

Psalm 32

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[0 : 0 0] Psalm 32. Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away, through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity.

I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah. Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found.

Surely in the rush of great waters they shall not reach him. You are a hiding place for me. You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts of deliverance.

[1 : 0 6] Selah. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.

Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts the Lord. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Well, good morning, church.

Good morning. Yeah, like Pastor David said, it is an honor to be here with you all this morning. It is a distinct joy, and I could go on and on and on about that.

I remember I was in Chicago. You know, the pandemic time is hard, right, to run together. It was a few years ago, and it was maybe right after the building was bought.

[2 : 1 8] And I came into the building, and it was, there were no chairs here. It was scaffolding up. And Dave asked me if I wanted to go and see up top, and I'm definitely afraid of heights, but I didn't want to, like, come off like a punk.

So I'm like, all right, Dave, I'll, you know, walk up, which, you know, I was holding real tight onto the thing. And we walked up, and just seeing the plaster peeling and this whole place in disarray.

And to be able to walk in now, and when we had the time where we greeted everybody, like, I just looked around, and I said, man, Dave, it's beautiful.

And he says, yeah, we've still got a long way to go. There's still some things we have to do. And I'm like, no, no, no, no, no. Not the building. The church. You all. It is just an honor and a joy to be able to see you all.

And for, I just want you all to know, I don't know you well. You don't know me, but I've got a deep love and affection in my heart for you. And I pray for you and your church often.

[3 : 29] So let's go before our Lord in prayer, and let's dive right into the word. Let's pray. Our Father God, we thank you, Lord. You have been so good and so, so kind to us, and our hearts are overwhelmed.

We pray that you would overwhelm them all the more as we read about the joy that is found in your word. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Joy is often found in the most unlikely places.

Joy is often found in the most unlikely of places. All right, it's March 9th, 1842, and a man by the name of Francisco Lopez is right outside of Placerita Canyon, California.

He spent a whole day, tedious day, cowboying on the outside, and he found himself tired and exhausted and filthy, just trying to look for some food out there to reinvigorate him so he could make his way back home.

So he got down on his hands and knees, and he found these little wild onions, and he started to dig up these bulbs. And clinging to the roots were these things that looked yellow in the sunlight, but when he put them in the shade, these little flecks were a goldish hue.

[4 : 59] Six years before the gold rush started, Francisco Lopez discovered gold clinging to dirty roots.

He went down to the ground filthy, and he came up filthy rich. That this gold was not found on some mountaintop that he had to scale.

This gold was found in the most unlikely place. His joy was found in the gutter. And I want you to know that joy is the same way.

It's found in some of the most unlikely places. Our problem is we tend to look for joy in what seem to be the most likely places.

Compliments, competence, achievements, promotions, affirmations. And we have these hearts that will do any and everything, even breaking God's law, in order to get those things.

[6 : 09] And we search for it, and we think that we find it. But when we go outside of the bounds of what God has called us to do, what we realize is that our sin doesn't necessarily give all the things that it promises.

And it leaves us, not with the joy that we hoped for, but with this shame and embarrassment, sorrow.

And when we find ourselves inevitably in that place, it does at least one of two things to us. We tend to respond in one of two ways. We either respond with silence or resilience.

Silence. I'm so ashamed by what I just did. I don't want anybody to know. So I'll just act like it didn't happen, and it'll go away.

I won't apologize for my outbursts, and I'll just start to act like things are fine. I'll clear my internet history, and I'll just act like things are fine.

[7 : 25] Out of sight, out of mind, we respond with silence, and we think that things will be fine. Or you may be here, and you respond with resilience. And you say, I can't believe I did that.

I'm never going to do it again. And you double down on your hard work and your promises. And what's difficult and what's sad is that you actually keep those promises.

And you don't do it again. And you imagine yourself successful now as if your future acts of obedience will replace your past acts of disobedience.

And you set up more strict boundaries, and you run yourself ragged, and you just feel at the end of the day, all right, I'm done with it. Either I've forgotten about it, or I've conquered it by my sheer will.

And in silence and resilience, what we do is we try to deal with a problem. But do you know what we don't get on the back end of that?

[8 : 38] Joy. The joy that God promises. It's exhausting. For you and I to think that joy is somewhere over there, out there, or up there, as if it's someplace where we have to scale mountains of morality to get this joy.

What if I told you that it was possible for you to have an experience and possess that joy right now? What if I told you it was possible for the way you orient and relate to God to change in an instant, so that as you walk out of that door today, it is fundamentally different than the way that you walked in.

What if I told you that joy is found in the most unlikely places? In the gutter. I think that's the beauty of Psalm 32.

I don't have much time here today, so I'm just going to tip my hat at the front and give you what I feel like is the main point of this psalm, or the main thing that I want you to leave with, and that is this.

I want you to know, and I want you to believe, and I'm going to spend the rest of my time trying to prove it to you and drive it down into your heart, I want you to know this, that God's perfect joy is reserved for forgiven people, not perfect ones.

[10 : 18] Look at how Psalm 32 starts out. There's going to be three ways we get there. The very first one is this, you've got to believe the pronouncement. You've got to believe the pronouncement that I just said.

And what I love is that Psalm 32 is gift-wrapped very, very well. All right, I'm a great gift-getter. I'm a terrible gift-giver, okay?

My wife is a great gift-giver because she'll get the right gift, and then she'll do the extra work to make sure that I'm surprised by the time that the box opens, right? So it'll be a pair of shoes, and she'll put it in a smaller box and wrap that up and then in a bigger box and wrap that up in this big box.

And so I come and I shake, and I don't know what it is. That's too much work for me. If I get you a pair of shoes, the hard work for me was in finding the gift that you like.

I'm going to wrap it up so that the outside looks like a pair of shoes. So as soon as I give it to you, you know what it is. All right, David is a terrible gift-wrapper.

[11 : 24] He wraps Psalm 32 in a way where he wants you to know what it is. We tend to look at a psalm like this and think that it's about repentance and sorrow and heartache.

And in some ways it is, but Psalm 32 is a psalm about blessing and joy. Look at how he wraps it, all right? Verses 1 and 2 and verse 11. Those are the bookends of this psalm.

And I'm going to read from the CSB. Your translation may say how blessed. This one says how joyful. All he's trying to get at is how happy, right? How joyful is the one, look, whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

How joyful or how blessed or how happy is a person who the Lord does not charge with iniquity and in whose spirit is no deceit.

Look at here at verse 11. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones. Shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

[12 : 28] This concept of joy surrounds this psalm. And if you start at the end, you may misunderstand what he means by righteousness. So what he's going to say here at the end is, shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

And it's easy for us to hear righteousness and what immediately comes into our mind is this type of perfection, is this type of moral excellence.

And joy is only reserved for people that have that. The problem is we've got to look at how this psalm starts off. And in verse 1 and 2, he's going to apply this joy.

Listen, not just for people that have sinned, not just for those of us here in this room that have just a little sin that needs to be managed.

For the type of people whose sin is so great that you need synonyms to describe that sin. So what he's going to do is he's going to say it in three different ways, right?

[13 : 30] How joyful is the one, look, whose transgression is forgiven, the person that goes where they should not go. Whose sin is covered, the person that doesn't go where they should go.

How joyful is a person whom the Lord does not charge with inequity, or that word comes from inequity. So for those of y'all that grew up and your parents didn't buy you the best car when you grew up and you had a car like mine where the alignment was always off, that even when you tried to go where you should go, that car would lean on to one side.

So it's those of us that are filled with a type of sin where we find ourselves doing what we shouldn't, not being able to do what we should, and even when we try so hard, there's something wrong or alignment is off.

He's saying there is joy reserved for those people that still smell like weed smoke, that still have pending court dates, that know that they should end a relationship, but feel like they can't.

This joy is reserved for people that would walk into the doors of a church with plans after church to go and to be somewhere or with someone they have no business doing that with, and even as they find themselves sitting in a seat, their heart still longs to do that.

[15 : 06] He's saying it's possible that there's joy that's reserved for you. And what he helps us see is that, no, no, no, God's joy, righteousness, is not just about us not having sin, it's the unique joy that comes from that sin not being charged to our account, not having to pay for that sin.

Y'all know John Dennis, right? John Dennis, yeah. So I was with John Dennis a couple weeks ago in New York, and we were there for a meeting, and I checked into my hotel room that was supposed to be paid for by John Dennis and the crew, and when I get there, they ask me for my credit card, and it was like, oh, I thought that the room was paid for, and they said, no, actually, yours is on fire.

And so they were getting ready to charge me, and we were in Times Square, so John hooked me up with a nice hotel room, and I said, hey, I can't pay for this, and I called John Dennis, and he's like, oh, I'm sorry.

I know they ran your card, and it's a pending charge, and you owe that debt because it's a hotel room that you're staying in, but I'm going to call my assistant, and do you know what I'm going to do?

I'm going to send her, and she's going to make sure that that charge doesn't post to your account. I was filled with a unique sense of joy because I racked up a rightful debt that should have been charged to my account, but the joy came from the fact that I didn't have to pay it.

[16 : 52] It was forgiven, and that's how he starts off this song. Yo, how joyful, how happy are those of us that can just look and say, no, no, no, I know that this debt of sin is pending on my account, but if I have to pay it, it will absolutely bankrupt me.

I'm joyful because there's somebody else that was sent to pay that debt. That's the joy that he talks about here, and the joy comes, I want you to hear this, not just in it being true.

The joy comes in it being known. Known unforgiveness is terrifying to know that you've done something wrong and you know that that person will never forgive you.

It is heartbreaking. Unknown forgiveness is unnecessarily troubling to not know that forgiveness is accessible and yours and to feel like you've got to do all this stuff to earn it.

And when he said, no, no, no, there's a special joy. I want you to know that God's perfect joy is reserved, hear this, for forgiving people, not for perfect ones.

[18 : 08] If you're a perfectionist here in the room, I want you to know you've put a prerequisite on God's joy that he has not. It is not based on our performance, but on God's kindness.

We've got to believe the pronouncement. Look here at the end of verse 2. How joyful is a person whom the Lord does not charge with iniquity.

Look, and in whose spirit is no deceit. That may seem like he's saying that the joy is reserved for the person who's perfect. And that's not what he's saying.

When he says, in whose spirit is no deceit, that's not about perfection. It's about vulnerability, transparency, and honesty. Let me see if I can explain it like this.

I've got a very good friend, Erica Brown. She's my wife's best friend. And she goes through these things where she starts to make these pronouncements about herself that are less than honest.

[19 : 11] And we all were at lunch one day and she made the pronouncement. She said, I'm a vegan. And so I said, my condolences, I'm sorry, right? We start to eat.

We place in our order and I get these catfish sliders and they come out and she says, John, those look good. And I'm like, they sure do. And what she does is she looks at me and she says, can I have one?

And I said, I thought you were a vegan. And she says, well, I am, but sometimes I eat meat. And I said, I don't think that you get how this works, right?

By making the pronouncement about yourself, you have decided to remove from your diet that which was alive at one point and that which was delicious.

I see your problem. You thought that you could be vegan and happy. And you can't.

[20 : 13] You have to choose. The pathway towards one is away from the other. I think often when it comes to our sin, we think that we can be hypocrites and happy.

We think that we can have both. And I want you to know you cannot. There is no such thing as a happy hypocrite.

Because by virtue of choosing hypocrisy, you have made the commitment to publicly hide that which makes you the most happy.

Happiness is meant to be shared. And if you can't publicly share the things that make you the most happy, you're never going to be truly happy. And what the psalmist is trying to say is no, no, listen.

The joy is not reserved for perfect people, but for those people that are just going to be honest. We have to believe the pronouncement.

[21 : 26] It doesn't come from being holier than thou. It comes from you being honest to God about where you are. After he tells us to believe the pronouncement, he goes on and he talks about this process that you and I not just have to believe the pronouncement, but we have to trust the process that's laid out.

And the process is this paradoxical one. It's one that seems terrifying until you understand the context. Here's what I mean.

Say somebody rushes to you right now and they say, hey, you've got to come quick. I saw your friend, your loved one, your spouse, unconscious, lying on their back and there was a masked man with a knife standing over them getting ready to plunge it into their stomach.

It's terrifying. And so you would rush and what if when you rushed in there you said, oh, wait a minute, you really didn't set the context. The masked man is a surgeon.

They're unconscious because of anesthesia and the knife is a scalpel. That's not a terrifying scenario. It's a specific one where the aim of the person is to heal.

[22 : 47] You had me scared for no reason. When it comes to repentance and the healing that God wants to bring, I think some of us are scared for no reason because we don't understand the process.

And so what he says here is you've got to trust the process. Look here at verse 3. And this is why I mean process. It's going to be temporal. You're going to look at these words.

At the top of verse 3 you'll see the word when. At the top of verse 5 you'll see then. Then in mine it may be implied in yours. But what he's going to say is this.

When I did this, God, you did that. But when I did this then you did that. And so his first thing is this. God, when I was silent you were stubborn.

You could hear verse 3 and 4. Look, when I kept silent my bones became brittle from my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me.

[23 : 51] My strength was drained as in the summer heat. the very first thing that we see here is this. Look, silence does not mean serenity. You do know it's possible for you to suffer in silence.

You do know we are master ventriloquists where our lips can be closed but our hearts can be screaming out on the inside. So what he's saying is look, when I was silent about my sin my very bones the thing that gives my body structure the thing that makes me sturdy the things inside of me that give me shape and security the thing that separates me from jellyfishing through life when he's saying when I kept silent my bones became brittle.

why silence when it comes to deep sin? I think and I don't know about you this is why I get silent when it comes to my sin.

I get silent out of either neglect or despair. neglect it's fine it's not that big of a deal it'll take care of itself.

This is the last time it's fine I'm not going to go back there so I neglect it and I think things will just fix itself or I despair this is never going to change there's no way out I'm always going to be this way why bother and he says when I was silent about my sin one my sin is not innocent it's destructive suicide of the soul I felt my strength wane who was responsible for that look at verse 4 verse 4 says this for day and night your hand was heavy on me my strength was drained as in the summer's heat he's attributing the angst that he feels not just to chance but to the personal intervention of God holding his thumb down on him saying you are not okay if verse 3 is him trying to convince himself and everybody else around him that things are fine verse 4 is God putting his thumb down on it and saying no it's not if verse 3 is him suffering from an internal bruise that people can't see when he walks into church an internal bruise that he can hide behind a smile saying

[26 : 56] I'm okay I'm fine verse 4 is God pushing down on that pain point saying no you're not no you're not and that is one of the most gracious things that God can do how many of y'all know that God will work against your peace of mind to save your soul internal injuries often require invasive surgery if blood fills up the lungs it's not supposed to be there and the only way to get it out is to be punctured I want you to know that you are not more stubborn than

God I want you to also think about the people in your life that are your closest friends and ask yourself do they know me well enough to not be fooled by my silent smiles if they do then you better thank God that he's blessed you with those friends if they don't and maybe y'all should have some conversations some honest ones about the things that seriously ail you and the things that you try to cover and after all that we find this word in verse four sailor it's this pause it is don't just move on from there really quick don't treat what we've just heard as homework that we're going to take later and procrastinate so what

I want to do right now is maybe something different and as we walk through this I actually want to do this so I want you to just maybe close your eyes right now breathe in deeply and just listen to these next words I want you to sit with those truths I want you right now personally to ponder and to reflect on what God is doing I want you to honestly you don't have to say it to anybody else right now but just to God what is that secret sin if anything what's the thing that you hope that nobody ever finds out about and you agonize over the possibility of it coming to light have you ignored it think about how it's destroying you sapping out the life of the relationships that you have and just ask yourself do you want the rest of your life to feel like this or do you want something better are you tired of trying to cover your sin in a blanket of silence are you tired of screaming into pillows of neglect and despair if you want something different then open your eyes and let's keep going the psalm doesn't stop there it tells us to trust the process the latter part of the process what he does is he throws away silence the fifth amendment was rights provided to us whereby a host of a bunch of other things it gave you the freedom to cover your guilt with silence so if you have to testify about something that you are guilty of you have the freedom and the right to blanket your guilt with silence as granted to you by the fifth amendment and while that may keep you out of jail in courts!

unfortunately the fifth amendment does not work with God but the opposite is true look at this verse five then look I acknowledged my sin to you and did not conceal my iniquity I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord once again there you have those synonyms for sin and do you know what you have a pronoun personal pronoun linked with all of them my sin my transgression my iniquity there is no blaming anybody else for what's done there's an acknowledging that Lord although there are a lot of factors that shaped the way that these things came out those factors didn't cause it that's on me you know what you find at the end when I was silent God was stubborn when

I was honest God was forgiving God was gracious look here at the end and you forgave the guilt of my sin Selah two things that I love about that one is it is a very anticlimactic ending to what he says so he builds it up and says all right then I confessed my sin I didn't conceal my transgression I owned my iniquity and he builds up and he builds up and he builds up and God forgave it all and God forgave it all it's kind of like that scene Jerry Maguire you remember at the end Tom Cruise comes in he messes up real bad and he comes in and Renee Zellweger she looks all shocked and he goes into this speech we live in a cruel cruel world and he's got that pensive Tom Cruise look on his face and he goes on and he just gives all of the reasons why she should take him back and she responds with the words you had me at hello thank you for all the rest of that stuff but no no as soon as you walked into the door

[34 : 11] I was already determined to take you back if you would just come back it's the prodigal son in Luke 15 where after he sins he goes to a publicist and she says all right this is all the things that you should do you gotta acknowledge your sin you gotta ask for his forgiveness and you gotta promise that you're gonna work your way back up and by the time he gets to his dad he says dad I'm sorry that I sinned I'm not worthy to be called your son and before he could make a promise about how I'm not gonna do it again the father takes him and puts him in his arms and says you had me at hello he forgave the guilt of our sin and this is what I desperately want all of us to know confession of sin is not convincing God that you deserve it it is not you trying to barter with him and convince him of your authenticity and convince him of your sorrow and convince him that you're never going to do it again it is an act of faith where you say all right

God if you really are a forgiving God I have things that need to be forgiven and in that way confession is a push door it's not a pull door have you ever had the unfortunate encounter of being in front of a group of folks and pulling on a push door you're at the right door and you work as hard as you can with all of your strength and you don't get through and you're convinced the door must be broken and you walk away instead of realizing no no no no no to get through a push door it doesn't take strength it just takes you leaning all of your weight in the right direction and you'll fall right through that door the door of joy and forgiveness is not about your effort in convincing

God that you deserve to get through that door it's about leaning your weight and saying Lord take all of the brokenness inside of me and let me fall through this door of forgiveness and it's this unique sense of joy and he says you forgave everything and what I love is that that forgiveness came so quick how did the forgiveness come so quick because we serve a God that knows all that was prepared for there's a story on the opening pages of the Bible where Adam and Eve sin and as soon as they sin do you know what they do they hide from God not just physically but they take these leaves and they construct ways to cover or to hide this God comes and puts his thumb down on saying

Adam what took place and do you know what he does he doesn't confess his sin his transgression his iniquity but he says God it's actually your fault because I was here minding my own business and you gave me her and the snake talked to her and he uses second person pronouns!

to liberate and set them free and it changes the way that Adam relates to his wife no longer blaming her but blessing her calling her Eve the mother of the living choosing to treat her based on the promise that God gave her and not her mistakes and what she did in the past And then we get this little aside!

[38 : 24] where God covers them with animal garments Where did the animal garments come from? An innocent animal who didn't disobey God sacrificed God was stitching together this clothing to cover them so that it was ready even before they apologize The apostle Paul is going to go on and basically use the words and say hey there was a lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world that before the world was formed and people even had an opportunity do you know what God did God determined that there was going to be a lamb!

was slain so that even before he formed man from the dust God was stitching the clothing of innocence that he would cover to all of us that would go to him for forgiveness and the beauty is this in the same way that I asked you to close your eyes at the first sailor verse five ends with this word sailor and Charles Spurgeon is going to say it like this what a shame it would be to remember your sin and forget your savior so I'm going to ask you once again to close your eyes and remember all those things that came to mind about the sin that you don't feel like you have the courage to share or talk about or confess the life that you want but you don't feel like you can have because honesty just feels so hard and

I want you to reflect on this the depth of your sin and anguish does not compare with the depths of God's mercy the evil in our heart may be a pit with a deep bottom but God's mercy is a pit with no bottom open your eyes and let's keep going you've got to trust the process most people stay away from confession of sin because they confuse the road with the destination they know it's going to come with remorse!

regret and regret and sorrow and they imagine that's the destination and not the journey to get there the remorse the sorrow the heartache is the turbulence on a plane ride to the destination of your dreams seven years ago I was invited to go to Hawaii and my wife is deathly afraid of flying and she was like well can we just drive there and I said no there's no way to get there we've got to get on the plane I know you dislike the turbulence I know you're going to be uncomfortable but let me tell you sweetheart this may be the most uncomfortable journey that you take to paradise and we got there and as we experienced a week there she said I'm so glad that you didn't allow me to be discouraged from this destination because of a difficult journey this is what

David wants for us look verse three through five is just a testimony so he's not actually giving any advice he's just telling y'all what he went through and the charge comes here in verse six look we've got to believe the pronouncement God's perfect joy is reserved for forgiven people not perfect ones we've got to trust the process and that's being honest with God confessing our sins and when we find that forgiveness there's got to be this urgent proclamation I'm almost done verse six says this look you immediately when great flood waters come they will not reach him you are my hiding place you protect me from trouble you surround me with joyful shouts of deliverance Francisco Lopez discovered gold in 1842 but the gold rush didn't actually start until six years later where a guy by the name of

[43 : 37] James Marshall in Sutter's Mill California found gold and he started to tell everybody that he knew that gold was there and what took place was this rush people came in verse one through five is David saying I discovered joy in the most unlikely places and verse six he's telling everybody about it that he went from hiding from God to hiding in God not in a lie not in a bottle not in promotions but hiding in God and he says that he found these joyful shouts of deliverance Tony Morrison one of my favorite authors is going to say it like this the purpose of freedom is to free somebody else it was 19 years ago this spring that I realized this in a very rich way

I was 19 years old sophomore in college I'd been leading a Bible study for two years I experienced a breakup that drove me to depression and before I knew it I found myself in an inappropriate relationship doing any and everything throughout the week and on Thursdays leading a group of guys in a Bible study at my house I kept silent about my sin and I felt myself crumbling on the inside one Thursday before the guys were getting ready to come over I walk upstairs to my roommate Richard Mullin this is 19 years ago 19 years later me and Richard live in the same neighborhood still I said hey man I just have to confess this to you I wasn't met with condemnation or shame

I was met with a reminder that God's perfect joy comes for forgiving people not perfect ones and then he said hey man it's important that you talk to the leaders and share with them as well and we'll walk through what the next steps look like so I like I am just going to share with the leaders the leaders usually got to the house at 7pm and we had probably 20 other guys at my college that would come through and most of the guys were my hue of skin so punctuality was not a virtue that we embraced right so they would be late and so it's like alright good I'll have time to talk to the guys that let that Thursday night we hear a knock at the front door I look through the peephole everybody's there on time so they come into the house and we said and it's like hey

I've got something to share and I just really need to confess this and I confessed! C.S.

Lewis has this quote on friendship where he says this friendship is born at the moment one person says to another you too I thought I was the only one and so one by one in that room everybody goes around and just shares I feel like I was drowning I felt like I was isolated I felt like there would be shame and we talked and we talked and talked and at the end this was still in my charismatic days so we wrote it down on a piece of paper we burnt it outside on my porch and so we just prayed and do you know what I saw I found Psalm 32 verse 7 to be true you are my hiding place you protect me from trouble you surround me with joyful shouts of deliverance the end of that night was not shame was not condemnation the end of that night was hearing 20 brothers cry aloud thanking God for the deliverance that we hoped for and thanking him for the forgiveness and the joy that is reserved for forgiven people not perfect ones

[48 : 35] I say all of that to say maybe the joy you're looking for in reconnected relationship with friends or with spouses or with church life with the people that you're mentoring isn't some testimony about how you scaled some mountain of morality but it's a confession of sin an embracing of a savior whose mercy is a bottomless pit it's available to all of us right here and right now let's pray our father we thank you that you so graciously provide what you require of us

God we come to you now as those that say we desperately need your forgiveness and we are grateful that you made it available father for any of my brothers and sisters who are here in this room that feel like they're too far gone lord I pray that you would speak softly and kindly and tenderly to them father would they be encouraged by testimonies that they hear from people who they felt like were beyond this and would you do a work not just in each of our individually but collectively that Christ Church Chicago would be a place where joyful shouts of deliverance emanate from inside of this building inviting people that need to be forgiven in so they can experience the joy of known forgiveness we ask that you would grace us in the way that only you can it's in

Jesus name we pray amen