blessed because the Lord forgives, no doubt about that, and declares the sinner righteous before him. This is only by grace, and not by merit.
- ❖ Psalm 32 teaches wisdom. This wisdom is based on personal experience. The writer is honest about himself, and his stubbornness to acknowledge his transgressions. But the Lord is (gently) forcing him to do so, not by punishment, but by inner feelings of guilt, depressions, and by losing strength. He reveals the joy of salvation and peace with God. And he encourages every believer to do the same.
- ❖ Only after the true forgiveness, the believer will be able to listen and long for the instruction given by the Lord.
- ❖ The Psalm is also quoted by the apostle Paul discussing the righteousness in Romans 4. It was a favourite of Augustine and Martin Luther.
 - Augustin begins his homily on Psalm 32: “This is a psalm about God’s grace, and about our being justified by no merits whatever on our own part, but only by the mercy of the Lord our God.”¹

¹ Saint Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms, 1–32*, vol. 1, trans. Maria Boulding, O.S.B. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2000), p. 362.

- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the Book of Psalms. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand-alone”. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

Literary and historical context

- ❖ The historical context and the author of Psalm 32 are not known.
- ❖ The textual context: Psalm 32 is part of the first book of Psalms (Psalm 1-41).
- ❖ The final verse of Psalm 32 and the first verse of Psalm 33 connect seamlessly:
 - Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!
 - Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

Form and structure

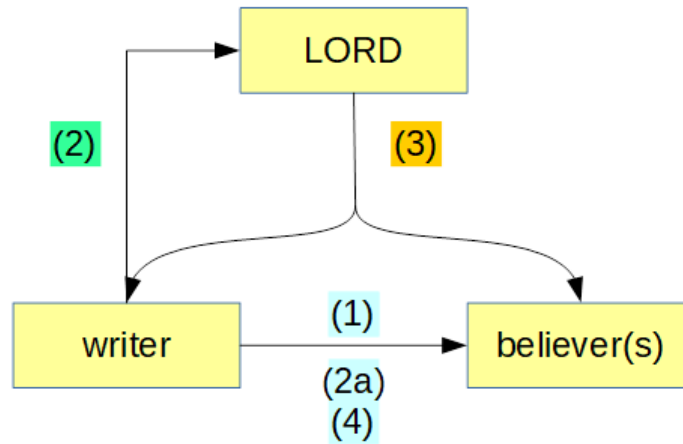
- ❖ Psalm 32 consists of four parts.

Blessed! – Part 1	
<i>(verse 1-2)</i>	¹ Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ² Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.
The prayer to God – Part 2	
I kept silent	
<i>(verse 3-4)</i> <i>I > you(r)</i>	³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped

	as in the heat of summer.	<i>Selah</i>
Then I acknowledged my sin – and you forgave		
<i>(verse 5)</i> <i>I > you</i>	⁵ 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.	<i>Selah</i>
Therefore let everyone pray to you - wisdom		
<i>(verse 6-7)</i> <i>I > everyone</i> <i>I > you</i>	⁶ Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. ⁷ You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.	<i>Selah</i>
The answer of God – Part 3		
<i>(verse 8-9)</i> <i>I (God) > you</i>	⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. ⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.	
Rejoice! – Part 4		
<i>(verse 10-11)</i> <i>I > you (righteous)</i>	¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord’s unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him. ¹¹ Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!	

Technical, hermeneutical and historical notes

- ❖ The following pattern of communication can be discovered in Psalm 32:



(1) = verse 1, 2: Blessed is

(2) = verse 3-7: Prayer

(2a) = verse 6: Let everyone pray

(3) = verse 8-9: The LORD: I will teach you

(4) = verse 10-11: Rejoice

- ❖ The Psalm has some features of an ABCB'A'-structure.
 - A = Blessed is (verse 1-2)
 - B = Prayer (verse 3-5)
 - C = Let everyone pray (verse 6)
 - B' = Answer (verse 7-9)
 - A' = Rejoice (verse 10-11)

Word-studies

- ❖ *Selah* = “סֶלָה”:
 - “The meaning is obscure: possibly from the Persian *salā* meaning song, sound of the strings; probably a technical term added later concerning the style of music or recitation; **suggested meanings**: 1. raising the voice to, a higher pitch; 2. Aquila and Jerome suggested it to be understood as “always”; 3. pause, from Septuagint,

interlude of instrumental music; 4. siglum: an abbreviation for a sign to change the voice.”²

- The meanings 1. and 4. supplement each other and are plausible with regard to the structure and the contents of Psalm 32.
- ❖ In verse 1, 2, and verse 5 the writer used three words for sin. They are synonyms with some variation in meaning:
 - Sin = “חַטָּאת”: sin.
 - This word occurs about 595 times in the Hebrew Bible. The basic sense is simply “to be mistaken, to be found deficient or lacking, to be at fault, to miss a specified goal or mark.” This denotes often the (ethical) failure of one person to perform a duty imposed by someone (2 Kgs 18:14; Gen 31:36; 43:9; 44:32; Exod 5:16; Judg 11:27). Sin against God is taken very seriously. Related words can refer therefore to “guilt,” “punishment,” or “sin/guilt offering.”³
 - Transgression = “עֲוֹן”: **transgression**. 1. *transgression* against individuals; 3. Against God.⁴
 - This word occurs in 135 cases and denotes willful, knowledgeable violation of a norm or standard (politically). It is also used for “rebellion” within the context of the covenant.⁵
 - Sin = “יָצָוֹן”: **iniquity, guilt or punishment of iniquity**.⁶
 - This word is almost always being used to indicate moral guilt or iniquity before God, seldom before a human (1 Sam 20:1, 8; 25:24). The range of meaning in the relationship in Hebrew thought between “sin” and resultant “guilt” and “punishment,” since “iniquity” may denote any of these three meanings, even in a single passage. “In Gen 4:13, for example, it signifies “guilt” (forensic and psychological) or “punishment,” (penal), and probably connotes both.”⁷

² Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 756).

³ Cover, R. C. (1992). *Sin, Sinners: Old Testament*. In D. N. Freedman (Ed.), (Vol. 6, p. 31–32).

⁴ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 833).

⁵ Cover, R. C. (1992). *Sin, Sinners: Old Testament*. In D. N. Freedman (Ed.), (Vol. 6, p. 32).

⁶ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 730).

⁷ Cover, R. C. (1992). *Sin, Sinners: Old Testament*. In D. N. Freedman (Ed.), (Vol. 6, p. 32).

- ❖ He also used three words to denote forgiveness, two in verse 5:
 - “Are forgiven (by God) = “אָפֿטֿיגֿען”:
 - 18. to **take away** someone’s guilt (and punishment), is forgiven.⁸
 - “Are covered (by God)” = “הִסְתִּיר”:
 - to **cover**: —1. to **forgive** (sin).⁹
 - In verse 5 this contrasted with the sinner: “I acknowledged my sin to you
 - and **did not cover up** my iniquity.”
 - God “does not count”: “נִשְׂבָּח”:
 - 4. to impute, reckon to as **guilt**.¹⁰
- ❖ The writer used the following words for acknowledging his sin:
 - (No) Deceit = “מִדְּבַר”:
 - **deceit, treachery**;— *deceit, treachery*: especially of speech¹¹ (verse 2).
 - Acknowledge = “עֲדָנָה”:
 - to **let someone know something**.¹²
 - Confess = “יָדָה” = 3. to **confess one’s sin** (with reference to penitence and praise).¹³

Literary features

- ❖ Metaphor and simile
 - A metaphor is very often used as a literary and rhetorical device, especially in poetry. It belongs to the same group as the simile. The simile compares two things: “do not **be like** the horse or the mule” (Ps 32:8), whereas the metaphor creates an implicit comparison: “when the mighty waters rise.” The “mighty waters” serve as a metaphor for the “judgment of God.”
 - A metaphor consists of two parts: which are called the tenor(1) and the vehicle(2). The tenor(1) is the subject to which attributes are ascribed. The vehicle(2) is the object whose attributes are borrowed. In the example given above, the tenor(1) is “the adversities of life”, the vehicle(2) is “mighty waters” and the attribute is “washing away”. Often, more attributes might be applicable.

⁸ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 726).

⁹ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000; p. 488).

¹⁰ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 360).

¹¹ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 941).

¹² Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 392).

¹³ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 389).

- ❖ Parallellismus membrorum is a special feature of Biblical literature, especially of the Old Testament Wisdom Literature: The Book of Job, Psalms and Proverbs. It “is also present, although less prominent, in biblical prose. It can be defined as the repetition of the same or related semantic content and/or grammatical structure in consecutive lines or verses.”¹⁴
 - There are three kinds of parallelism:
 - (1) Synonymous parallelism.
 - Verse 8 is an example of two lines:
 1. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
 2. I will counsel you and watch over you.
 - (2) Syntactical parallelism
 - In verse 6, the second line is a promise to the first line:
 1. Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found;
 2. surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.
 - A special case is the climactic or expansive parallelism. The following sequence can be noticed in verse 7: hiding place > protect me > surround me with songs of deliverance (climax).
 1. You are my hiding place;
 2. you will protect me from trouble
 3. and surround me with songs of deliverance.
 - (3) Antithetical parallelism
 - The second and third line contrast the first and second line, as is shown by verse 10 and 11:
 1. Many are the woes of the wicked,
 2. but the Lord’s unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

¹⁴ See for more information: Berlin, A. (1992). *Parallelism*. In D. N. Freedman (Ed.)(Vol. 5, p. 155).

Exposition

Remark

- ❖ “According to ancient church liturgical usage, this is one of the seven penitential psalms (the others are Psalms 6; 38; 51; 102; 130; and 143).¹⁵
- ❖ **“Of David. A maskil.”**
 - A maskil might be “a wisdom song performed to music.”¹⁶ This designation fits this Psalm. This is also the heading of the Greek translation of this Psalm (LXX).
 - The Psalm has some features of wisdom literature: an exhortation, a parable, and instruction.

Verse 1-2 Blessed!

- ❖ **“Blessed is he” and “Blessed is the man.”**
 - This introduction is not only a statement of faith, but it also reflects the inner feeling of the writer. He has been forgiven. He has been saved. He will be instructed by the Lord God. He is full of joy.
 - Blessed = “אַשְׁרֵי”¹⁷. Within the context of the Book of Psalms, it is important to have a look at other instances.
 - The Book of Psalms starts with a blessing and ends with praise (Ps 150).
 - It is important to note the relation between Psalm 32 and the blessing of Psalm 1:1, 2 and Psalm 2:12:
 - **“Blessed is the man** who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But **his delight is in the law of the Lord**, and on his law he meditates day and night.” See also **Psalm 112:1**; 40:4; 89:16. Blessed are the people on pilgrimage (Ps 84).
 - “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. **Blessed are all who take refuge in him.**” (Ps 2:12). “In him” is the messianic King. See also Psalm 33:12; 65:4; 144:15.

Both Psalms, Psalm 1 and 2, must be read together. They form the “theological” introduction to the Book of Psalms.

- Psalm 94:12 is important, it summarizes parts of Psalm 32: “Blessed is the man you discipline, O Lord, the man you teach from your law.”

¹⁵ Bratcher, R. G., & Reyburn, W. D. (1991, p. 302).

¹⁶ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 641).

- The first two verses of Psalm 119 are similar Psalm 32:
 - “Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord.
 - Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.”
 - Other instances are Psalm 128:1; Psalm 137:8, 9; Psalm 146:5.
 - Jesus Christ pronounced the blessing of the Kingdom of heaven in the Sermon on the Mount eight times.
- ❖ **“whose transgressions....”**
 - See also above. Bratcher and Reyburn summarize: “In verses 1–2a three verbs are used for forgiveness: (1) “carry away” (the Hebrew for *forgiven*), sin being thought of as a burden; (2) “conceal, hide” (*covered*), sin seen as an imperfection, a defect which must be removed, or else as a stain which must be wiped out; (3) “not to regard as guilty” (*imputes no iniquity*), that is, to consider innocent.”¹⁷ Sin results in being guilty.
 - The relation between God and the sinner has been restored.
- ❖ **“and in whose spirit is no deceit.”**
 - This deceit is elaborated in the next verse: “I kept silent” about my sins. I was not honest about myself. Deceit aims to disguise and cover up the transgressions and sins.¹⁸

Verse 3-4

- ❖ **“When I kept silent.”**
 - Examples are found in “David and Bathsheba” (2 Sam 11) and in “Joseph and his brothers” (Gen 37:12-36).
- ❖ The following two lines present a chiasmic structure:
 - Verse 3 ends with “all day long” and verse 4 starts with “for day and night.”
 - Chiasmic structures are used for emphasizing the message.
- ❖ **“my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.”**
 - “He learned that unconfessed sin is a festering sore.”¹⁹
- ❖ **“For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;”**
 - See also Psalm 38:2-8; 39:10.
- ❖ **“My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.”**
 - Bratcher and Reyburn offer some alternative translations: “In some languages it is not natural to speak of one’s strength drying up. Strength is sometimes said to melt,

¹⁷ Bratcher, R. G., & Reyburn, W. D. (1991, p. 303).

¹⁸ Wilcock, M. (2001, Vol. 1, p. 109).

¹⁹ VanGemeren, W. A. (2008, Vol. 5, p. 313).

to wither, or fall down. In languages which employ a different description of failing strength, it will often be necessary to adapt the type of simile used.”²⁰

- VanGemerer aptly remarks: “God’s discipline, like the hot, dry Mediterranean summer climate (verse 4), dries up the psalmist’s vigor like a plant deprived of water in the heat of summer. How different is his condition from the description of the wise person, likened to a verdant tree (Ps 1:3)! He did not experience relief until he recognized sin for what it was.”²¹
- “Ironically, because he did not cry out to God, he cried out loud in misery.”²²
- ❖ **“Selah.”** Pause for a moment and think.

Verse 5

- ❖ **“my”** The psalm becomes personal, whereas the first two verses are more general.
- ❖ **“Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.”**
 - See also Psalm 38:18 and **51:3-5**.
 - Compare verse 5 with verse 1. In both verses, the word “covered” is used. The Lord can cover up my iniquity, I can’t.
- ❖ **“I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’ — and you forgave the guilt of my sin.”**
 - The writer reveals his inner resolution: “I will confess.” When I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, a burden will be taken from me.
 - By using the present tense, the writer invites the reader of this Psalm to do the same as he did. It is a kind of actualizing a decision taken in the past, into the present.
 - Alternative translations of the second half of this verse: ‘you removed my guilt by forgiving my sin,’ ‘you forgave me and (thereby) took away my (reason for) guilt,’ ‘you forgave me and did not punish me for the wrong I had done,’ or ‘you forgave my sin which was a heavy burden’ or ‘... which kept me far from you.’²³
 - **“You forgave the guilt.”** The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving **wickedness, rebellion** and **sin**” (Ex 34:6, 7; see also Ps 103:8-14).
 - In Exodus 34:7, the same three (different) Hebrew words are used as in verse 1, 2 and 5 of Psalm 32.
 - It is not a question. It is not a prayer. It is a statement, without any uncertainty.

²⁰ Bratcher, R. G., & Reyburn, W. D. (1991, p. 304).

²¹ VanGemerer, W. A. (2008, Vol. 5, p. 313).

²² Waltke, B. K., Houston, J. M., & Moore, E. (2014, p. 113).

²³ Bratcher, R. G., & Reyburn, W. D. (1991, p. 306).

- ❖ **“Selah.”** Pause for a moment, and think.

Verse 6-7

- ❖ **“Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found”**
 - Therefore refers to verse 1, 2 and 5: blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven.
 - “Godly” = “גִּדְלוֹתָיִם”: *pious, godly*, either as exhibition of ‘dutiful love’ toward God (, or because *kindness*, as prominent in the godly, comes to imply other attributes, and to be a designation of the godly character, *piety: a pious man, the godly*.²⁴
 - **“While you may be found.”** See also Isaiah 55:6, 7 (also Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:12–14; Ps. 145:18):
“Seek the Lord while he may be found;
call on him while he is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way
and the evil man his thoughts.
Let him turn to the Lord,
and he will have mercy on him,
and to our God,
for he will freely pardon.”
See also Matthew 7:7-8: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.” This is certainly applicable to the prayer for forgiveness (Mt 6:13, 14).
- ❖ **“surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.”**
 - **“mighty waters”** = “גְּבוּהַיִם”: **flood**, rainflood (Jb 38:25).²⁵ This is a metaphor for God’s judgment.
 - This metaphor or image is also used by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 7:24-27).
- ❖ **“You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.”**
 - This is only possible after he has acknowledged his transgressions and received forgiveness.
 - In verse 7 and 11 the similar verb is used:
 - **“surround me with songs of deliverance”** (verse 7).
 - **“the Lord’s unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him”** (verse 11).

²⁴ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 339).

²⁵ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 1009).

- This expression, “surround me with songs of deliverance” is unusual. “We may either think of the *congratulations* and songs of praise of those who participate in the celebration.”²⁶
- ❖ **“Selah.”** Pause for a moment and think.

Verse 8-9

- ❖ **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you”**
 - Three words refer to instruction, especially wisdom:
 - (1) “Instruct” = “שִׁכַּל”²⁷: a. to **make wise, insightful** (Gn 3:6) —b. to instruct, teach.
 - (2) “Teach” = “יָרָה”²⁸: to teach, also used in relation to wisdom and understanding.
 Related is: “תּוֹרָה”: 1. **direction, instruction**; (as instruction or teaching by the wise).²⁸ This kind of instruction is found in the Sermon on the Mount, and also in the Book of Proverbs.
 - (3) “Counsel” = “יַעַץ”²⁹: advise counsel.
 - **“The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom,** and his tongue speaks what is just” (Ps 37:30).
 - **Only after having acknowledged his sins, the writer will be able to listen to the instructions of the Lord.**
- ❖ **“and watch over you.”** See also Psalm 1:6; 34:16. Literally, it reads: **“my eye upon you.”**
 - “I” is the Lord, although some commentators state that “I” refers to the writer. But these finale words “watch over you” favor an explanation that the Lord is speaking.
 - The Hebrew **“my eye upon you”** expresses the idea of concern and care, not of a veiled threat. It can be rendered **“taking care of you”** or **“watching out for your safety.”**²⁹
- ❖ **“Do not be like the horse or the mule...”**
 - These words refer to verse 3 and 4, where the writer kept silent about his sins, and Lord was (gently) forcing him to acknowledge his sins. This is compared with the horse and the mule which need to be tamed and guided by a bit and bridle.
 - At the same time, because “do not be” is in the plural, it is an exhortation to all the readers of this Psalm.
 - There are some difficulties in the wording of the last two lines of verse 9. This will not be discussed here.

²⁶ Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Moll, C. B., Briggs, C. A., Forsyth, J., Hammond, J. B., ... Conant, T. J. (2008, p. 225).

²⁷ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 1328-1329).

²⁸ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 1711).

²⁹ Bratcher, R. G., & Reyburn, W. D. (1991, p. 308).

Verse 10-11

❖ “Many are the woes of the wicked.”

- “woes” = “מַכְאוֹבִים”: “1. *pain*, physical (Ex 3:7); 2. of *mental pain*.³⁰ Often these pains come together. Mental stress can reveal itself in physical pain, a headache, a stomach ache, abdominal pains. The psalmist has experienced mental and physical pains himself, as he describes in verse 3 and 4.
- “wicked” = “רָשָׁעִים”: 3. *guilty of sin*, against either God or man, *wicked*.³¹
 - Psalm 1:1: “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.”
 - The wicked and the righteous are part of the same covenant community! They belong both to the people of Israel.
 - The wicked are depicted in the Psalms (especially Psalm 1; 10; 37; 73) as people, who:
 - are compared with chaff that the wind blows away (Ps 1:4);
 - will not stand in the judgment (Ps 1:5);
 - and their way will perish (Ps 1:6);
 - and, in their pride don’t seek him; in their thoughts there is no room for God (Ps 10:4);
 - do revile God and say to themselves, “He won’t call me to account?” (Ps 10:13);
 - say, “How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge? Who are always carefree, and increase in wealth Ps 73:11, 12).

❖ “but the Lord’s unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.”

- “but” contrasts these words with the preceding line.
- “unfailing love” = “חַסְדֵי יְהוָה”: II. of God: *kindness, lovingkindness* in condescending to the needs of his creatures.³²
- “Trust” = “בְּטַחֲתִי”: to feel secure, to **trust**.³³
- “surrounds”. See also Psalm 5:13.

❖ “Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous;”

- “righteous” does not mean: “without sin” but “the righteous will live by his faith” (Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38). Righteousness is a merciful declaration by

³⁰ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 456).

³¹ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 957).

³² Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 339).

³³ Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. E. J., & Stamm, J. J. (1994–2000, p. 120).

the Lord.

- Study Romans 4:7-9:
 - “Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.” (Ps 32:1, 2; Rom 4:7).
 - “Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness” (Rom 4:8, 9).
- ❖ **“sing, all you who are upright in heart!”**
 - “upright” contrasts the “deceit” of verse 2.

Application

Praise and Rejoice

- ❖ Rejoice in Christ, in whom we have all forgiveness of sins (Rom 5:11; Phlp 4:4-7; 1 Tess 5:6; Ps 33:1, 64:10, 68:3, 97:12).
- ❖ Rejoice in forgiveness and salvation.
- ❖ Rejoice in God’s faithfulness and grace.
- ❖ Rejoice in God’s wisdom and his instruction.
- ❖ Rejoice in God, he is our refuge.
- ❖ Rejoice in God, who credits faith as righteousness.

Confession of sins

- ❖ Sins can be confessed to God alone (Ps 32:3–6; 51:4–6), to one another (Jas 5:16), to a wise person (Acts 19:18), and the entire church, publicly (1 Cor 5:3; 2 Cor 2:6).³⁴ It is obvious in the latter three cases, that where other people are involved, God is present!
 - 1 Jn 1:8-2:3: If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
- ❖ Caution:

³⁴ Waltke, B. K., Houston, J. M., & Moore, E. (2014, p. 100).

- Adeyemo remarks: “An awareness of the importance of confession has led many Christian communities in Africa to give confession a place in their liturgy. This is good in that it makes people more aware of the need to confess their sins. However, we need to exercise caution as we encourage confession. It is sometime better to confess to God and to a trusted Christian brother or sister (Jas 5:16) than to make a public confession to the entire church, for the public confession of certain sins could create a scandal in the church. It is worth noting that the psalmist does not tell us exactly what sins he is repenting of, nor exactly how he confessed them to God.”³⁵

Don't conceal sins

- ❖ It is impossible to cover up sins. God knows the heart, the feelings, far better than we know ourselves (Psalm 139).
 - “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy” (Prov 28:13).
- ❖ Ask why people want to cover up their transgressions. There might be a variety of reasons, also depending on the culture.
 - Think about shame, honour, and (feelings) of guilt.
 - Bratcher and Reyburn wrote: “People in different cultures experience guilt in radically different ways. Grammatically it appears that guilt in *guilt of my sin* is something possessed by sin, whereas semantically it is sin that causes guilt. Guilt is thought of in many cultures as a burden, a mark or stain, a kind of moral indebtedness that must be paid by punishment; guilt includes the damaged relationship between the sinner and God or other people.”³⁶
 - There is also the problem of narcissism and self-righteousness. The wicked belong to the people of God (Ps 1).

Forgiveness

- ❖ Psalm 32 teaches the four spiritual conditions that must be met for mercy can flow freely into the human spirit: (1) no deception (verse 2); (2) godly sorrow for sin (verse 3–4); (3) open confession of sin (verse 5); (4) faith in God's salvation and his forgiveness (verse 6–10).³⁷

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³⁵ Adeyemo, T. (2006, p. 645).

³⁶ Bratcher, R. G., & Reyburn, W. D. (1991, p. 306).

³⁷ Waltke, B. K., Houston, J. M., & Moore, E. (2014, p. 120, 121).

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