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Speaker Stephen Sherwin
Subject: Psalm 32

You may ask what the relevance of a Psalm written about 3000 years ago is for us today. The Word of God is relevant for every age.

The Psalm is a Maschil which means giving instruction. It deals with the knowledge of forgiveness and the joy of salvation.

People may deny sin today but lying, stealing and cheating are still sins in the sight of God. Even those who like to deny sin will recognise when they are sinned against and suggest that someone can do as they please provided it does not harm another person. In fact, all sin is against God, it separates us from Him and will do so eternally unless those sins are forgiven.

We need to see ourselves as God sees us; in Isaiah 64:6, there is the confession of people who recognise this, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags". If sin keeps us out of heaven, it will leave us in hell; there is no alternative. Luke 16:19-31 makes clear that the judgment goes beyond anything we know today; the rich man pleaded for someone to warn his brothers.

David uses various words for sin:

The word, sin, has the idea of an archer missing the target; even the most moral and upright person cannot come up to the standard that God demands.

The word transgression has the idea of crossing a boundary

The word iniquity has the idea of inward perversion and delight in sin

There is a real blessedness when transgressions are forgiven and sin is covered. In Colossians 2, Paul writes about the handwriting of ordinances that was against us but it was nailed to the cross as the only basis of forgiveness. David knew the blessedness of forgiveness because God knew what Christ would do; we can experience it because He has done the work so transgression is taken away, sin is covered and iniquity is not imputed. Imputing has the idea of a bank account where money is transferred or imputed to an account.

God is holy and righteous so He cannot simply overlook sin, it must be punished in a just way. He did this by giving His Son for us (Gal 2:20).

We need to be open and honest with God; we must accept that we are guilty, David describes his experience in verses 3 and 4; it was months of conviction until a change came (v.5). He acknowledged and confessed his sin and found that God is ready to forgive. He could lay his head on the pillow in peace because God had forgiven and we can when we recognise that Christ died in our place. The Gospel is free to all, men want to put a price on it, but there is none.

Verse six reminds us that the message is urgent, Now is the day of salvation. We cannot tell when the opportunity will pass but we can be certain that He will save now. He does not promise that there will be no troubles, but that He will keep us through them. There is joy in heaven when a sinner repents, but we can rejoice in every circumstance. Paul and Silas sang in prison.

David wants others to learn from his mistakes but we all make mistakes despite being warned. For those who are saved, the sadness of the early verses is transformed into joy as we come to the end of the Psalm. Rather than the sorrow, there is gladness and a song of deliverance