

The God Who Redeems

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[0 : 00] Thank you.

From Psalm 32. We're singing from the Metrical Psalms. Psalm 32. And from the beginning, the first four verses.

Psalm 32. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgression he hath done, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord impugneth not his sin, and in his spirit there is no guile, nor fraud is found therein. When as I did refrain my speech, and silent was my tongue, my bones then walked stalled, because I roared all day long.

For upon me both day and night thine hand did heavy lie, so that my moisture turned death in summer's drought thereby. And so on.

[1 : 28] These four stanzas to God's praise. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned, all the transgression he hath done, all the transgression he hath done, whose sin is covered, blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned, and in his spirit there is no guile, nor fraud is found therein.

When as I did refrain my speech, and silent was my tongue, my bones then walked stalled, all because my bones then walked stalled, my bones then walked stalled, all because I roared all day long.

For upon me both day and night, thine hand did every lie, so that by my moisture turned it is, so that by my moisture turned it is, and so come I stride thereby.

Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. Let us pray. Ever blessed God, as we gather before you, we give thanks that we can call upon your name, and that you have declared to us that there is an open way by which we can approach, even to a throne of grace.

We bless your name that you are the God of all grace, and that in spite of our forgetfulness, our negligence, our throw-wardness, our waywardness, you are always waiting to be gracious to the children of men.

[5 : 37] And we give thanks that you invite us to come in the name and for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that your blessing would be upon us today, as we wait upon you to direct our minds and our thoughts in portions of Scripture that are your word to us, even today.

Lord, this is the living word that you have given to us. Your people have discovered in their experience how this word is alive.

It speaks into their circumstances always, even though there are times when they may be desensitized in spiritual terms.

They are so taken up with their own particular life and their need within that life, that the thought of God is removed from their attention.

Even your own people must confess that, that there are times when they are guilty of going through the motions. In their private devotions, in their public devotions, the same applies.

- [7 : 08] They come with little expectancy of your blessing upon their heart and soul. They have been here before, and they have come and gone as they came and went.
- Do not allow us to succumb to such failings, no matter how prevalent they are in our experience.
- Grant to us that yearning after your own presence, that desire wherein we find ourselves as hungering babes, desiring the milk of the truth.
- That is what marks out your people from those who are not your people, that you have given to them that desire for nurture from the hand of God.
- May it be so for us today as we gather your name, so that as we sing your word and as we read your word, that even as we are led in prayer, a minister leading a congregation, a minister led by the Spirit to pray for that which is in keeping with the needs of the congregation.
- [8 : 42] That is what we desire above all else. That we would know the ministration of your Spirit, so that what we seek at your hand is ultimately to your glory.
- We pray for all the needs presented before you here. Then ones that we can anticipate that are true of all of us, but also the needs that are hidden from sight.
- Those who have heartache, those who have consternation because of the particular area of suffering.
- Perhaps they have physical ailments. Perhaps they have mental trials. Perhaps they have spiritual trials.
- Whatever they may be, we give thanks that the all-seeing eye of God is upon us. So help us to yield ourselves to whatever it is that you are able to do for us.
- [9 : 47] We bring before you the grieving and the sorrowful. When you speak to us by way of the voice of death, we ought to bring to mind the fact that we too are but sojourners in this world, and that we are travelling on the scene of time only for a short duration.
- And our life will shortly come to an end. What awaits us there, we are assured, is the judgment seat of Christ, where the righteous will receive from the hand of God what God has promised to the righteous.
- There are but two who will appear before the judgment seat, those who are clothed with the impeccable righteousness of Christ, and those who are found naked in your sight.
- So we pray for the sorrowful today as they grieve. We are mindful of our neighbouring community as you have spoken to them and to us so suddenly, in taking from the scene of time one that was known by many within these communities.
- We pray for a grieving family and ask that you would sanctify the voice of death to them and to us. That you may remind us that we can come to the God of heaven and earth to supply our need and all our circumstances, even when our hearts are broken.
- [11 : 45] We pray for the homes and the families round about us, those represented here, and those who fail to present themselves in God's house.
- only by virtue of your grace would any one of us be found here. So we pray for grace for all, those present and those not present, asking that you would in mercy pour out your spirit upon us, that we would be drawn into the fold of the body of Christ as it is represented here in this world.
- We pray for our children, our children's children. We ask your blessing to be their portion. Particularly we pray for our Sunday school and for the young people who come regularly to be taught the good things, the things that matter.

We give thanks for the privilege that they enjoy of attending day school and all the things that they learn for their good there. But we know that there are things that matter with regard to our never dying souls.

Whatever we learn, we know that these things will remain with us, however much they may lie dormant in our heads and hearts.

[13 : 16] We pray for your own power to accompany the world that is brought to our attention, be we young or old. Remember our nation.

We pray for our King, his family, for those who govern in his name in Holyrood, in Westminster. We see so much uncertainty, so much lack of clarity on the part of those who ought to show leadership.

There is constant turmoil and so much lack of trust on the part of the public in the elected representatives.

It is something that concerns us and we bring your concerns to you. We pray, Lord, for the nations of the earth. And remember especially the parts of the world that are suffering, where there is warfare, ongoing hostility, man between man, nation against nation.

Remember the nations affected by disaster. Those places in the world that have constant battles with the elements resulting in poverty, in want, lack of food, lack of provision for all the creature needs that we take for granted.

[14 : 49] Enable us to bear one another's burdens and bring into the throne of grace and seek the God of all grace to supply your needs.

So bless us together and continue to watch over his pardoning sin we ask. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. And boys and girls, before you go out to your Sunday school, just a very quick word. The Sunday school superintendent sends me a text telling me what I'm supposed to speak about.

And sometimes he's a man of few words. So the text for today was the two sons. The two sons.

I was saying to myself, are there more than two sons in the Bible? And I was thinking, well I wonder which two sons he was thinking about.

[15 : 56] And it reminded me of the late Professor MacLeod who would set his assignments and the heading that he would give to us was always very brief.

He would put something like, the atonement, discuss. So anybody who knows anything about theology, if you were presented with a title like that, you would probably say to yourself, where do I go with this?

Well I thought that although the Sabbath school superintendent thought I knew everything, I thought perhaps he meant the parable of the prodigal son in particular.

He's shaking his head. He's shaking his head. So maybe it wasn't. But that's what I'm going to talk about. In Luke chapter 15, there are three parables.

One of them is a parable of the lost coin. The other is the parable of the lost sheep or vice versa.

[17 : 03] And then we have what is well known as the parable of the prodigal. The prodigal son. But when you read that parable, I think it has in it three stories in one.

Because not only is there a son who was lost, there is also a son who stayed at home. And of course, both sons had a father.

So when you read through the parable, there are lessons to be found in the parable about each one of these characters.

The son who was lost, the son who stayed at home, and the father who was father to both. And the two sons, they were alike.

They were alike in this sense that they were selfish. The prodigal, the one who went away from him, was selfish.

[18 : 09] He wanted to enjoy himself. He wanted to enjoy himself at his father's expense. It didn't really matter to him what his father thought.

He just wanted to have a good time. So off he went. And if you know the story, you'll know that things didn't go very well for him.

The son who stayed at home, he was also selfish. Because when the son who was lost came home, instead of rejoicing, instead of celebrating with his father, he was sad.

He was selfish because he saw the son that was lost, found, but he didn't rejoice. He didn't celebrate. He didn't think that the son who was found should be treated the way he was treated.

And the father, well, I think the father was the best character of them all. He taught the son who came back, how the father was merciful and kind and willing to forgive, even though he did not deserve it.

[19 : 38] He taught the older son the wisdom of rejoicing when rejoicing was in order. And always to remember that there was good reason to celebrate what God was doing for good.

So it's well worth reading this parable carefully. Well worth thinking about what we are taught by it. And to find who of these characters that we are meant to look at most.

And who do they remind us of most? The selfish sons or the father who rejoiced when the sinner who came home was saved.

Well, I hope that these thoughts will go with you. We are going to sing now as you go out from Psalm 62. Psalm 62.

And we are going to sing from verse 5. Psalm 63. Psalm 63. My soul, wait thou with patience upon thy God alone.

[20 : 57] On him dependeth all my hope and expectation. He only my salvation is, and my strong rock is he. He only is my sure defence, I shall not move it be.

In God my glory place stays, and my salvation sure. In God the rock is of my strength, my refuge most secure will sing.

Turn to verse 10. My soul, wait thou with patience upon thy God alone. My soul, wait thou with patience upon thy God alone.

On him dependeth all my hope and expectation.

He only my salvation is, and my strong rock is he.

[22 : 22] He only is my sure defence, I shall not be.

God my glory place it is, and my salvation sure.

God my glory place it is, and my salvation sure. And God the rock is of my strength, my refuge most secure.

God the rock is of my heart. Ye people, please your confidence. In Him continually.

In God the rock is of my heart. Before them thought ye a few heart. God is our refuge.

[23 : 47] 1000 Dan lift the holy air more like than vanity trust ye not in oppression in robbery be not rain unwell said not ye hearts when as in precedence your

King A reading this morning is taken from the Old Testament scriptures and a reading from the book of Psalms and Psalm 103 Psalm 103 from the book of Psalms I'm going to read the whole of the Psalm bless the Lord oh my soul and all that is within me bless his holy name bless the Lord oh my soul and forget not all his benefits who forgiveth all thy iniquities who healeth all thy diseases who redeemeth thy life from destruction who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender measures who satisfies thy mouth with good things so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles the

Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed he made known his ways unto Moses his acts unto the children of his dear the Lord is merciful and gracious slow to anger and plenteous in mercy he will not always chide neither will he keep his anger forever he hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities for as the heaven is high above the earth so great is his mercy toward them that fear him as far as the east is from the west so far has he removed our transgressions from us like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him for he knoweth our frame he remembereth that we are dust as for man his days are as grass as a flower of the field so he flourishes for the wind passeth over it and it is gone and the place thereof shall knoweth no more but but the mercy of the lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and his righteousness unto children's children to such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them the lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens and his kingdom ruleth over all bless the lord ye his angels that excel in strength that do his commandments hearkening unto the voice of his word bless ye the lord all ye his hosts ye ministers of his that do his pleasure bless the lord all his works in all places of his dominion bless the lord all my soul amen and the lord at his blessing to this reading of his word to his name be the praise let us sing now the words of psalm 11 psalm 11 we're going to sing the whole psalm i in the lord do put my trust how is it then that ye say to my soul flee as a bird and to your mountain high follow the wicked bend the foe the shafts and string they fit but those who upright are in heart they privilege may hit if the foundations be destroyed what have the righteous done god in his holy temple is in heaven is his throne his eyes do see his eyelids try men's sons the just he proves but his soul hates the wicked man and him that violence loves snares fire and brimstone furious storms on sinners he shall reign this as the portion of their cup doth unto them pertain because the lord most righteous doth in righteousness delight and with a pleasant countenance beholdeth the upright the whole of psalm 11 to the praise of god i in the lord do put my trust i in the lord to put my trust i

visit then that ye say to my soul flee as apart a day in mountain high for though the wicked bend their fall their shafts on strength their feet that those who have bright bad in heart they forever may hate if the foundation feet is side what has the righteous done god in his holy temple is and heaven is thrown his eyes to see his eyelids dry men's sons the just he proves but his soul hates the wicked man and him that died his love sneers fight and brim stone furious shores on sinners he shall rain this as the portion of their cup that to them pertain because the

Lord most righteous self and righteousness delight and with a pleasant countenance behold feel his year pride Let us turn now for a short while to the chapter that we read in the Old Testament, Book of Psalms and Psalm 103. We can read at the beginning of the psalm.

[33 : 54] Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless the holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tendered mercies, who satisfies thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles.

And so on. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.

Most of your Bibles will indicate that David is the composer of this psalm. David is given the title, the Sweet Psalm Singer of Israel.

Many of the compositions in the Book of Psalms bear his name. And this psalm is, when you go through it, I think you would call it a very upbeat psalm.

[35 : 15] It's a psalm that delights in God for all that God means to him.

He speaks at length of the love of God, the lovingkindness of God, God's goodness to him.

And he is able to speak of that from personal experience. That's important. That when a person speaks about some subject, it has more meaning if the person who is speaking on that subject knows something about it at a personal level.

There are many academics who can give you a chapter and verse on a lot of topics that they have learned about from books.

But it is, for them, purely an academic exercise. There's something that they're considering at a distance and talking about on the basis of somebody else's experience.

[36 : 43] But David is talking about something that he knows all about. And I think that's something that we have to recognize when we sing the psalm.

The words that we sing are the words that come from the mouth of someone who knows all about it. He is also able to speak of some of the ways in which God has revealed to him.

things that would not have been at the forefront of his mind as he encountered these things, were it not for the fact that he knew God personally.

And he understood what God was saying to him at a personal level through these encounters with different experiences.

In particular, what I'm thinking about is the awareness that David has of sin in his own life, sin in the world, and the consequences of sin in his own life and in the life of others.

[38 : 02] Now that might not be the thing that springs to your mind when you read through this psalm. There are many other psalms that David has composed.

And the subject matter, you would say, is sin. They're called, many of them are identified as what are called penitential psalms.

Psalms that speak about sin and the consequences of sin, the need to confess it, the need to repent of it, the need to address areas of your life that are affected by it.

And on the surface of it, this psalm is not one of these penitential psalms. The first psalm that we sang, Psalm 32, for example, you would probably be able to say, that psalm is all about sin.

And David's experience of it, David's confession of it, and his grief for it. And Psalm 51, it's a psalm that clearly speaks of the experience of David when he fell into sin.

[39 : 18] But if you look carefully through this psalm, the joy that David expresses and the understanding that he has of God's love is emphasized by the understanding that he has of sin in his own life and in the life of others and the way God has dealt with it in his experience.

When you look at the psalm, you'll know that David is showing the reality of what it means for a believer to know and understand that God is able, not just able, but willing, to deal with sin in the life of those who are his people and to equip them to identify it and to deal with it and to get a positive outcome even though on the face of it what they're encountering is destructive.

Now some look at the psalm and they see that David clearly in the layout of the psalm, he moves from the psalm to the experience that is the experience of the people of God as Israel were known and then the universal impact of God's influence on the world begins more or less with his own experience and then the experience of God's people and then the experience of the world in which sin dominates or in which sin is seen.

So there's three things from the psalm or with this narrow area of focus that I want us to think about. First of all, that as far as David is concerned, he appreciates more than most that sin is in the world and sin is in those who are in the world and sin has consequences for all who are in it.

He is someone who is grateful for what God does for the sinner. He is able to show gratitude and the gratitude comes from an understanding, first of all, of what sin is, what sin does and what God must do in order to deal with sin in the sinner.

[42 : 20] And then there's a reminder to us which might appear of bleak. You know, some psalms are quite obviously setting before us the consequences of sin that is not dealt with.

And here there's no evidence of that but you'll notice as you read through the psalm that David talks about how focused the mercy of God is.

Who are the beneficiaries of his loving kindness? Who derive good from it? And he lists for us those who are indeed these beneficiaries but at the same time without having to say as much by reason of that emphasis he excludes from the benefits that he wishes to highlight.

And we'll explain something of that before we finish. I think I'm able to argue just by reading these opening verses of the psalm that sin is not something that is far from the psalmist's mind.

You know, it's not it's a very as I said I suggested it's a very upbeat psalm a very positive psalm a very encouraging psalm to the believer.

[43 : 56] What does he do to begin with? He invites the person who is singing the psalm to bless the Lord. Bless the Lord my soul bless the Lord who is holy.

It's an invitation to rejoice in the presence of God because of the knowledge that they have offered. But when you get to verses 3 and 5 you'll notice the words that he uses are quite specifically to do with sin and the consequences of sin.

He speaks of forgiveness he speaks of iniquities he speaks of healing and disease and redemption and destruction loving kindness and tender measures.

And all of these words have meaning all of their own but in in the mind of the psalmist he is somebody who appreciates these words in light of his experience of what God has done in his own life.

Now I know most of you read your Bibles you wouldn't be here without reading the Bible we always read the Bible when we attend church and because of the reality of what the gospel is all about the gospel is addressing the need of the sinner by way of Jesus Christ so you can't read your Bible without at some point confronting the fact that this world lies in sin and that there is sin in the world and there is sin in the heart and mind of those who live in the world so because you're present because you're regularly present you know about it and you've heard about it and you've got a measure of understanding about it but knowing something of the world does not really mean that you understand the full implications of what the world is saying we could do a word study and there are parts of the scripture that invite such a study for example if we look at the word iniquity

[46 : 23] I was just focusing on that word iniquity who forgives all thine iniquities what kind of word is the word iniquity now my instinct when I'm confronted with that word is to think not just of sin but an exceptionally evil sin you know it's on a spectrum you would see it quite quite distinctly on the dark side of the spectrum the meaning of it in the dictionary is behavior that is highly unfair or immoral it's not just unfair or immoral but highly unfair or immoral another understanding of it is something that is twisted or distorted so that's just one word and David uses several

I don't want us to to think about the meanings of these words in particular but to grasp that when David is here praising God and rejoicing in the presence of God and delighting on all that God has done that he is doing so with the felt expression of all of these things in his life that God has dealt with all of these things that were part of his experience things that he did wrong things that he said that he shouldn't have said behavior that was unacceptable in any person let alone for the king of Israel who was supposed to be representative of his people and indicative of the people's relationship of God with God

I want you to understand and I want us to understand that not only was David personally aware of this broad spectrum of misbehavior that was in his own life and in the life of others but that it affects our life and the life of others others you know my sin might be a sin that is private and hidden from sight but at some point it is going to impact on others outside of my own personal experience of that sin it is bound to in its very nature it does not remain within my heart and within my life privately it will affect other areas of my life and as my life interacts with others it will affect the lives of others how I behave towards them and so on one of the theologians who has written a book a commentary on the book of science a man called

J. Alexander he refers to this word that we have here that is used by David where he is speaking about diseases now what do you think about the word diseases obviously the thing that you think of instinctively is a physical manifestation of poor health disease can be in many shapes and forms but it is usually associated with our health but the psalmist the way he speaks about God healing our diseases he is also talking about something that is directly the consequence of sin in the world we might not think of it like that we might not associate it with sin but it is a direct consequence of the fall of man and the consequences of the effects of the fall on the whole of man in that when man fell from

God they went away from God they suffered as a consequence of their going away from God and part of that suffering was not just moral it also had implications for their physical life and for their ability to sustain that physical life it affected all of mankind in different ways so J.

[51 : 45] Alexander goes back to Deuteronomy 29 and he quotes from a verse there and the Lord shall separate him into evil out of all the tribes of Israel according to the curses of the covenant that are written in the book of the law so that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you and the stranger that shall come from afar shall say when they see the plagues of the land and the sicknesses which the Lord has laid upon it now he goes on to expose that but the word diseases there comes from that emphasis that Moses brings to the attention of the people that the consequences of their going away from God their refusal to believe

God or to do what God tells them will impact upon not just their ability to do right or wrong but also it will impact upon their whole physical life as well sickness is a consequence of sin in the life of those in the world a universal consequence now that doesn't mean you know that Christ had to combat misinformation on the part of the theologians who were in the world because the theologians that were around in his day they would at times look upon misfortune people or unfortunate people who had diseases that were commonplace in his day and generation diseases such as leprosy or perhaps a person who was born blind and they would ask the question supposedly a theological question who was the sinner this man or his parents now Jesus was saying to them that that was not what was at the root of their situation they didn't suffer such diseases or illnesses because of their personal sin it was something that undergirded the whole of society because of the consequences that sin had brought into the world and mankind in the world and David understands that there is a universal impact on the lives of every person of sin and it manifests itself not just in moral behavior but also in the struggles and the striving that we encounter every day of our life because of the infirmity of the flesh that is a direct consequence of the reality of this thing that is in the world when you look at what David goes on to say he understands that death and the grave are consequences of sin now those who do not agree with the Bible those who are in dispute with the

Bible would say death is a consequence of old age death is a consequence of the inevitable process of time and the decrepitude that affects all men because of the process that man physically has to go through sin is not part of their thinking but David insists that that is not the case he sees death and the grave the ultimate end of the effect of sin in the world it's not something you can separate from the existence of it in the world just because someone to view God through the prism of human righteousness will not change who God is David knows personally that there are there are sins but he also understands that there are no small sins in the sight of a holy

God you know we mentioned Psalm 51 against thee he says thee only have I sinned in thy sight done the sin that when thou speaks thou mayst be just and clear in judging still David understands that God is the judge of all flesh the quick and the dead and the judgment of God is brought to bear upon the sinner because of their sin because of their lack of righteousness because of their lack of holiness because they are in a broken relationship with God which they cannot restore because they are incapable of breaking or restoring what is broken what David knew much to his grief was that he could not hide sin he tried to willfully he tried to hide his sin he tried to make out that it wasn't that because he was king that his sin didn't matter or because he was king that he could overlook it but the consequences of sin always follow us whatever we do it's one of the puritans who has put it something like this sin is a bit like seed the more you try and cover it the more you cultivate it it's a very wise statement when you think of what

David did he tried to cover his sin but it was more fertile ground for the outcome of it he understands he understands experientially he understands personally a vast experience of his own shortcomings his own failings every misdirection every way that he has failed where he should have stood he understands all of these things and yet what does the psalm consist of a celebration of who God is and it's not because sin doesn't matter it's not because sin is something that is indifferent or something that has no consequence but because God is who he says he is and

[59 : 31] God as far as David is concerned is the stimulus for his gratitude where do we find that in the psalm well I think in a way he sees first of all what God is able and willing to do God is able and willing to forgive he is able to heal he is able to redeem he is able to demonstrate his loving kind he is able to satisfy the lying soul he is able to renew and to quicken all of these things are not things which David does but which David enjoys David appreciates because he has experienced these things at the hand of God he is as must be pointed out not under any obligation to show mercy or to be forgiving or to overlook iniquity in any way we choose to speak of it as

God overlooking it but God is a God of mercy and mercy means nothing if it is not something that is totally totally undeserved David did not come to God with his sins thinking that because he was the king of Israel he had a right to expect from God mercy for his sins he had no right any more than you have any right to expect God to show mercy to you because of your sins mercy means nothing if it is anything other than unmerited favor on the part of God you go to the New Testament and the words of the apostle Paul writing to the Ephesians he speaks about

Jesus Christ and the peace of Jesus Christ in whom we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins according to the richness of his grace according to the riches of his grace again in Colossians in whom we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins one more and you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath he quickened together with him having forgiven you all trespasses now that's what David understood are you seen that this world of ours wants to to dismiss the whole notion of sin as if it was irrelevant something that doesn't matter something that is part and partial of human existence but something you have to live with and suffer the consequences on occasion maybe you want to live like that but

David did not want to live like that he wanted his sins to be accounted for he wanted his sins to be dealt with he wanted his sins to be obliterated redemption from forgiveness from the hand of God you know a common thing we hear of today is we want to rewrite the history books we want to put right the wrongs of past generations and especially the mistreatment of slaves in the world and that is right as far as it goes and the reason I mention it is because the whole notion of redemption as far as David is concerned has in it the buying back of something that was sold to someone else to redeem is to buy back and

David and Paul understood everything to do with the slave market they were slaves themselves they experienced what it was to be oppressed by others it was part of their culture when the Roman armies conquered the world at one point in the Roman empire it is said that there were up to six million slaves six million slaves who were under the heel of the Roman oppressor and it wasn't an easy thing to be a slave in Rome they bought and they sold them as if they were cartled so when Paul talked and when David talked about redemption he understood what that word meant he understood the significance of it he understood what God was doing when he was redeeming a soul somebody who was enslaved enslaved by what enslaved by sin enslaved by the consequences of sin in in chains in bondage to it something they could not break free from but by

[65 : 26] God's grace David understood that he was redeemed when it speaks also of the forgiveness of God there's much in that we use that word very loosely we'll say to somebody I forgive you you've wronged me but I forgive you God's forgiveness is not just a word that that is thrown out it is a word that speaks of a deliberate action on the part of God where he carries away the offence where he removes what is the offending article and sin is what offends God and he carries it away and the symbolism of the Old Testament speaks of it you go to the book of Leviticus and the book of Deuteronomy and it speaks there of the typology that speaks of what

God was going to do in the person of Jesus Christ and sin was to be carried away removed from the sin so that it would no longer be an offence but it was something he was doing do you understand that when God forgives he takes away the cause of the offence so that it no longer exists and this is what David was rejoicing in he wasn't rejoicing because he was a sinner he wasn't rejoicing because he was an offender he wasn't rejoicing because he was somebody who was hell bent on destruction which was true of him by nature he was rejoicing because he knew what God had done and what God was willing to do the Old Testament words of the Apostle and of the New Testament words of the Apostle and the

Old Testament words of the saints of God speak constantly of what it means to experience God's grace in the pardon of sinners it's not a light matter it's not a trivial thing you know some people see graffiti on the wall there's two ways you can deal with it you can wipe it out or you can paint over it but the problem with that is that the evidence for it is still there however vague however lacking it may appear to the naked eye the impression that it made is somewhere there maybe not visible to the naked eye but it was there

God doesn't do that God deals with sin in the sinner that has appreciated his mercy in Christ Jesus by removing it completely so that he will not remember that he will not hold it against the sinner that he will not hold them to account on the day of judgment because they have done something they have come to the Lord they have trusted in the Lord they have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ through whom forgiveness is possible if you read through the psalm again the emphasis on God's mercy is before you the Lord is merciful and gracious slow to anger plenteous in mercy he will not always hold either will he keep his anger forever he has not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquity for as the heaven is high above the earth so great is his mercy towards them that fear

I don't think there's a child of God present here today who has not gone to these words and rejoiced in their hearts that their sins are as far from God as the east is from the west never will they be presented before his eye to condemn them because in Christ they are dealt with nothing like it in the world but notice even without emphasising this fact David can't get away from the fact that the God who is merciful the God who is gracious the God who is forgiving is forgiving and merciful and gracious to them that fear him that his righteousness is to his children's children to such as keep his covenant to those that remember his commandment people want to believe that

[70 : 52] God has dealt with sin so that every sinner no matter what they do their sins will never be held against them that's the kind of God that they want a God who will say never mind carry on sin or will doesn't matter I don't care is that the kind of God you expect will one day stand and you stand in his presence would you say that he was a holy God if he closed his eyes to use them and said they don't matter the worst of them they don't matter go ahead do your worst doesn't matter where do you find a picture of God like that in the scripture God of scripture is a holy God a God of scripture the God of scripture the only living and true God is a

God who must judge in righteousness I was reading recently most of you many of you will know the person called Arthur Conan Doyle you would possibly know him better by one of the characters that he wrote about which was Sherlock Holmes but it seems that Arthur Conan Doyle was very interested in the spirit in the spirit in the occult what happened after death and yet he had no time for the God of scripture which seems rather strange he believed in a spirit world and yet he had no time for the

God who is spirit he had no time for the God who is holy he had no time for what the God who was holy said he would do to the sinner who remained unrepentant who remained unregenerate who remained dead in their trespasses and sins unfortunately it is not there are too many people who like that kind of person who thinks they can form and shape a God of their own making who thinks differently to the way the God of heaven has expressed his thoughts Jonathan Edwards one of the preachers of renown of a past generation he preached a sermon that terrorised many who were sitting listening to me perhaps wouldn't get many in his congregation today sinners in the hands of an angry

God but at one point Jonathan Edwards said looking at the scripture there is no reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you rose in the morning but that God's hand has held you up that's a very very serious thought there is no reason why I haven't dropped into hell this morning according to Edwards according to the scripture if it is not for the mercy of God for the grace of God holding you back from the abyss there is a point at which that will be the case God's grace will no longer apply to you if you reject his grace in Christ

Jesus you may choose not to believe in hell there are many in hell today who more different David doesn't talk about hell here he does talk about it elsewhere because it was a real thing to him you know when he speaks about it because he understands the implications of it the destruction the word that is translated destruction here is a word that equally is able to be translated sheol or the grave or hell itself and he understands that God has saved him from that and only God can only God does and that is why Christ is set before you in the gospel that you may believe in him as the one who came and took the sins of his people to the cross that they would not have to answer for them read the psalm again sing it spend the afternoon singing the psalm sing yourself into the spirit that is necessary to celebrate the mercy of God as it is in Christ

[76 : 33] Jesus you can't go wrong by doing that let us pray the Lord our God help us to appreciate how wonderfully precise your word is that speaks at length of God's memories the psalmist says I will never sing and we give thanks that when we do that we are talking about something that we have experienced that you have not judged us as similarly as you could we pray for an understanding of your word that we might understand the words that are in the word where sin is identified in all its gross evil and outcomes and where salvation is held out to us as possible and certain in Christ go before us we pray forgive us every transgression in him amen we're going to sing the verses of this psalm that we were looking at in particular psalm 103 the first four stanzas so thou my soul bless God the Lord and all that in me who's bestowed up his holy name to magnify and bless bless oh my soul the Lord thy God and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he has bestowed on thee we'll sing to verse four oh thou my soul bless

God the Lord oh thou my soul bless God the Lord and all that in me is best in be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee all thine iniquity news who hath he love he■■■■■ we listened these

Who doth redeem thy life, the power to death, miss not for down?

O thee with glory, kindness joth, and tender mercy trine.