

# When I Kept Silent...

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[ 0 : 00 ] Psalm 32. I'm just going to start by reading the whole psalm for us this morning.

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them, and in whose spirit is no deceit.

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me.

My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledge my sin to you. And did not cover up my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.

And you forgave the guilt of my sin. Therefore, let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found. Surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them.

[ 1 : 17 ] You are my hiding place. You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.

I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding, but must be controlled by bit and bridle, or they will not come to you.

Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him. Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous.

Sing all you who are upright in heart. Many of the psalms that we have in our Bibles are songs, poems, prayers, or some, a combination of all those things.

And this one is no exception. The superscription at the top says, of David, a masculine. So we know for sure that it was David who wrote this.

[ 2 : 34 ] As for the precise meaning of a masculine, that's something that we're uncertain about today. There's a related word in the original language, and some suggest it may mean a song that imparts wisdom, or a skillfully or well-written song.

3,000 years later, with an English translation of this song, it's really difficult to imagine just how these words might have been sung in the Hebrew language.

Much of the poetic beauty and rhythm is lost to us today because of this gap in time and language and culture. Was part of this song the chorus, or the refrain?

And if so, which part? All these centuries later, we don't really know. But that doesn't mean that all the truth and beauty in this psalm is lost to us.

On the contrary, these words have been treasured by many through the centuries, in many different languages, and in many different ways. Behind these words is a gripping story.

[ 3 : 42 ] It's the true story of a man whose sin and guilt became so overwhelming to him. Look at verse 3.

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. Now this is obviously metaphor.

My bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. David is describing how things were for him at a particular time in his life.

Something was eating away at him from the inside out. Slowly killing him. This wasn't just a one-moment thing. It was an all-day-long thing.

Day and night thing, as we see in the next verse, verse 4. And it's difficult to translate the metaphor here of groaning. It's the same word, apparently, that was used for the roaring of a lion.

[ 4 : 50 ] And that still kind of leaves us wondering what this means. But probably it's a metaphor for some kind of constant inner growling or groaning, an expression of stress, and in this case, guilt, coming from deep inside.

Look at verse 4. For day and night your hand was heavy on me. My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. So David attributes his inner turmoil to God.

And we aren't given a lot of detail here, but it would seem that in some sense, God's hand has brought this affliction on David. This is a poetic and it's a figurative way of David expressing how he feels.

He says, My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. In other words, he felt weak. Think of the hottest days of summer that you've experienced.

Maybe you've been outside in the heat doing some work, and you know how that heat just sort of sucks the life out of you. You've got no energy.

[ 6 : 09 ] You find yourself slow and lethargic, weak, as the heat of the sun just beats down on you relentlessly. This is how David felt. But it was not a thing that just lifted off when evening came.

Day and night. Day after day is the sense we get. Sucking the life and energy out of him. And he saw God as the one doing this to him.

Why? We see up in the beginning at verse 3. Because David was keeping silent. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy on me. My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. David was keeping a secret. David was not saying anything when he should have been saying something.

In verse 5, the next verse makes us a little more clear just what David's referring to. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.

[ 7 : 25 ] I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. So this deep turmoil and affliction that David is experiencing is somewhat self-inflicted.

There is a sin that he has been refusing to acknowledge to God. There's a wrong that he has done that he has covered up.

And this is why God's hand is heavy on him. This is why he's in this state of great turmoil. And he has been silent.

He hasn't said a word to God or to others. But it's killing him inside. He's been groaning. He's been roaring inwardly and it's sucking the life out of him.

Now at this point, if you know the story of David, King David from the Bible, you're probably wondering, what is the sin that David is talking about here? What did he do?

[ 8 : 26 ] And before we speculate a little bit here, let's just be clear that David does not say right here in this psalm what it was that he had done. And that's probably intentional.

Now I don't think David omitted the details to cover it up some more or to save face, but perhaps because this song he hopes will be a song that others can sing too, even if they've sinned in a different way than he did.

There are, in my estimation, about two clear and obvious times where we read about how David sinned in the Bible. But that doesn't mean that he was less of a sinner than the average person who had faith in God in his days.

He would have faced the daily temptations that all people face. We see moments in his story where his anger flared up, where he was almost going to take revenge, but was prevented from doing so. We see some questionable decisions at times where we kind of wonder if David did the right thing. Was he acting in faith? So David was a man just like we are, and he was a sinner just like we are.

[ 9 : 43 ] He could be talking about a sin that was not recorded in the Bible. But that being said, David's words here seem to fit really, really, really well with the biggest and most glaring moral failure that he had as Israel's king.

If you know the story of King David, you know that there was a time in his life when he gave into temptation, he gave himself to lust after the wife of another man, and he committed adultery with that woman.

And then, when he found out that the woman had become pregnant, he murdered her husband to cover it up and took her to be his own wife.

There are certain elements of this psalm that seem to fit this description very well here in Psalm 32. We know from the story in 2 Samuel chapter 11 and 12 that this was a drawn-out thing.

David's sin was in the works over a period of time as he tried to cover things up. And so that fits with David's words here about being in great turmoil all day long, day and night, while he kept silent.

[ 11 : 19 ] And then when David finally did come to confess his sin, he says here in the psalm, I acknowledge my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.

And so it almost seems implied in the way he phrases it that up till this point when David confesses he has been covering it up. The sense we get in 2 Samuel is that David might have got away with this from a human perspective, but eventually God sent the prophet Nathan to David to convict David of his sin.

And what did David do when he realized that God was not going to simply allow him to hide this sinful thing he had done? David confessed to the Lord.

He admitted what he had done in the presence of Nathan the prophet. We also read words of his confession in Psalm 51. But here in Psalm 32, we read, Then I acknowledge my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. So just as we read in 2 Samuel about David's moment of confession before Nathan the prophet, Nathan says there, The Lord has taken away your sin and you are not going to die.

[ 12 : 49 ] Here we read the simple truth of what God did to David after he confessed. I will confess my transgressions to the Lord and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Now we might in this moment have feelings of anger about what David did to Bathsheba and to her husband Uriah. And what about Uriah?

There are truly two dimensions to our sin. Our sin is against other people. Yes, there's that horizontal dimension.

But there's also the vertical dimension. Our sin is against God. He is the ultimate ruler. He is the judge of all the earth.

It wasn't just Uriah that David sinned against, but it was also the good and righteous God who made them both. God has given us his commands as to how we should live.

[ 13 : 58 ] And David knew those commands. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not murder. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

And David defied these very commands of God and then tried to cover it up. And so we don't want to minimize for a moment what David did to Bathsheba and Uriah as we read of the outcome of this. But we do want to see the horizontal dimension that David was guilty before God for what he did. he had broken God's holy law.

And you know going back into verses three and four a little bit we see the effect that this had on David while he was in this place of going against God keeping silent.

We can read here about how and just see how tormented he was how burdened he was to the core by his guilt. Now there's a sense in which all sins are equal in that they all make us liable to punishment before God.

[ 15 : 19 ] That's a clear teaching in the Bible. But there's also a sense in which some sins are worse than others. Consider the words of Solomon in Proverbs chapter 28 verse 17.

This is what Solomon, David's son, came to write. He said, anyone tormented by the guilt of murder will seek refuge in the grave. Let no one hold him back.

We can never undo the wrong things that we have done or said but in many cases we can admit what we've done to others. We can repent. We can seek to be reconciled.

We can make restitution. We can sometimes find forgiveness from the one that we've wronged but that's never the case when it comes to murder.

That person is gone and should you take a life you will have to live with what you've done for the rest of your life. There can be no restitution with that person, no reconciliation, no forgiveness from that person because they're dead.

[ 16 : 30 ] you killed them. Solomon suggests that this guilt often torments a person so deeply that they may seriously contemplate finding relief from that guilt through suicide.

This is probably why David's words in verses three and four are so serious. it was killing me what I had done. My strength was sapped.

It was the guilt of adultery and murder which tormented David as God brought conviction upon him. But finally David confessed to God.

He admitted what he had done and in that moment what did David deserve? Think about this.

Because God is just and David had done something utterly wicked.

Instantaneous death was really what he deserved. That was the punishment that fit his crime. As God said long ago, Genesis chapter 9 verse 6, whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed.

[ 17 : 49 ] David knew well the law which God had given through Moses. Leviticus 24, 17, anyone who takes the life of a human being is to be put to death.

Life for life. David knew what he deserved for his sins but amazingly, astoundingly, David says, you forgave the guilt of my sins.

this is amazing. God forgave David for committing adultery and committing murder.

And we might wonder at this point, how can God really do that? Can he just forgive our guilt and still be just?

Still be righteous? This is one of the most important questions that the Bible brings us to again and again. And the answer is yes. In fact, the Bible all together is the story of how the answer is yes, he can.

[ 19 : 04 ] And we're going to look at how in a moment. But in the meantime, look at how this wonderful forgiveness of God changes David's life. Look at the difference in David's life between verses 1 and 2 and verses 3 and 4.

In verses 3 and 4, David refuses to utter a word. He's tormented by the guilt of his sin. It's killing him. It's sucking the life out of him. He confesses to God.

God forgives him. And now verses 1 and 2, right at the top, describe David now. In verses 1 and 2, David can't keep quiet.

He can't help but declare his own happiness and gratefulness to be blessed and favored by God in this way, to have his sins forgiven.

This is an exclamation of joy. Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven. blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them.

[ 20 : 17 ] This word blessed could also rightly be translated happy. It's kind of a dual meaning to that word. Blessed describes the good favor of God bestowed upon a person.

Happy describes the feeling that always goes with it and this is where David is living now in this joy because God has forgiven him of what he has done.

What a change from inner torment and silence to outward joy and can't keep quiet about God and his grace and his mercy.

That burden of sin, that crushing weight of David's guilt is gone. God has forgiven. Why? Because God, the judge himself, has said, your sins are forgiven.

I will not count this thing that you've done against you. And so David is just glad with the deepest of joys.

[ 21 : 25 ] He's so deeply touched and changed by God's forgiveness that he calls out to everyone in verse 6. He says, therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found.

Surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. It's like David is saying, this is the way. God really is merciful. He really does forgive.

To all of you who believe in his name, call out to him, pray to him, confess your sins to him like I did, and you'll see, ask for deliverance in whatever troubles you may find yourself in.

Even if it seems like the water is up to your neck or the wave is coming for you, pray to God. Call out to him. Surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach you, if you do.

He goes on, speaking directly to God. He says, you are my hiding place. You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

[ 22 : 42 ] I love these words. Could it be that the righteous judge over all of us, the one we should fear, the one who will not let us get away with our sins against others or against him?

Could it be that he is also the one that we run to for safety? Could it be that he is also our protector, our refuge, our savior, our deliverer, even from the things that we've done against him and the guilt that we've got from that?

This is the good news. God is a saving judge. this is by far not a perfect analogy, but can you imagine a scene in a human courtroom?

A man gets caught committing a crime for which his fine will amount to \$50,000. To most of us, that's a lot of money. Can you imagine the judge presiding over this case in such a way that no matter what the man does, he cannot escape this just verdict?

\$50,000. And then can you imagine this judge saying, come here son, calling him up to the bench and then writing a check from his own bank account and showing it to him and saying, you're free to go.

[ 24 : 13 ] your debt is paid. God is a saving judge. If we are in danger because of the sins that we have committed against him, and we are, the Bible tells us we are, he is the place of safety to run to, to get out of that danger.

You are my hiding place. you will protect me from trouble. You will surround me with songs of deliverance. As we come a little further down to verse 8, there are differences of opinion over whether verse 8 is God speaking directly to David, or whether it's God speaking through David, and David kind of now sharing this wisdom that he has learned with us.

It says, I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding, but must be controlled by bit and bridle, or they will not come to you.

What is it that God wanted of David all those days when he was silent, trying to cover up what he had done? He wanted David not to be stubborn, but to come to him willingly, and admit and confess and find his mercy, his forgiveness.

forgiveness. All too often, we can be like this toward God. We have our own way that we want to go, just like David tried, and sometimes we can be really stubborn, but we need to surrender.

[ 26 : 10 ] We need to submit to the God who loves us. We need to come to him willingly and just yield. God loves us so much.

Think about this. Had David simply trusted in God's commands and been obedient right from the start, just think of all the heartache and grief that could have been avoided.

He could have been spared all of it, if you know the story of David and what happened as a result of these sins. And so David warns us with the wisdom that he had to learn the hard way.

Many are the woes of the wicked. Don't go down the path of the wicked like I did, says David. The troubles were multiplying so quickly.

It was awful. Put your trust in the Lord. Come to him. Bring your troubles to him. Even your sin and your guilt to him. His unfailing love surrounds those who do.

[ 27 : 20 ] But the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him. Brings us to that place where this psalm ends in verse 11 of rejoicing and gladness and singing.

I wonder how these words hit you this morning. As you look at the sections in your Bible, the stanzas of this psalm, which of these stanzas describes your relationship with God right now? Perhaps you're living in verses 3 and 4 right now. You've been sinning and sinning, sinning, and like David, doing as you please.

You know it's wrong. And maybe God's hand is heavy on you and you feel that. It's taking a toll. You know you should confess your sins to him.

You know you should run to his loving arms and ask for forgiveness, but you've been keeping silent. I urge you, listen to the words of God.

[ 28 : 35 ] Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding, but must be controlled by bit and bridle, or they will not come to you.

Come to him. Confess. Admit. Repent. Pray to him today while he may be found.

We can all live in verses 1 and 2. This is the good news of God. God's forgiveness is graciously offered to all people. All the wrong things that we have done, he will forgive if we come to him and confess to him.

We too can know the joy that David knew after he had done the unthinkable. We can know with certainty just as he did that we are off the hook with God even if we've done unthinkable things. We can say with David, blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven. We can know that reality personally. Which of these stanzas describes your relationship with God right now?

[ 30 : 01 ] One final piece to this wonderful news that we can be forgiven by God when we come to him and confess our sins. As I said earlier, as we look at David's sin and God's forgiveness, forgiveness, we might wonder how can God forgive our sin?

How can he just forgive our sin what David did and still be just and righteous? And the answer both for David and for us is the same.

He can and he did make a way for us to be forgiven a way that does not involve just sweeping our sins under the rug and pretending that they didn't happen.

God himself made a way for us to be forgiven. That is just. He himself decided to come down and live among us in the person of Jesus.

He lived and then he died for us taking upon himself the punishment that we deserve for our sins so that we could be forgiven and justice be done.

[ 31 : 20 ] This is what happened when Jesus died on the cross. This is what it's all about. This is how Paul describes this in his letter to the church at Rome. Romans 3, 25 and 26.

Paul says there, God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement through the shedding of his blood to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.

That's what David did. he did this to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

He is both savior and judge. Christ suffered and died on the cross to atone for the lust and adultery and murder committed by David.

That's how God was able to say your sins are forgiven. My son is going to take the punishment for that when he comes. And Jesus suffered and died on the cross to atone for our sins as well so that God can say to us who believe in him who come to him and confess to him your sins are forgiven.

[ 33 : 00 ] Justice has been done life for life. So this is what we remember this morning as we once again come to partake of the Lord's table.

We eat from the bread we drink from the cup just as Jesus taught us to do in remembrance of him. the cup represents his blood which was shed for us when he died on that cross to atone for us.

The bread represents his body in place of ours suffering bleeding and dying as we deserve. And so this table behind me and partaking of it is a remembrance of the forgiveness of God freely offered through Jesus sacrifice.

Have you come to acknowledge your sins to God? Have you come to confess your transgressions to the Lord as David said?

Have you put your trust in Jesus the Savior? And if so this table is for you and I want to invite you to partake with us to eat and drink with us this morning in remembrance of Jesus.

[ 34 : 23 ] And if you haven't I ask that you just let the elements pass you by. Let's take a few moments now to be quiet before God as we reflect on this salvation that is ours through Jesus.

I want to encourage you to pray to God in these moments confess your sins to him and after a few minutes Charles and Nate are going to come up they're going to pass out the elements we'll wait until everybody who wishes to partake has been served and then we'll eat and drink together in unison.

Lord Jesus we say thank you for your sacrifice for us. Thank you love that we truly are forgiven we love you so much to your name be the glory amen Amen.