

Sins Forgiven

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God does not let past sins stand in the way of His love and friendship.

“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.” – Psalm 32:3-5

Silence! There are times when it can be devastating. So it was in the life of David.

He had committed terrible sins and had not repented before God. No, these sins were not of a general category. It was not so in David’s life that he had no idea what sin was involved. It was nothing less than the sins of adultery and murder into which he had fallen. Even God’s evaluation of the life of David focuses upon these sins, *“David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite,”* – I Kings 15:4,5.

It was a dark moment in the life of Israel’s king.

If we reflect upon the true character of these sins in the life of David, we shudder with disbelief. The *“man after God’s heart”* had actually taken another man’s wife and adulterated his own marriage with her and forced her to break her marriage vows as well. When she reported later that this tryst had resulted in her pregnancy with David, he immediately sought to cover it up by having Uriah return home and spend a night with his wife. When that failed he coldly plotted Uriah’s death by having him exposed to imminent danger in the front lines of battle. Yes, David committed sins against the sixth and seventh commandments of God.

These sins were more than private affairs, David had done this with the

knowledge of those around him, as well as those around Bathsheba. He had inquired of her identity, sent for her, had her return home. He had to deal with servants and messengers who were privy to his evil deeds. Still more, he held the trusted position of king of Israel: in that office he was the type of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ Himself. He had even used his office to advance his evil deeds. He took advantage of his position as king to order Bathsheba to come and return as well as arrange the death of her husband. He broke a sacred trust.

And all the time, he was silent before God! He persisted in this sin. David was overcome with lustful passion, but he did not exercise self-control, rather he gave in to his own feelings and when things went from bad to worse he allowed evil to have its way in his life.

That silence went on for nine months to a year.

Have you ever done such a thing? In the extreme, there are the drug addicts and the drunkards who use every excuse imaginable in order to persist in their sinful lives. Are there not others who persist in a life of partying, illicit sex, stealing, swearing, or any dominant sin?

Give some thought to this, maybe you are doing this right now!

David, by the Holy Spirit, tells us that during that time of guilty silence, he was miserable. He describes this in verses 3 and 4. He tells us that he roared all the day long, literally the Hebrew figure is that he howled like a beast. Inside himself his conscience was so troubled that he became afraid of God. The deepest cause of this howling was, *"Thy hand was heavy upon me"*. He couldn't enjoy sleep, his conscience terrorized him through the night. During the day he couldn't work, he couldn't concentrate for the fear of God surrounded him at every turn. This "soul trouble" produced physical problems for he adds, *"my bones waxed old, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer"*. The skeleton supports the body and if our bones are old, we feel worn out. The figure he uses concerning

moisture refers to the trees of Palestine whose sap runs thin during the dry spell of summer, so he felt dried up. He existed, but he didn't have any drive or incentive to succeed at anything. He suffered spiritual depression and its consequences.

He lived, yet he wanted to die. Such are the consequences of, "guilty silence".

The scene is repeated over and over. I can't imagine a Christian who hasn't gone through this to some degree in his or her life. Even Martin Luther called this a Pauline Psalm. He meant of course that what David experienced Paul and Luther also experienced. There can be no peace with God by the deeds of the law. Take courage, dear reader, you are not alone when your bones wax old through your roaring.

God didn't leave David alone in his silence. After the "Selah" of verse 5, the pause that forces us to reflect a moment, comes these beautiful words, "*I acknowledged my sin unto thee and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*" A changed David is speaking in these verses.

The three words that he uses in reference to his sin are most enlightening. They indicate that David has come to terms with his sinful behavior. They are all used in verse five. He speaks of his "iniquity". That word emphasizes the filth and depravity that is involved when we sin. In this case, the terrible filth of actually lusting after another man's wife and planning the death and carrying out the execution of a human being. The point is that this filth is not only in the eyes of men, but emphatically, it is filth in God's holy eyes. Another word he uses is "transgression". With this word David comes to term with the fact that these deeds were violations of God's law. God has set a boundary within which He expresses His love and favor, outside of which He is a God of wrath and judgment. David stepped out of bounds with God and thereby became liable for the punishment of his sins, temporal and eternal death. The third word is translated "sin", which

is the most familiar word which has as its root the “missing-of-the-mark”. The importance of this word emphasizes that such acts of disobedience are deliberately committed. David was not a victim of circumstances, he planned it, and deliberately broke God’s law.

Do you speak this language as well? It is the language of a convicted sinner. Only one who has come to terms with his sin before God speaks this way and is willing to use these words which so accurately describe the true nature of sin. Hence David adds, *“I acknowledged my sin unto thee and mine iniquity have I not hid, I said I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD.”*

We have here the record of the fact that David did this. If we want to know the content of his acknowledgment and confession we turn to Psalm 51, which records that confession. Psalm 51 was written upon the same occasion and gives to us the details of what David said to God as he made this confession. Verses 3 and 4 express the heart of it, *“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”*

By our coming to God and making acknowledgment, we admit that He is the unseen witness of all our deeds and the Judge of all our inmost thoughts and secret deeds. We have failed our God. We have broken our part of the covenant. We make ourselves worthy of being abandoned, *“Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me,”* – Psalm 51:11. We are sorry to God for this evil we have done. We ask God to forgive us and not let it stand in the way of His fellowship with us. We desire to be at peace with God as He is at peace with us.

Such a cry always focuses upon Jesus.

David was well aware that his confession of sin required that he come in the presence of God with the blood of the lamb. God never overlooks sin,

forgiveness means that another has paid the debt and the benefit is given to us. This is the gospel of our Lord Jesus. Forgiveness for sin is based upon His bearing the penalty of our death upon the cross and keeping the law of God perfectly for us that we might have his imputed righteousness for ourselves.

What brought the change in David's life: nothing other than God's messenger.

Nathan the prophet was sent to David by God with his anecdote of the rich man who stole the only lamb from his poor neighbor in order that he might feed it to his guests. David was incensed by the injustice and when told, "*Thou art the man*", humbled himself before the face of Jehovah and saw his sin in dealing with Bathsheba and Uriah her husband.

How merciful of God to point the finger at us. We may squirm in our seats, we may try to deflect its personal application, we may look across the aisle or street at the sins of others to try to console our own sinful conduct, but when God touches our hearts, we can do nothing but cry and come to terms with our sins before God.

It doesn't mean that our confession of sin will free us from any consequence of sin. The child conceived by adultery died. The sword never departed from David as long as he was king. Nathan told David that his concubines would be ravished openly in the light of day (a thing done when Absalom came to Jerusalem). Yes, our sins carry a certain price, but that becomes bearable when we know God has forgiven.

"Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin". God does not let past sins stand in the way of His love and friendship.

David wrote in Psalm 51:13, "*I will teach transgressors thy ways.*" In this Psalm he fulfilled that pledge, to teach others what he had learned.

May God put this teaching in our hearts.

We exalt then, *“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile”* (Psalm 32:1 and 2).