

Psalm 32:1-11 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. ³ When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. ⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah ⁶ For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. ⁷ You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah ⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. ⁹ Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you. ¹⁰ Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him. ¹¹ Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Bill Clinton in his just released book *My Life* says the following about the night when he finally told Hilary about his adulterous relationship with Monica Lewinsky. "I had a sleepless night and woke her up and sat down on the side of the bed and just told her. And it was awful. But I had to do it."

The psalmist David says in his long-ago released book, "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long."

What do both of these best-selling authors have to teach us this day? The lesson is simple: Unconfessed sin makes for an awful existence.

And yet, it took a grand jury to convince Bill Clinton that he should confess the truth to his wife. And it took a sly prophet named Nathan who we read about today in our Old Testament lesson to convince David to confess his sin of stealing Bathsheba from her husband, Uriah.

Yes, it seems that both Clinton and David were gluttons for punishment. Rather than confess the very thing that plagued their conscious, rather they held it in. And in so doing they caused themselves many anxious days and sleepless nights.

What kind of a person would do this to themselves? Surely, Clinton had many opportunities to come clean about his sin and kept silent. Surely David at any point could have admitted his weakness. But he never did. What kind of a person would do this to themselves?

Well, unfortunately, the answer is not just people like Clinton or David, but people like you and me. Humanity as a whole has a great reluctance to confess sin. Oh sure, we are fine at giving a good “I, a poor miserable sinner” here and there. But what if you were called upon this morning to confess not just the general nature of your sinfulness, but your specific acts of sinfulness? What if we took the time to each go around and list the specific sins in our lives? How long would it take for you to run to your car? Martin Luther explained our reluctance to confess sin this way, “If the sins known to my heart were published to the world, I would deserve the gallows. To be sure, the world now respects me. But if it really knew me, it would spit on me; for I would deserve beheading.” Yes, all too often we would rather hold on to our reputation and live with guilt rather than simply confess our sins.

We are like our first ancestors when it comes to sin. We not only try to hide our sins from each other, but also at times seek to hide our sin from God as well. We grab whatever is near to cover us the nakedness of our condition. We try to crouch behind anything we can find in order that God might not see us and our deplorable acts. Yes, we are tempted to suppose that what is hidden from man can also be hidden from God.

Of course, that is a false notion. Nothing is hidden from God. As David confessed in the 69th Psalm, “You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from You.” Yes, the idea of hiding from God is ridiculous. So why do we still try to do it?

What is it that causes us to be so reluctant to simply confess? We may be able to list several reasons why we are so reluctant including our reputation or our own self-esteem. But perhaps the true reason is that we forget what the true result of confessing our sins truly is before God. We forget that sin confessed is also sin forgiven. We forget that the only way to be relieved of the burden of sin is the covering of that burden.

This is really the point of Psalm 32. The psalm is called maskil. A maskil is a psalm of instruction or teaching. And so it is right that we would ponder exactly what David wishes to teach in this Psalm? When we look at the Psalm on the whole, we realize that he wishes not to teach primarily about the awfulness of unconfessed sin, but rather the blessedness of sin confessed. That is why his Psalm begins with these words, “Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.” As we confess our sins, as we reveal the

nakedness of our condition to our God, God promises to cover our sins. He promises to cover them to the point that He can not see them anymore.

God covers them with white robes of Christ's righteousness, those robes that have been washed clean in the blood of the Lamb. Yes, in Baptism, each time absolution is proclaimed, and each time we receive the Lord's Supper, God covers our nakedness with the perfect life and the sacrificial death of His Son.

Do you have sins that you are hiding from God or from someone you love? Do not be deceived. Keeping the sin secret is not the solution. Unconfessed sin makes for an awful existence. It destroys marriages, it destroys friendships, and worst of all, it can destroy our relationship with God.

Rather this day, confess your sins to whomever you have sinned against and to God. Do not make for yourself another sleepless night or anxious day wondering if they will ever find out. As far as God is concerned, He already knows. And He is waiting for you to admit to Him what He already knows. He is waiting not to scorn or to punish you for your sin, but rather to cover it so that it does not glare in His eye any longer.

Jesus told the Pharisee Simon in our Gospel lesson today that he who is forgiven little loves little, but he that is forgiven much loves much. We today have been forgiven a great deal of sin, and so we join in doing what David instructs all who fear God to do at the end of our Psalm, "Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!"

We rejoice because God had turned our sleepless nights into joyful days by the power of his Son. He has turned the nakedness of our sinful lives into perfect white clothing by the power of his Son. He has taken the guilt of our sin and replaced it with the joy of our salvation. And that is more than reason to rejoice. How blessed are we who transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered! Amen.