

# The Blessed Man Whose Sin is Forgiven

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 11 October 2024

Preacher: Rev Colin Macleod

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     prayer meeting at 11am. The service will follow at 12 noon taken by the Minister Colin MacLeod. There will be a bilingual prayer meeting at 6 o'clock and following the benediction just now the concession will constitute and we will be pleased to meet with any who belong to the congregation who may desire to make public profession of their faith in Christ for the first time.

Good evening friends, it's good to be with you. It's a privilege to be here and it is correct, Kai is correct to say it's my first visit and I know that because I checked with my wife earlier on today. Have we ever been here before? For some reason we just haven't been so it's great to be with you this evening to gather around God's Word.

Well as we prepare our hearts to sing praise to God, let me just read these few verses from the scriptures from 1 Thessalonians in chapter 5, words that go right to the heart of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us. What a Saviour, what a message and what a gospel.

We sing to his praise from Psalm 65 this evening. Psalm 65, we'll sing from the beginning of the psalm to the end of verse 4. Praise waits for thee in Zion, Lord, to thee vows paid shall be, O thou that hear art of prayer, all flesh shall come to thee. Iniquities I must confess prevail against me do, but as for our transgressions, then purge away shalt thou. Psalm 65, we'll sing to verse 4 to the praise of God. Praise waits for thee in Zion, Lord, to thee vows paid shall be, O life that hear the heart of prayer, all flesh shall come to thee. Iniquities I must confess,

Reven against me do, but as for our transgressions, then purge away shalt thou. But as for our transgressions, then purge away shalt thou.

[ 3 : 1 3 ]     Blessed is the man whom thou dost choose, and may shalt thou approach to thee, that he within thine Lord's O Lord may still at well and be. We surely shall be satisfied with thy abundant grace, and with the goodness of thy grace. Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray.

Our gracious and ever-blessed God, our loving Heavenly Father, mighty and glorious, wondrous in power, amazing in grace. These words already this evening stir within our hearts and minds and understanding of the bounty of the bounty of your provision toward us, the abundance of your grace that satisfies both in life and eternity.

So, Lord, we bow this evening. We give thanks for the opportunity we have to join together in worship, to sing praise to the living God. What a joy, what a privilege, to be able to lift up our voices in praise and adoration, to give vent to the longing of our hearts, to adore, to worship, to sing praise. Lord, we pray this evening that as we do so, we might do so in humility and dependence. It is not our might that matters this evening. It is our meekness.

It is not our gifting and our strength and our ability and our plans and our strategies, but it is all of the cross. It is all of Christ. It is all of the Lord Jesus, our Saviour and Friend.

We acknowledge him tonight as the King and Head of the Church. We acknowledge him as the only Saviour of sinners, as the apostles did so long ago when confronted with enmity and opposition and intimidation, with threats of danger and beatings, with threats of execution. They said, we would rather obey God than men. And so they preached the name of Jesus. They testified that the one who had been slain had risen from the dead and was victorious over the grave.

[ 6 : 23 ] And we thank you, Lord, that the New Testament Church from that moment has gone through a transformation, that they were changed from within, and they went from being timid and afraid behind locked doors to turning the world upside down. And we bless you, Lord, that they did so not because of their own strength, but because of the wonderful message of love and forgiveness, full and free, found in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And so as we worship this evening, may we clear our hearts and minds of other things. May we clear our hearts and minds even of today's activities, the responsibilities, the things that have kept us busy, things that we've been focused upon, responsibilities, concerns, worries. May we, for this evening hour, be enabled by the Spirit to focus clearly and consistently on the cross of Christ, our Lord and Saviour. May we know him to be close tonight. May we know him through repentance and faith to be our Lord and Saviour. Lord, we pray that your hand would be upon us over these days, that you would bless the congregation, that they might know, Lord, a real blessing from on high, a real time of nourishment, encouragement through the word and sacrament, if it be your will that we meet to this coming Lord's Day at the table of our Lord. We ask, Lord, that you would meet us there, and that you would pour out such a blessing that we could not contain it, and that we would know the joy of the Lord as our strength. We anticipate that table because of Jesus. We anticipate the feast, the nourishment, the meal, the growth. We anticipate all these things because of his finished work upon the cross, his perfect life, his sinless sacrifice in our room instead, penal substitutionary atonement.

It is the beating heart of the gospel, and it is a message that we gather in its light and give thanks for this evening for its verity, that we are tonight meeting in the name of a risen Saviour who has given to us a message that is trustworthy and true. And so we tonight praise you that you sent your Son into this world, this world of darkness and sinfulness, this world of rebellion, this world that had rejected you and turned from you, this world of iniquity and sin. God, have mercy on us. Forgive our sins and trespasses.

Forgive, Lord, the things we do. You command us not to do, and yet we do them. You instruct us, Lord, on what we are not to do, and that is where we are found. We trip and fall and fail. And we ask tonight, Lord, for your forgiveness and cleansing and the renewal of the Holy Spirit himself moving within our hearts and souls, that we would be renewed with strength in the inner man, that we would be renewed as eagles, and that we would run and not be weary, that we would walk and not faint, that we would take up the cross and follow. We remember, Lord, this evening, then, your cause here on our island and across our nation.

We pray for your blessing upon word and sacrament in days ahead. We pray that your cause, Lord, would prosper through the preaching of your word and through fellowship and communion. May your people be encouraged over this coming weekend, wherever they meet, in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Saviour. May there be a real harvest of holiness. May there be nourishment and growth and vibrancy as we together and as one we remember his death until he come again and focus on the gospel.

With the word, then, is preached, Lord, in days to come across our land, we ask that you would accompany that word, that it would go forth with power and conviction, that lives would be changed, that eyes would be opened and hardness of hearts would melt, and that sinners would come to the cross, would come to Jesus, us crying out, Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner. And as we ask that, Lord, we ask that you would draw near to us here as we meet in days to come. I pray your blessing on the ongoing work of the congregation at this significant time in their story. We remember Kai and Margaret, the family, the office bearers, members and adherents here in Kalanish. Lord, undertake for them, bless them and keep them, and may they know what it is to walk in a manner that is worthy of the gospel. May they know in this change of providence that is coming, in this end of one ministry, in the beginning of another chapter,

[ 11 : 23 ] Lord, we pray that you would be with them, they would walk with you into this chapter, looking unto Jesus, giving thanks for the blessings they have known and anticipating the blessings to come.

Lord, we know that you are unchanging, and we bless you. In the name of Jesus Christ, we gather, the one who was the same yesterday, today and forever, and we seek now your blessing upon us as we worship together. Forgive our sin, Lord, and all these things we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Amen. We will sing again to God's praise from Psalm 42. Psalm 42. I will sing again from the beginning to the end of verse 4. Psalm 42. Singing from the beginning to the end of the double verse, Mark 4.

We will sing again from the beginning to the end of the double verse 4.

God's sight, we will sing again from the beginning to the end of the double verse 4. We will sing again from the end of the double verse 4. To the praise of God. I cast the heart of water moon, in thirst of light and gray.

[ 12 : 58 ] So once my longings, O Lord, have come to thee, O Lord.

My soul, Lord, of the living, O Lord, the first which shall I hear.

Until thy countenance approach, can't in not sight appear.

My dear, come unto me, O live the night of day.

My love to be, O tenderly, where is thy heart insane?

[ 14 : 29 ] My soul is cold without in me, and as I think of God, Because the wind above the wind, I hear to forth and on.

With them in true, O search I went, With voice of joy and grace, Give with the man, Deuteronomy, The last song of holy days.

We'll read from God's word this evening two passages. The first being from the letter to the Ephesians in the New Testament. Reading Ephesians and chapter 1.

And then turn into the book of Psalms. Ephesians and chapter 1. And then turn into the book of Psalms. We read this chapter from the beginning.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, By the will of God, To the saints which are at Ephesus, And to the faithful in Christ Jesus, Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, And from the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 16 : 41 ] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, In heavenly places in Christ. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, That we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, According to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, Wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, In whom we have redemption through his blood, The forgiveness of sins, According to the riches of his grace, Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, According to his good pleasure, Which he hath purposed in himself, That, In the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, Both which are in heaven and which are on earth, Even in him, In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, Being predestined according to the purpose of him Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,

That we should be to the praise of his glory, Who first trusted in Christ. Amen. Turning for a second reading to the book of Psalms, I'll read from Psalm 32.

Psalm of David. A psalm that puts before us the blessedness of forgiveness. Psalm 32.

Psalm 32. Blessed is he whose transgressions is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

[ 18 : 45 ] Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no guile. 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. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, And my iniquity have I not hid.

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, In a time when thou mayest be found.

Surely in the floods of great waters They shall not come nigh unto him, Thou art my hiding place, Thou shalt preserve me from trouble, Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go, I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, Which have no understanding, Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, Lest they come near unto thee.

[ 19 : 56 ] Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, But he that trusteth in the Lord, Mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord, And rejoice, ye righteous, And shout for joy, All ye that are upright in heart.

May the Lord bless to our hearts His own word. We'll sing again to his praise Before turning back to look at the psalm. We're going to sing from this psalm, In the Psalter, Psalm 32, We'll sing from verse 5 to verse 7.

Psalm 32, Psalm we've just read together, And we'll sing from verse 5 to verse 7. I thereupon have unto thee my sin acknowledged, And likewise mine iniquity I have not covered.

I will confess unto the Lord my trespasses, Said I, And of my sin thou freely didst forgive the iniquity. We'll sing then to the end of verse 7 to God's praise.

I thereupon have unto thee my sin acknowledged, And likewise mine iniquity I have not covered.

[ 21 : 26 ] I will confess unto the Lord my trespasses, And I, I love my sin thou freely didst forgive him, Iniquity.

For this of every Lord we won, Is made a great to thee, In such a time he shall please thee, As one thou mayest be.

To thee when floods of waters stray, To sweat up to the grave, They shall not overwetheest old, Nor once come near to him.

Thou art my hiding place, Thou shalt from the heart keep me free, Thou with songs of deliverance, Thou shalt compass me.

Amen. If you would turn with me in your Bibles to the passage that we read from together in the book of Psalms, Psalm 32, A passage that's entitled, Blessed are the forgiven.

[ 23 : 51 ] And as we read through that psalm, We see from start to end that David has indeed got reason to rejoice. It's here in the very first phrase, Blessed are they whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

We know tonight through our familiarity with the Psalter, the song book of the Bible, That these songs, divine poetry, are full of realism.

They're packed full with real life. That's the kind of situations we find so often in the Psalms, Which is why they resonate so much with us, Why they're so popular with the Lord's people, Why they have retained such a place at the heart of the church of Christ on earth.

The Psalms are full of real life. There's nothing pink and fluffy here. There's nothing unrealistic here. There's nothing in many instances that we can't relate to, Because there are struggles and setbacks.

There are joys. There's hopes. There's blessing. There's uncertainty. There's fearfulness. There's forgiveness. There is God. And what we find from the human side, Is that the layers of these struggles are often just peeled back, To reveal to us how it is that we are to deal with life in the raw.

[ 25 : 14 ] Psalm 32 takes us from the very beginning, Into this realism. This realism that presents to us things from God's perspective.

The Psalm starts an understanding tonight, friends, that we know well. And the more familiar we are with the Bible, The more familiar and honest we are in our own hearts and minds, Our own conscience bearing witness to us of this.

The Psalm begins by stating how things are in the sight of God. It starts with the realism and awfulness of sin.

Blessed are they whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Sin is not a debate.

It's not a discussion. It's a doctrine of God's word. It's a reality that the Bible places before us this evening. And because of the reality and awfulness and impact and consequence of sin, We have a table to anticipate this coming Lord's Day.

[ 26 : 25 ] So yes, the Psalm here, it begins with this reality. It deals with the realism and awfulness of sin, but it doesn't stay there. David's song doesn't fixate on sin.

It's that he isn't crushed with a sense of anguish and despair conscious of his sin. Rather, his song progresses to take us to the point of wonder, praise and gratitude Because of who we are as Christians and whose we are.

So tonight we can say this is our song. This is the song of the Church of Christ on Earth. This is the song of every Christian man, woman, boy and girl.

Lewis, this evening. When you come to Christ, when you seek the cleansing and forgiveness of sin that only Christ can effect, You are truly blessed.

What is it in this context, this setting, to be blessed? It is to know the contentment and fulfilment of God's touch upon your life.

[ 27 : 33 ] It is to know the merging of contentment and fulfilment through God's favour and God's grace. Truly, the forgiven sinner tonight is blessed.

I want us to think about the psalm this evening and the time we have together. Thinking first of all about the reality that's placed before us. God's forgiveness. God's forgiveness.

The Bible never hides from us. There is a problem. And the problem is sin. The world will do that. Unbelievers will do that. Atheists and humanists and secularists.

They'll do that. They'll deny sin. They'll mock any understanding of sin. They'll mock us for holding true to the Bible. They'll laugh and scorn at the concept of the reality of sin.

But the Bible doesn't. It's four square and centre. If you were to read your Bible from beginning to end with an open and honest heart, with a mind that is willing to learn and take on board what you're told, you would close your Bible after reading the last chapter of Revelation, and you would know there's a problem.

[ 28 : 43 ]    Something's wrong. And it's called sin. Its presence and power, its effect is here in the very first sentence we've read a number of times now already.

In fact, the seriousness of the situation, in fact, it's so serious that David uses several words to get into the real heart of the problem.

Sin is such an issue, it doesn't do just to have one word to try and sum it up. He needs a number of words. We have the word here, sin, which itself is a word that means to miss the mark or to fall short.

That's the ancient setting of this word. It comes from the root of the ancient language to mean to miss the mark. So there is how God sees us spiritually.

We miss the mark. But then you'll notice he uses other words. He uses this word transgression. To transgress God's law is to go over or to cross a known boundary.

[ 29 : 49 ]    This is something we do knowingly. But what fuels that activity? Why do we transgress God's law? Why do we transgress the boundaries?

Well, that comes from this word we find in verse two, iniquity. This word iniquity speaks not of outwardly crossing a known boundary, but the energy and the drive to do so.

Because iniquity comes from the heart. Iniquity is a word that speaks of inner corruption, of the mess, the mangled, twisted mess of our nature.

And then, of course, we have this word deceit. In whose spirit there is no guile, as the AV puts it. It is a word that in other translations you'll find translated as the word deceit, which of course is to cover up or to deny the truth.

That's the world's business. That's never the business of the church of Christ, to cover the truth, to deny the truth. Rather, we focus in on the truth. And we see here the awfulness of the situation of sin.

[ 30 : 54 ]    Sin is to experience a lack of conformity to or transgression of God's law, which Calvin famously defined as, Because sin defiles us and denies God.

That's what we do in sinful activity. And if we were to turn to the first chapter of Isaiah, we see a very powerful summary into the consequence of all this.

Let me just read to you from chapter 1 and verse 4 as Isaiah opens his ministry with these words, defining the problem. The problem. A sinful nation. A people laden with iniquity.

A seed of evildoers. Children that are corruptors. They have forsaken the Lord. They have provoked the Holy One unto anger. They are gone away backward. That phrase literally means they are estranged.

And that's where sin leaves us. Estranged from God. Cast out. Stranger to the promise. With no hope for God. Estranged.

[ 32 : 07 ]    And so isn't it good and right and proper that God set before us this problem in his word. And we learn tonight anew and reflect upon the awfulness of sin.

But we notice that this psalm begins with that word blessed. Because of this awful situation and the realism of sin. David is now beginning a song because he knows he has been forgiven for his sin, for his iniquity, for his deceit, for his transgressions.

And so the song bursts forth. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord accounts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones waxed all through my roaring all the day long.

For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me. And then verse 5, the turning point. I acknowledged my sin unto thee. The testimony of a Christian here tonight.

It's where testimonies eventually come to this point of acknowledging in our story our sinfulness. In a discussion last weekend, it came up a bit of back and forth that someone was asked in an interview scenario.

[ 33 : 26 ] If you were to write your biography today, what would the title of the book be? A Christian friend, if you were to write your biography tonight, you could use the title Forgiven.

Forgiven. Forgiven. Because that's what occurs when we come in repentance and faith to Jesus Christ. And you see, something has to change here.

And we see this change in verse 5. He begins to unpack and describe for us the glory and wonder and grace of God's forgiveness. I acknowledged my sin unto thee. My iniquity I have not hid.

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord. And you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Something has to change.

Something has to give. And it does. The distress and anguish of verses 3 and 4 are now displaced by the wonder of forgiveness.

[ 34 : 26 ] And the transformation is total and it comes through God's forgiveness. He graciously removes our burden. He covers our condition. He cancels our debt.

That is what this psalm puts before us this evening. And what a wonderful focus that is to just carry into the weekend as we anticipate the Lord's table. As we look to the cross.

As we reflect on the glory of Golgotha. As we think of the suffering servant and our wonderful risen living saviour.

Why did he die? The only explanation is because of the awfulness of sin that we could do nothing about. And the loving provision of God our Father in sending his son into this world to seek and to save the lost.

It's a little wonder that the Bible uses that word lost to describe us as we are. We acknowledge tonight that we don't grow up into sin. We don't become sinners when we hit 18.

[ 35 : 25 ] We're born with this condition. We're born in sin. As Ephesians makes very clear, not only are we born in sin. Because of sin we are spiritually dead. There is no pulse.

There is no breath. We bring nothing to the bargaining table with Almighty God. But sin. Which is why Charlotte Elliot wrote this glorious hymn.

I share these words with you. Just as I am without one plea. But that thy blood was shed for me. And that thou bidst me come to thee.

O Lamb of God, I come. She wrote these words in the midst of a real bout of anxiety, doubt, and what we probably would call today clinical depression.

She suffered a horrendous catalogue of ill health in her life. And at one point, specifically feeling so torn. Was she forgiven?

[ 36 : 25 ] Was she good enough? Had she actually become a child of God? As she meditated in the scripture. These words were written. Just as I am.

Without one plea. But that thy blood was shed for me. And that thou bidst me come to thee. O Lamb of God, I come. The blessing of God's forgiveness.

What does God do with our sin? Many scriptures tell us here. Let me read to you just a few of them. In Isaiah chapter 38. You have cast all my sins behind your back.

Isaiah 43. I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake. And I will remember your sins no more. Psalm 103. As far as the east is from the west.

So far does he remove our transgressions from us. This is what God does with our sin. This is the condition that David calls blessed. God forgives.

[ 37 : 25 ] God forgives. And God forgets. And God forgets. I will cast your sin behind my back. I will remember your sins no more.

And friends, what God does, no one and nothing can undo. By grace and through faith, God forgives. And God forgets.

The wages of sin is death. That's where our natural condition leaves us. But the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. Isn't it tragic that the devil has convinced so many people tonight in our own communities and in our nation that the church has nothing good to say?

That we're just naysayers, protesters, that we're overbearing, that we're just legalists, that we don't want people to enjoy life, that we don't want people to know fulfillment and prosperity and joy.

What a tragedy that the devil has convinced so many of that lie. When our message tonight is the wages of sin is death. That's where we all stand. But the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

[ 38 : 47 ] And we can see tonight, Christian friend, that in Jesus we have only one record. And our record is righteousness. For the slate has been wiped clean.

We read here that blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord accounts not his iniquity and in his spirit there is no guile or deceit.

This word here imputes means to account. And in Christ the slate is truly wiped clean. Yes, the war remains. Christian friends, we all know about the tender conscience.

We all know about the strife and the warfare and the struggles. We know about that sin that so easily besets us and trips us and snares us, our weakness, the flesh.

O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? And as the old wrestles with the new and as the flesh wars with the spirit, we look to the Lord for grace and mercy and strength to persevere, to fight the good fight.

[ 39 : 54 ] To face the enemy full square and the breastplate of righteousness and the shield of faith and the sword of the spirit. It's a battle. That's why Paul uses such forceful language.

That's why he so often dips into the military world to describe the Christian life. It is a battle. This is no cakewalk. There's nothing pink and fluffy here. There's nothing easy here.

We don't stumble and mumble our way to glory. We have to fight and run and persevere. We have to mount up with wings as eagles at times, friends.

We need to rely and lean on our Lord and we must be prepared to do so. And so, yes, the war remains. But in the light of God's forgiveness and this blessedness, this contentment and fulfillment that merges in our hearts through God's favour and grace, we go, according to his will, to the table as forgiven sinners.

And rejoicing in the joy of knowing our Saviour, God's forgiveness.

[ 41 : 06 ] Second, we hear in this psalm, there is very much an emphasis on God's closeness. In verse 5, at this turning point of acknowledgement and repentance and confession and turning, David said, I will not hide my iniquity.



I will not try to kid on I'm something I'm not. I will not try to mask the inner corruption of my soul. I will acknowledge it. I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.

And then with this wonderful phrase, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. God has said, forgiven. And what's wonderful here in verse 5, in the ancient Hebrew, it's emphatic.

There's a double, there's a repetition. It's to make it clear where the forgiveness comes from. The Hebrew could be read in this way. You, you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

He's praising God in grace and gratitude. Listen to the case that, that passage in 1 Corinthians 15. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 42 : 11 ] Doesn't it come to mind when we think of this? You see, this is not a forensic, cold, unfeeling theological lecture. There's nothing cold and unfeeling in the doctrine of the forgiveness of God.

Or in the reality of the closeness of God. To think of this as a cold, forensic, unfeeling, methodical experience is to completely misunderstand what is held out to us here tonight.

Nothing less and nothing other than the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Come to me, he says, and I will give you rest.

And that Christian friend again is our testimony. We heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest. And what did we do? We responded.

We came just as we are. And we sought the cleansing and renewing power of the Holy Spirit. And David now, between verses 5 and 7, revels in this standing.

[ 43 : 14 ] Yes, but in the closeness that he now experiences. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found. Surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto him.

How? Because thou art my hiding place. Thou shalt preserve me from trouble. Thou shalt compass me about with the songs of deliverance.

There's nothing cold here. This is the language of closeness, communion, fellowship. Closeness with the living God. You see, sin destroyed our communion with God.

It leaves us under his wrath and judgment. This we know. Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. That again is where we are out with Christ.

But look now at the language. The transformation that's happened through forgiveness. You are my hiding place. I was thinking about this coming across earlier on, coming over this evening.

[ 44 : 19 ] And it struck me. The language paints a picture of a spiritual broch. And whatever they say about the broch, and there are myriad themes and suggestions and stories about what it was used for, and who used it, and all the rest of it.

One thing it certainly did, it provided protection for whoever was inside. That's what the purpose of that building was. We know that much. But look here at this language.

You. You are my hiding place. You shall preserve me from trouble. You shall compass me, or you shall surround me with songs of deliverance.

And then the Lord speaks himself. I will instruct you. I will teach you the way that thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye. This is closeness.

This is what we enjoy as children of God. Forgiveness changes everything. It banishes the lostness of our condition and establishes closeness.

[ 45 : 30 ] So where are we now? How do we live out our life in the world as believers in the Lord Jesus? In this manner. In this closeness.

Through this communion. Knowing that he will preserve us. He will surround us with songs. Look what's happening as he surrounds us. I will instruct you.

I will teach you. I will guide you. With my eye. The language of verse 8. Communion with God. And the Bible is full of passages.

Particularly the Psalms. That speak of this reality. Psalm 119. My shield and hiding place thou art. Psalm 46. God is my refuge and my strength.

And Psalm 91. They who dwell in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. That Christian friend is where you are this evening. In the shadow of the Almighty.

[ 46 : 31 ] Because of Jesus Christ your Lord and Saviour. He has paid a price you could not pay. He stood where you could not go. And he said, Father. Not them.

But me. And he emptied the cup of God's wrath. Something we could not do. And so we must never doubt, friends. The reality of this closeness.

Of course, the world, the flesh and the devil. They tear at it. They attack it. They deny it. They denounce it. They make it a laughing stock. They say, how can you believe that you have closeness with God?

How can you go there? What did Ephesians tell us? We have redemption through his blood. The forgiveness of sins. According to the riches of his grace.

The riches of his grace. Brings us not just into the light of the kingdom. But right into the family of God. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed in us.

[ 47 : 36 ] That we are children of God. And this is what we are. This is where our dignity as believers comes from. We don't stand on our own dignity. We don't have any. Spiritually speaking, we don't.

But the dignity of the child of God comes from our loving Heavenly Father. And not only does this closeness establish dignity. It fixes our destiny.

We know what happens next. We know that the undertaker doesn't have the last word over any of us. We know the cemetery is not the end. We know the funeral is not the full stop.

Because in the life to come, we will be with him. And we will see him as he is. Face to face. What a promise. What a pledge he has given to us, friends, this evening.

In describing the great biblical doctrine of justification. The Shrodd of Catechism puts it this way. Justification is an act of God's free grace.

[ 48 : 36 ] God's forgiveness, friends, is both immediate and eternal.

Thanks be to God. He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. God's closeness. He is our shield and hiding place.

Our refuge and strength. And he is our shelter. And we abide in the shadow of the Almighty. As we live to his glory. And that psalm begins to push us into this place of understanding.

And so we see the correction, the warning in verse 9. Don't be stubborn. Don't be hard of heart. Don't be thick in the head. Be ye not as the horse or the mule which have no understanding.

Don't turn away from this wonder. Don't turn away and question and doubt. And give up on what the gospel holds before us tonight, friends. You see, these animals that are described in verse 9.

[ 49 : 47 ] That they're described as being so stubborn and set in the ways they will not learn. And so the living God says, remember, not only I am with you.

But in the closeness of this communion, he instructs. He teaches. He guides. And he guides us with his own eye. Lastly, then, this point.

Just to close this evening. God's forgiveness and God's closeness. And the closeness is seen particularly in God's guidance. Verse 8 closes with that phrase.

I will guide thee with mine eye. I will guide thee with mine eye. And look at the consequence of all of us.

Remember Isaiah chapter 1 set before us. The consequence of our sin is estrangement with God. But here in Psalm 32, with the time we come to the end, we see that the consequence of forgiveness is closeness and guidance and joy.

[ 50 : 46 ] Look at verse 11. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous. Shout for joy, all ye upright and hard.

There's the consequence of living in the shadow of the Almighty. We have reason to rejoice. Because of the grace of God in our hearts, we are glad. We are glad because we have the righteousness of Christ accounted to us.

Forgiven. Set free. What to live for ourselves? No, of course not. But to serve the living God. There will, of course, be hardship. Difficult days.

There are no doubt around the corner for many of us. Stress will be there. Anxiety will be there. Uncertainty will be there. Maybe ill health. Maybe financial pressure.

Maybe family concerns will grip us. But our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ assures us repeatedly he is with us. Psalm 22 uses the phrase, My God and guide art thou.

[ 51 : 50 ] And we know the setting of Psalm 22. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? That cry of dereliction from the lips of our Saviour. As he gives his life for us.

As he becomes a curse for us. Embedded in that Psalm. My God and guide art thou. Then God not only forgets our sin.

He promises to guide our steps. That's what verse 8 sets before us. He instructs, he teaches, he counsels. And he watches. Isn't that interesting? The emphasis, I will guide thee with mine eye.

Look at Psalm 33 and verse 18. Just across the page. Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him. Upon them that hope in his mercy. I wonder, friends, if that's you this evening.

If God has his eye on you because your hope is in him. Because you have sought his mercy. Because your life is full of reverence for the Lord.

[ 52 : 51 ] I trust so. And I trust so that if you're here in the Lord's day because of that reality. You'll join your brothers and sisters at the Lord's table. Giving thanks that he instructs.

And he guides. And he leads. It's wonderful to reflect on this this evening. That as we follow our guide. He leads us deeper and deeper.

Into this experience of joy. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice. We rejoice tonight because of our Saviour. We rejoice tonight because of the cross.

We rejoice tonight because of what he has made. A reality in our hearts. A forgiveness of sin. Closeness with God. Acceptance. Justification. So let us persevere.

Let us persevere to the glory of our God and Father. Psalm 48 puts it this way. For God the Lord who is our God forever will abide. He is our God forevermore.

[ 53 : 51 ] And to the end our guide. And it's right perhaps just to emphasize this evening. The Bible is not a book of guidance.

It's a book about the guide. The Lord himself. And it is him who says. I will guide thee with mine eye. So as he teaches.

And leads us. And instructs us. Friends. Let us be willing to receive that lead. That teaching. And let us be willing to go where he leads. I will instruct thee.

And teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye. He leads. He instructs. And he teaches. Why? Because he loves us.

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice. Ye righteous. And shout for joy. All ye that are upright in heart. Our Lord and our God has brought us to this point.

[ 54 : 51 ] Where we can say tonight. Amazing love. How can it be. That thou my God should die for me. It is friends.

That's David then revel in this reality. As forgiven sinners. Who know. Love. Trust. And follow Jesus. Let us together anticipate further blessing.

Greater blessing. Wonderful blessing. Because God loves to give. He loves to bless his children. And here this psalm begins with this wonderful sense of blessedness.

Blessed are those whose transgression is forgiven. Whose sin is covered. Blessed are those unto whom the Lord does not account iniquity. And whose spirit there is no deceit.

Let us together then anticipate the blessing of his word to our hearts. And the blessing of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to our souls.

[ 55 : 51 ] And let us look to him further. And come to him in humility. Let us develop our meekness.

And let us develop thereby our willingness to persevere. To give glory to God the Father. Remembering that God's forgiveness is both immediate and eternal.

To all those who in repentance and faith come to Christ. And trust in him as Lord and Saviour. Let us pray for a moment there together.

Gracious Lord. Our ever blessed Father. We thank you this evening for such rich and beautiful poetry. As this in the psalm.

Which speaks of blessedness. Which speaks of fulfilment and contentment. Poured into our hearts. Through your grace and your forbearance. Lord we bless and praise you tonight.

[ 56 : 55 ] We adore you. For your goodness toward us in Christ. We thank you for the wonder of the gospel. That we tonight can speak of being forgiven. Lord go before us in the days to come.

Bless your word to our hearts. In Jesus name we ask it. Amen. Now we'll turn to the psalter this evening to close our service.

We'll sing from Psalm 28 in the psalter. Psalm 28. We'll sing from verse 7 to the end. In Psalm 28. The Lord's my strength and shield.

My heart upon him did rely. And I am helped. Hence my heart upon him. Hence my heart of joy exceedingly. Psalm 28. We'll sing from verse 7 to the end.

To the praise of God. The Lord's my strength and shield. The Lord's my strength and shield. My heart upon him did rely.

[ 58 : 02 ] And I am helped. And I am helped. My heart upon him. The Lord's my heart upon him.

The Lord's my heart upon him. The Lord's my heart upon him. The Lord's my heart upon him. The Lord's my heart upon him. And I am helped. The Lord's my heart upon him.

The Lord's my heart upon him. The Lord's my heart upon him. The Lord's my heart upon him.

God's role is the saving strength of His Anointed One.

O Thine, Lord, would thou ask forrest thine gl Priest's hand, Then also do our freedom  
Then forevermore at last Let us pray May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of  
God the Father And fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all now and forever Amen