

# The God Who Brings True Happiness

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Date: 16 January 2022

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[ 0 : 00 ] 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.

Steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

May God add his blessing to that reading from this holy word as we turn to consider this morning the God, the God who brings true happiness, true happiness that's found in God who forgives your sins, God who protects you from evil, and God who leads and guides you in the path away that he has prepared for you.

For God who brings true happiness. Many years ago in the northwest highlands of Scotland, in Lougharren, there was a famous minister called Lachlan McKenzie.

And Lachlan McKenzie wrote a poem, a famous poem, a poem called The Happy Man. And in that poem, Lachlan McKenzie wrote about the truly happy person, a person that truly knows blessing from God.

[ 1 : 19 ] I suppose the language that he wrote in almost 200 years ago now, in some ways is quaint, but it certainly tells of where true happiness, true blessedness lies.

The poem begins like this. The happy man was born in the city of regeneration, the parish of repentance unto life. And then in the poem, he goes on to talk about the characteristics of the happy man, the blessed person.

He talks about that person being shaped by God's word, his life being formed by God's word. He talks about the self-denial that the happy man, the blessed man, shows in his life.

He talks about his contentment. He talks about his fervent prayer life. And above all, he talks about the happy man being found righteous through the finished work of the Lord Jesus.

At the very centre of that poem, words that really we should all seek to apply in our lives. Happy he lives and happy he dies.

[ 2 : 30 ] And it's that theme that certainly Lachlan McKenzie brought out in this poem that we really want to focus on, because, of course, it's the theme that is very much before us in Psalm 32. Because in the psalm, we see and see the one who truly is blessed.

That's why David uses these words, blessed, right at the start of the psalm there, when he speaks of the happiness, the blessedness, that the person who knows God as Lord, that happiness that he knows.

As we say, the forgiveness of your sins. We've been protected from the evil one. The guidance that God gives to you in your life.

And we continue to look to God to give that true blessedness, even in the times that we're living in. You know, when you think of the times that we are living in, they appear anything but happy.

The continued pandemic, the restrictions on our way of life that we took for granted just, what, a couple of years ago. All the political scandals that we're seeing in our various media channels each and every day.

[ 3 : 44 ] The turmoil in our political life. The moral and spiritual decline in our land. But even in the midst of all that we're seeing around us, it's for the Lord's people, for you to turn, to turn to God, to turn to the one who gives and brings true happiness, true blessedness, to see, for you to see and seek beyond these circumstances, beyond the circumstances of the age.

And look to the eternal one, the eternal saviour. Look to the one who shows his eternal goodness to his people. So, grasp that truth and apply it in your life even this week.

As you seek to know God, as you seek to know the one who brings true blessedness to his people because that's what David focuses on certainly the first five verses, the blessedness of God's

forgiveness.

You know, we read right at the start, blessed, blessed. And right even at the very end, we're commanded to be glad in the Lord and rejoice. There's this theme of blessedness that, if you like, envelops this psalm.

I mean, David is speaking of himself, blessed, the one whose transgression is forgiven, but of course that can apply to all who know God as Lord. And so David here is beginning with true happiness in life.

[ 5 : 07 ] And he ends, as we said, with those who know God and his forgiveness to rejoice, to be glad, to shout for joy. And there's this completeness then that the psalm brings out for the person who truly knows God as Lord.

Who knows that it's not the world that can give that true blessedness. Blessedness is only found in the Lord and Saviour. 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's no deceit. See what David's saying here, even in these first few words.

He speaks of sin, if you like, in three different ways. Sin is sin, of course, but he speaks of transgression, he speaks of sin, he speaks of iniquity. These different emphases on man's enmity against God.

You're thinking of sin in the children's talk, sin that separates man from God. Well, David speaks here of that as well. He speaks of, first of all, of rebellion, transgression. Transgression that defies authority.

[ 6 : 17 ] Transgression that challenges the power of God as Lord. I mean, rebellion itself speaks of seeking to overthrow, seeking to remove somebody from power.

Now, we don't have rebellions, certainly not really military rebellions in our country today, as was the case some time ago. Jacobite rebellions, 1715, 1745.

I suppose the modern day equivalent are rebellions in the Houses of Parliament. The Commons Rebellion. It was last week that the Prime Minister faced his biggest Commons Rebellion.

Many MPs from his own party voted against him on these COVID measures. These MPs were transgressors, they were rebels. But David knows, yes, that he, at some time, he's rebelled against God.

He's rebelled against his Lord. He knows that he's been a rebel. He's sinned against God. At certain points in his life, he knows that he's rejected God's authority.

[ 7 : 24 ] These times when he wouldn't submit to God's rule over him. Of course, that's what happens when a person rebels against God. God, when even a believer, rebels against the Saviour.

You know, when you rebel against God's authority and you seek to replace God's authority with your own authority. You won't submit to his rule when you don't abide by his word, when you break God's law, when you'll have other gods before God, when you'll make an idol of your own choosing, when you'll commit heart murder and hating someone else, when you'll be unfaithful to God and even unfaithful to a spouse in your heart, when you steal, when you lie, when you covet, when you grieve the Holy Spirit, when you profess the name of Jesus, but your actions show that, in fact, you're rebelling against your Saviour.

And that's why when we think of the words here, blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, that's why we see how wonderful the forgiveness of God is in the life of a person, a believer, so that you can rejoice in that blessing of true happiness, knowing that God is the Lord who forgives you your sins.

You know, in human history, rebels, those who rebelled against authority, the last thing they expected would be mercy and forgiveness. In most cases, just execution.

But we have a God who's merciful, a God who will not reject you even in these times of rebellion, but will forgive you your sins. He's the King of kings.

[ 9 : 06 ] And yes, He knows you. He knows your heart. He knows when you rebel against Him. He knows when I rebel against Him. But you have this wonderful, wonderful word from God's Word, that you're blessed when you know the forgiveness of your sins.

When you confess your sins, when you repent of these sins, and you can rejoice in your Lord and Savior and know that true blessing, this true happiness in the Lord who forgives you your sins.

And of course, you who know the Lord Jesus, a Savior, you have, as it were, that fuller revelation, fuller than even David had himself. You've got that full revelation of God in Jesus.

And you know that it was the finished work of Jesus on the cross that's made it possible for your transgressions to be forgiven. All who are His, all who know the Lord Jesus as Savior, you are blessed, truly blessed with that knowledge of the forgiveness of your sins.

You confess your sins. God is faithful and just to forgive you your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Does that not make you rejoice?

[ 10 : 23 ] Doesn't that make you truly blessed to know that you're blessed because when you confess your transgressions, as David confessed his transgressions, you know that God will forgive you?

Because, of course, the opposite surely is the case. When you remain in your transgression, when you remain in rebelling against God, when you continue to disobey Him, you know that deep sorrow in your heart.

You know that restlessness. You know that lack of peace in your heart when you don't confess your sins before God. But you know the greatness of our Lord and God, God who truly makes happy.

Even as we see here in the grace of forgiveness, as David wrote, he wrote of the one who's truly happy because his sins were told, not just are forgiven, but covered, whose sin is covered.

I mean, David knows he's been disobedient. David knows that God had sent a standard. The law was the standard. But David had to keep to. David knows he's fallen short of that standard.

[ 11 : 34 ] But he can still rejoice. He can still rejoice because he knows that God has forgiven him his sins. In fact, the way David puts it, he puts it like this.

Obviously, David has come to God with a sacrifice. And in that sacrifice, blood was spilled. Blood, as it were, had covered over his sins.

The altar on which the sacrifice had been placed, the altar was covered in blood. And when David saw that blood, he could tell that God had forgiven him his sins. The blood of the animal had pointed to David's sins being covered, covered from God's wrath.

David's sins. David's sins. His guilt even, taken, covered over. Bring that to the Lord Jesus. By his death, by the blood that Jesus shed, you know that your sins are covered.

Next Lord's Day, God willing, we'll be celebrating the Lord's Supper. And once more, we'll be remembering the death of the Lord Jesus and the blood that Jesus shed to cover your sins, to cover your sins from the wrath of God.

[ 12 : 45 ] Jesus gave his life, shed his blood, so that your sins would be forgiven, sins would be covered, so that you can know that true blessedness that the true believer knows and that assurance that you're eternally within the love of God, that God won't punish you eternally for your sins.

so you can rejoice in that great mercy of God towards you. And just to emphasize the greatness of God in his love towards you, in his mercy towards you, David speaks of God not counting iniquity against him.

God won't reckon his sins against him. David knows that he's fully forgiven. He's not condemned in his sin. Of course, when Jesus came to earth, these words that David wrote here in Psalm 32, these words were fulfilled.

These words fulfilled in God's perfect plan of salvation because Jesus bore the sins of sinners on the cross. Jesus took your sin upon himself and credited his righteousness to you.

if you're a Christian, if you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, are you rejoicing? Are you rejoicing that Jesus bore your sins?

[ 14 : 11 ] As we said, next Lord's Day, God willing, next Lord's Day morning, we're having a communion service. And those who are the Lord's people will be making that public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus, but making that public profession in the one who doesn't count your iniquity against you because he bore that iniquity and he did so willingly.

Even now, even in preparation for the Lord's Supper next Lord's Day, bring that to your mind, bring that to your heart and give thanks to the one who's forgiven you your sins, has covered your sins and counts no iniquity against you.

And that's the happy person, the happy man, the blessed person who knows that, who knows that in coming before the Lord God in forgiveness, in repentance for forgiveness, you know that you're forgiving your sins.

Isn't that the secret? The secret of true happiness. You know that you've been forgiven by God for your rebellion, for every shortcoming in your life, for every twisted aspect of your behaviour. It transforms you, it transforms you into, as David tells us here in verse 2, it transforms you into a person who's got no deceit in his heart. In other words, somebody whose life is open before God. [15:33] You know that you can hide nothing from God. Everything about your life is open before the one who sees you, who knows you, who knows every aspect about you, who knows you better than you know yourself.

One of us can pretend before God. We can't pretend to live a life of holiness when in our heart there's sin that lurks and lies there.

But when you're open before God, even confessing sin open before him, even know that that relationship with God is secure. And again, that brings to you that true sense of blessedness, that happiness, so that you can hide nothing from God.

so that when you do confess your sins, you've got that absolute assurance he will forgive you the sins that you confess and cleanse you from all your unrighteousness.

Because confession is absolutely crucial, crucial to confess your sins before God. You have a relationship with your heavenly Father. Confess your sins before him.

[16:40] Because you know, as I know, that when you hide your sins, when you try anyway to hide your sins from God, when you try to cover up your iniquities, there's no peace in your life.

There's no peace in your heart. And that's what David admitted here in verse 3 and 4. 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 by the heat of summer. It was only when David poured out his heart to God. It was only when David brought before God his transgressions, his sins, his iniquities, it was only then that David knew the blessedness of that sure relationship with God.

The forgiveness of his sins and his soul was satisfied. And then, after he confessed his sins before God, as we see there in verse 5, I acknowledge my sin to you.

I didn't cover up my iniquity. I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Confession, true confession, brings relief.

[17:51] True confession that lifts that burden of your heart. David did that. David knew he was a transformed man. The groaning, the roaring, the pain was removed from his heart.

What about you? You confessed your sins before God? Truly confessed and pouring out your heart before God? Or are you just casual about sin?

Just casual about your transgressions? Maybe thinking, well, maybe I'll confess my sin tomorrow.

No. Because until and unless you confess these sins before God, there's a price to pay.

There's an absence of true blessedness. There's that burden of guilt that remains. Your heart burdened with that guilt of unconfessed sin.

As we said, restless. Trying to hide in your sin, trying to hide from the God who sees everything and sinking even further into that pit of despair.

[18:57] But God is faithful and God will not keep his forgiveness away from you when you confess your sins before him. God's a God who forgives you your sins.

You know, we live in a world that finds forgiveness very difficult. But we trust in God. God who forgives every confessed sin.

And think of the prayer that the tax collector prayed, Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner. And God answered that prayer. We read in Proverbs 28 verse 13 that the person who conceals his transgressions will not prosper.

But he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. Proverbs 28 verse 13 Even now, in the quiet of this moment, this is a very quiet moment, even now in the quiet of this moment, confess.

Even sins that are deep within your heart, confess these iniquities, these transgressions. Confess them even now. Bring before the God who forgives your sins and know that blessing of true happiness, that knowledge that your sins are forgiven.

[20:14] Forgiven through the love of a merciful and gracious God. But that's not where we finish. That's not where David finished in the psalm because in verse 6 to 7 he writes of the blessedness of God's protection.

Therefore, let everyone who's 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. Then these words, you're a hiding place for me.

Preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts of deliverance. Therefore, in other words, in light of the truth that God hears the prayer of the repentant sinner.

In light of that truth, God will forgive that repentant sinner. Praying, praying to God, knowing that you're safe. You're safe in the love, safe in the arms of your loving Saviour.

It's a place of security that's found in no one else and nothing else. You who are in Christ, you know that security that's in him. The world offers all kinds of different securities.

[ 21 : 26 ] The world offers, possessions as a form of security or a hefty bank balance or secure employment, but these aren't what truly matter.

What truly matters is that your security, your true security is found in your Lord and Saviour. Safe. Safe in the Lord Jesus. Safe in his arms.

Safe. through repentance. And as David says, you know, God, these wonderful words, you're a hiding place for me, a place of refuge, a place of shelter.

I'm sure many of you know the story of Corrie ten boom, Corrie the Dutch Christian from Harlem near Amsterdam. Corrie and her family who hid Dutch Jews from the Nazis in the home that she shared in that little house just off the main street, just off a side street in Harlem.

These Jews that were hidden in a specially constructed room, just off Corrie's bedroom, in fact. And the tiny room was behind a false wall. Some years ago, Janice and I actually visited that house.

[ 22 : 38 ] We actually stepped into that hiding place in that house. Very, very narrow, very narrow, but it was a hiding place until, of course, that hiding place was betrayed by a Dutch sympathiser to the Nazis.

Corrie and her parents were arrested, her sister as well, her sister who died in captivity. And the hiding place was a hiding place no more. But the hiding place that David speaks of here in verse 7, it's a hiding place that's never a place of risk.

The hiding place in Harlem was a place of risk. And it was discovered. But the hiding place that is gone is never a place of risk. It's a hiding place that's fully and wholly secure.

Safe, as David says, safe from the rush of great waters. In other words, the ravages of Satan, the lure of the world, all that in fact would drown you in sin.

Safe from that rush, that rush of great waters. But secure in the hiding place that's gone. You're safe, you're protected from that rush of great waters.

[ 23 : 51 ] And the language that David uses here is quite fantastic, really. You surround me with shouts of deliverance. What are these shouts of deliverance that God surrounds you with? David's speaking of something that's so melodic.

It's the songs of God. Praise, God's praise. unless we're singing in Psalm 98, there's a new song, the song that God even puts into your mouth.

In Psalm 40, David wrote and sang, he put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Of course, in eternity, he'll be singing that new song, the song that says of the Lord Jesus that you're worthy.

Are you singing that song of God, that new song, song of praise? Are you even now making melody in your heart before God? The song of salvation that tells of the finished work of the Lord Jesus because that's the response that you must have for the knowledge that your sins are forgiven and you can't stop thanking God for his goodness to you.

And so the believer, the one who knows that true blessedness in God knows that you're blessed in the God who forgives your sins, the God who protects you from evil, from the power of sin.

[ 25 : 17 ] And you know, thirdly, the blessedness of God's guidance that David speaks of in verse 8 to 10. This is God speaking as we say to David, to all who are his, if you like, in many ways it's God's words of advice, God's instructions.

I'll instruct you, I'll counsel you. The wording is the language that's used here, it's the sense of let me instruct you, let me teach you, let me direct your ways, let me direct your life, let me guide you, let me guide you to live a life that's worthy of your calling.

Well, let God do that. If you are seeking that life of blessedness, that contentment, that knowledge of God in your life, then let God teach you, allow him to teach you from his word, allow him to direct you by his word.

Don't follow the ways of the world. You know, so often at the end of life, the refrain, the constant refrain is, I did it my way. Well, no, that's not the way of God.

The way of God is not doing it my way. The way of God is doing it his way. The way that leads to eternal life. The way.

[ 26 : 38 ] Don't go that way, that route of the stubborn sinner who will not go on that narrow road. Go the way that God directs you to the Lord Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life.

And as David tells us there in verse 10, yes, many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord.

That's the contrast, that's the contrast between those who will not bow and submit to the authority of God and those who have submitted to that authority.

Those who don't submit to the authority of God, many are the sorrows. But you who have placed your trust in God the Lord, know that steadfast love of God that surrounds you.

And that's where true happiness, true blessedness it is. At the start of our thoughts this morning we mentioned that poem by Lachlan Mackenzie, the happy man.

[ 27 : 46 ] Is that you? Are you that happy person? Are you that happy person that longs, that loves Christ and longs for glory?

Are you still without Christ? Are you still deep in your sorrows, deep in your pains, deep without that saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus? Come to him.

I know that forgiveness for your sins, that blessing of your sins being covered, your iniquity not counting against you. Then you'll have that blessing of true happiness in the Lord, found only in our Lord and Saviour Jesus.

Amen. And let us pray. Our Lord, our God, our Heavenly Father, you who show us the way, the way that is the only way, the right way, the way of salvation, found only in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord, we truly give thanks that these words that we have been looking at this morning, your voice speaking to us, tell us of the blessedness of the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, against whom iniquity is not counted again.

[ 29 : 11 ] May these words be applied even in the lives of each and every one gathered here this morning and those worshipping from home. Each and every one know that blessedness, that true blessedness in you.

Continue with us now Lord, we pray. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Beautiful geology