

The Blessed Man - Communion Preparatory Service

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Date: 31 August 2023

Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[0 : 00] Lord our God, we come before you and give you praise this evening. We come before you, the God who is alone and truly holy, holy, holy.

We ask that for our short time together this evening, but also for the rest of this communion weekend, we would be aware that we are before a God who is holy.

A God who is eternally holy, who is indescribably holy. To all that you are, and all that you have done, and all that you do, and all that you will do for all eternity, you are holy in all your being.

You are holy in all your action. You are holy because you define what it is to be holy. In and of yourself you are through holiness.

Help us become together for the short time this evening to understand that we come before a God who sees all and who knows all. A God who knows not just our length of days.

[1 : 08] A God who doesn't just know the days and the years, and indeed the hours and the seconds of our lives. But also who is in full control of all your creation.

But there is not a single galaxy, not a single atom that is beyond your full and complete sovereign power this evening. It's to you, that eternally powerful God, we come this evening.

We humble ourselves down before you. As we think of your majesty. As we sing of your power and of your glory. As we join together to worship you, the God who in and of yourself has all power.

All life. You are the great I am. You are fully self-sustaining. You require nothing from any other creature.

You are the holy God. The unsearchable God. The God who is without fault, without blemish, without darkness.

[2 : 15] The God who is eternal, glorious and escapable light. And we look to ourselves this evening and we see none of these things.

We come just now before you as a people who at times our lives are more darkness than light. Our times, our lives are more unholy.

More against you than they are for you. We come this evening as a people who have fallen so far short of what we have called to be. So far short of what you have called us to live like.

To think like. To profess our faith in a certain way. And we fail you in all these things again and again. And this evening we come so mindful of our failings before you.

So mindful as aware of our smallness before you. We give you praise. We come just now to you, the eternal God. We come not to a God who is distant.

[3 : 19] Not to a God who is far away and unknowable. But we come this evening to a God. As your word tells us. You draw close to all who cry out to you.

You draw close this evening to your people. You're a God who is close to us. Who is with us every second of our lives. But more than that your word reminds us.

Before time itself. Before creation. That you knew your people. You had set your love on your people. But in time and in space.

And in the normal course of our lives. You'd come and you'd make yourself known to us. You would bring us to a saving knowledge of your son. And you would call us as your own.

You would have us as your own. You would make us more and more like our saviour. In that slow but sure work that's taking place right now.

[4 : 16] In all your people here this evening. We come just now to a God. Who is not distant. But a God who as we saw and as we'll see this evening. In the very way that you sent your son.

You showed that you are close to your people. We come at this communion season. And we draw our minds very much on the suffering of our saviour.

Not just at the cross. But the life of suffering he lived. The life of yes. Of constant obedience. But also the life of constant debasement. Constant pain.

Constant agony. As our saviour day by day humbled himself to being a man. Like us in all ways apart from sin.

It's to that man we come this evening. That man who suffered and who lived that perfect life. Who died that death. It's to him we come and we pour out our heart this evening.

[5 : 20] For one who feels and who felt the pain of what it was to live as one of his own creatures. But fully man we profess.

But also fully God. Our saviour. In his humanity fullness. In his deity fullness.

And we come to one who is fully man who understands us. And we come to one who is fully God. And who can take that pain. And who can reassure us that if we come to him.

If we give our lives over to his service. To his kingdom. If we follow after him. If we find ourselves crying out for salvation to him. He is able.

And willing. To forgive our sin. To call us his own precious people. I pray this evening for your people here just now.

[6 : 20] For the brothers and sisters as we gather together. We are here this evening as one family gathering. We are here this evening as brothers and sisters. And as sons and daughters. We ask that this evening indeed.

The rest of this weekend. Lord we ask for a time of encouragement. A time of blessing. A time of reminder for us. Of just who we are. In the sight.

And in the finished work. Of Jesus. In the light of who he is. And of what he has done. I pray also just now as your people. You help us to enjoy a time of communion.

Not just with yourself. But also with each other as brothers and sisters. We give you praise that you have given us the church. You have given us this living temple. This living body of your people.

Which you have called together. And we are here this evening. From different backgrounds. Different ages. Different lifetime experiences. We are here this evening. In different stages of our walk with you.

[7 : 21] But we come united together this evening. Those of us who know and who love Jesus. Worshipping our one saviour. With that one baptism. And that finished salvation.

With that one destination. And eternity spent with Jesus. We also give thanks this evening. For our friends who gather with us. Some who have gathered with us for many years.

Some who have sat even in the same pew for many years. We thank you Lord for our presence here this evening. And we ask you bless them and encourage them. We ask you to bless them by even this evening.

Speaking to them through your word. Showing them the reality that without you they are lost. Lord. But no matter how kind they are. No matter how successful in life they have been.

And we know there is much success here. In personal life. And in business life. And in community life. We give you praise for all these good things. But we know these good things save nobody.

[8 : 21] We ask Lord if your word this evening. They would hear. Perhaps truly hear. For the first time the gospel. As it applies to them. They must come and find help.

Eternal help. For sin. They must come and find their peace. And their salvation. They must come and find eternal life. And forgiveness. In Christ.

And his finished work. We pray Lord for the rest of this weekend. We pray for our brothers. Who will join us over the next few days. If it's your will. Who will lead us in your worship.

We pray just now Lord for. Reverend Thomas Davis. And Reverend Roger John Campbell. We pray for them in their own personal lives. We pray for them as brothers. We pray for them.

As fellow. Brothers in the kingdom. We ask you bless them at home. Bless them in the quiet times. We also ask especially this weekend.

[9 : 17] You would bless their time with us here. As they open up your word to us. Over the next few days. We would see marvelous and glorious things. About you in it. Help us not just to be here.

For the sake of being here. Help us not just to be seeking head knowledge. But help us to leave this place. Having grown in our love for our saviour. Having grown in our love.

For the God of all graces. Who has given us this wonderful gift. Help us Lord. To turn our theology at all times. Into doxology. Help us to praise your name.

Even this evening. As we turn to your word. We thank you for the privilege we have. Of this gathering. We remember as always. Our dear brothers and sisters. Who love you. As we love you.

And who seek to serve you as we do. But at this very moment. Brothers and sisters. Who are in constant fear of their lives. Who are worshipping you week by week. Behind locked doors.

[10 : 15] Who are doing so in secret. And we pray just now. Especially for our brothers and sisters in China. Lord of the recent troubles there. You know the detail Lord.

We ask you would be with your people. Be with the churches there. The many gatherings who know and who love Jesus. Who long to see his name further known in China.

We give you praise for the good news. Of recent gospel growth in that country. Lord we ask that they would be seen. We would see believers of that nation.

Come perhaps. And even send missionaries to our nation. As we see gospel knowledge shrink year by year. Lord help us not to relax in this place.

Help us to understand we are here as salt and light. We are here as ambassadors. We are here to serve you. As missionaries in our mission fields of our home.

[11 : 10] Our places of work. Our places of study. In our own village. With our neighbours. With those who are nearest and dearest to us. Remember just now. Especially those who are close to our hearts.

Those who we love so very much. But who as of yet show no gospel interest for themselves. We give you praise that you alone save. That you alone bring the dead to life.

You alone change hearts of stone to hearts of flesh. We ask Lord you would help us to be fervent. And help us to be long suffering. We ask if needs be. In our prayer for our loved ones.

We pray for those who would long to be here this evening. Long to join your people this weekend. Those who are housebound just now. Through illness. Through age. Those who for our various reasons cannot gather.

In this place this evening. Who cannot gather over this weekend. We ask you would be with them. That they would know that we remember them. And they would know that. Just because they cannot gather with the saints.

[12 : 11] As they would long to do so. That you are with them. You have not forgotten them. You are no way further away from them. Than the days they could worship here. But you are with your people.

Through all the corners of this earth. To all the lengths we may go. Spiritually and physically. You never let your people go. We come this evening confessing sin.

We come this evening confessing ongoing sin. We confess hidden sin. We confess open sin. We confess sin against you this week. This year.

This day. This hour. As we come confessing sin. We do so relying on the finished work of our Saviour. As we cling on to him. We know we have a Saviour.

Who holds eternally on to his people. We ask all these things. In and through. And for his precious name's sake. Amen. We have two short readings.

[13 : 07] This evening from God's word. First of all. The letter of 1st John. The letter of 1st John. That's on page 959.

Of the Pew Bibles. We can read chapter 1. Down to chapter 2. Verse 6. 1st John chapter 1. On page 959.

Now afterwards we can turn to the book of Psalms. 1st John 1. Let's hear the word of God. That which was from the beginning.

Which we have heard. Which we have seen of our eyes. Which we looked upon and have touched with our hands. Concerning the word of life. The life was made manifest.

And we have seen it. And testified to it. And proclaimed to you. The eternal life. Which was with the Father. And was made manifest to us.

[14 : 07] That which we have seen and heard. We proclaim also to you. So that you too. May have fellowship with us. And indeed our fellowship is with the Father.

And with his Son. Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things. So that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him.

And proclaim to you. That God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him. While we walk in darkness.

We lie. And do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light. As he is in the light. We have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus' Son.

Cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin. We deceive ourselves. And the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins.

[15 : 05] He is faithful and just. To forgive us our sins. And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned. We make him a liar.

And his word is not in us. My little children. I am writing these things to you. So that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin. We have an advocate with the Father.

Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins. And not for ours only. But also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know.

That we have come to know him. If we keep his commandments. Whoever says I know him. But does not keep his commandments. It's a liar. And the truth is not in him.

But whoever keeps his word. In him truly. The love of God is perfected. By this we may know. That we are in him. Whoever says he abides in him.

[16 : 06] Ought to walk in the same way. In which he walked. Now turning to the book of Psalms. And reading together Psalm 32. The book of Psalms.

And Psalm 32. That's on page 432. Of the Pew Bibles. Psalm 32. On page 432.

Again the word of God. 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 his 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 acknowledge my sin to you. And I did not cover my iniquity.

[17 : 06] 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're a hiding place for me.

You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts. Of deliverance. 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 I will not stay near you. Many are the sorrows of the wicked. But steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord.

[18 : 05] And rejoice so righteous. And shout for joy. All you upright. In heart. Amen. We give praise to God for his holy. And his perfect word.

Let's now turn to sing. Once more this time from Sing Psalms. Sing Psalms in Psalm 40. Sing Psalms.

Psalm 40. That Psalm we all know so well. Speaks of course of our sin. But also more importantly. In the context of God's forgiveness.

Psalm 40. And Sing Psalms is on page 50. We can sing verses 1 down to verse 8. I waited long upon the Lord. He heard my cry and turned to me.

He raised me from the slimy pit. And from the mire he pulled me free. He set my feet on solid rock. A place to stand both firm and broad. He put a new song in my mouth.

[19 : 04] A joyful hymn of praise to God. Psalm 40 verses 1 to 8. To God's praise. Psalm 40. I waited long upon the Lord.

He dared my cry and turned to me. He raised me from the slimy pit.

And from the night he pulled me free. He set my feet on solid rock.

How great to stand both firm and broad. He put a new song in my mouth.

A joyful hymn of praise to God. Praise to God. Praise to God. Many will do.

[20 : 23] Will God be here. I love the Lord. I will rely. Blessed are you.

Good as the Lord. B Good as the o'er Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Let's have a short time to turn back to the book of Psalms and Psalm 32. The book of Psalms and Psalm 32. We're taking the whole Psalm this evening for our text.

[22 : 48] But to help us with understanding, we take the first two verses. We're looking at the whole Psalm. First two verses.

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity. Amen.

Amen. As we come this evening, I'm sure we're aware that, at least in times gone by, that the Thursday evening of the communion service was usually, at least, there was no strict rules on these things.

But in our culture, in our tradition, usually it was a time of fasting. The whole day was a day of fasting. And the evening itself was an evening where you would spend time just considering this past year in terms of your own faith.

This past season, I should say. Your own faith, your own service. Also, before you come to the Lord's table on Sunday, to spend this time this evening asking the hard questions, the honest questions, and the, truthfully, the open questions of our own hearts.

[24 : 03] As we come to Psalm 32, that's exactly what this Psalm does for us this evening. And the truth is, as we go through this Psalm, I say this both to brothers and sisters, also to friends.

Don't think the application that's being made is for anyone else in the room. Don't think, oh, well, so-and-so should be here this evening to hear that. Or I wonder if so-and-so sitting behind me or in front of me is listening.

The truth is, this is a Psalm which speaks to Christians and in some ways to those who, as of yet, are not Christians alike.

I see it as a maschal of David and we are unsure, ultimately we're unsure, as to the true meaning of that term.

It's definitely what was used, we know, for certain as some sort of musical direction, whether for the tune or how to do the Psalm in temple worship. Of course, we can't say for certain, nor should we.

[25 : 09] What we can say from the word maschal is its root, really, is the same word, the same root as is used from the word insight or to view.

And often when you see maschal written on top of the Psalm, it's often a Psalm that is deeply perceptive as to the human heart.

And in this Psalm, we see nothing different. In fact, for our time this evening, as we go through this Psalm together, we are seeing a Psalm which is digging in to who we really are.

This Psalm leaves none of us, myself included, with any escape this evening in one sense. This Psalm gives insight, first of all, into our lives.

It gives insight into our sin. It gives insight into our pain and regret. It gives insight into our failings and faults. This Psalm also gives insight into who God is.

[26 : 10] This is a Psalm which gives insight into God's power to see our sin. But also God's power to forgive our sin.

Also this Psalm reminds us of God's power to heal the damage done by our sin. This is a Psalm of insight.

Brothers and sisters and friends, truth be told, this is a painful Psalm in some ways for us to go through this evening. But sometimes that pain is necessary for us.

This is a time, a short time of reflection for us. To the brothers and sisters here this evening, Christians, as we go through this Psalm together, this Psalm deals with unaddressed, with hidden sin.

Now I can say with confidence there is some hidden sin in the congregation this evening. Not because I know some rumour. Not because I've heard anything. But because we're here as fallen men and fallen women.

[27 : 22] Yes, saved by grace. But we harbour sin in our hearts day by day. We find reasons to sin and follow the way day by day. Brothers and sisters, if we're honest, there are many times in our lives we have hidden sin.

Unaddressed sin. As we go through this Psalm, this is our chance this evening. To do the painful operation of viewing this sin and then taking it before the Lord.

As the Psalm will lead us on later to do. For the friends here this evening, those who as of yet can't say that you love or that you know that you serve Jesus.

As we come to look at this Psalm, it's also a Psalm which reminds you, dear friend, that your sin, if you're not in Christ, your sin and the punishment of that sin is still hanging over you.

You've heard this before. You'll hear it again this evening from God's Word. Your sin and the punishment of that sin still hangs over you. And this Psalm really, it speaks mostly, of course, to the Christians.

[28 : 28] Because in this Psalm, we see the hope the Christians have. Even when we're lost in our sin, we have hope. But the glorious thing, we'll see this later on. But if nothing else, please listen to this.

This is the conclusion, if you like, at the start. Because I don't mind. I truly don't care if you listen to my well-prepared, hopefully prepared sermon.

I care that you hear the gospel this evening, my friend. That's our concern this evening. That's our care this evening. And the truth is, to the Christians here who are lost and backsliding in sin.

To the Christians here battling hidden sin. And to you, my friend, who as of yet can't call yourself a Christian at all. The answer is the same. The cure is the same.

The Christians are told this evening to come back to Jesus. Dear friends, you are told to come to Jesus. Come to Him. Just looking at this psalm under three or four, we'll watch the time, general headings.

[29 : 36] First of all, we can see rescue from sin. Verses 1 and verse 2. And touching on verses 8 and 9. Rescue from sin. Then we see the impact of sin.

Verses 3 and verse 4. Then we can see the joy of forgiven sin. Verses 5 and verses 10 and 11.

And then finally, we see the ongoing preservation from sin. First of all, our rescue from sin.

First two verses. The psalm begins with David reminding us. Reminding the people of Israel.

Reminding those who know the Lord. At least those who are called to know and to serve the Lord. By reminding us what it is to be forgiven by God. What it is to be rescued by God.

[30 : 37] In these first two verses, we see what it is to be a Christian. The joy of what it is to know the Lord and to know His salvation. As we later on touch on sin we keep hidden.

As we later on touch on sin which keeps fighting against us as Christians. As we address our own backslidings and shortcomings in a short time.

We begin with the positive. The positive reminder of who we are in Christ. What it is to know forgiveness. What it is to know true rescue.

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 the Christians here this evening. As we, perhaps some here, find ourselves backslidden or backsliding.

[31 : 39] Find ourselves harbouring some secret sin. And these first two verses are the first pain for us this evening. As we are reminded of who we are. Of where we once were with the Lord.

And perhaps how far we have come. For our non-Christian friends here this evening. These first two verses are what you are missing out on.

We could say at this very moment. This is the life you could be living. But you choose not to be. This is the peace and the joy you could have. But you will not come.

You will not follow Christ. In the first two verses we see three main terms being used to describe our rebellion.

Three ways we rebel against God. And then we see three ways in which God responds in his love to our rebellion. Three ways we need rescue from sin.

[32 : 36] First of all, we see we are those who have transgressed. The first half of verse one. Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven.

Transgression, literally in the Hebrew, is a departure. We have departed from God. In transgressing, we have departed from who he is.

Departed from his holiness. Departed from what we have called to be in him. We are called to be blameless. Called to follow our saviour. We are called to be like him in all ways.

And of course, as Christians who fall into sin, we have transgressed. Gone against God. Gone against his person.

Gone against his holiness. Gone against, as it were, his very plan for us. We also see the second term at the end of verse one.

[33 : 34] We are those who have sinned. This is a term that's most commonly used, of course, in the New Testament. You've probably heard this before.

But the term sin here, literally it's a falling short. So transgression is a departure. Sin here literally translates as falling short.

You could add in some there. Falling short off the mark. The word here. The word here, to fall short. It was used in secular resources, secular sources at the time.

Secular writings to describe failure. To describe in particularly military failure. The image is actually of something being shot at a target and missing the target completely.

We are those who have transgressed. We are those who have transgressed. We are those who have departed from God. We are those who have sinned. Who fall short of God. Fall short of his holiness.

[34 : 35] Fall short of who and what he has called us to be. There's one final term here used for sin. We are those who have practiced iniquity.

We are those who have practiced in times gone by. We have practiced iniquity. Literally, we are those who are corrupt. Who are crooked.

We have departed from God. We have missed the mark completely. And we are corrupt. We are crooked at our very core.

This tells us, it gives insight into what sin does to us. We will see this more in a second. Sin's destruction, it was total in our lives, wasn't it?

Before we were saved, brothers and sisters, sin's hold on us. It was total. It was complete. It infiltrated every area of who we were and what we did.

[35 : 38] And we were told that many times, weren't you? You were told so many times as to the reality and the extent of the sin nature you possess. And you sat, even in this building, time after time, year after year.

You said, I hear it, but I don't believe it. I understand it, perhaps. But I don't perceive it. Sin blinds.

And sin blinds totally those who are still under the effect and the power of sin. Those whose eyes have not yet been opened by the glorious light of coming to Christ.

That's the most horrifying aspect of sin. Is that those who are so deep in it often are so blinded by it, it makes them blinded to it.

Sin blinds so much, we can't see the reality of sin in our own lives. And we know that. Those who are most blinded are those who will say, but I live a good life.

[36 : 43] I look after my family. I'm a good man. I'm a good woman. I serve my community. I come to church. I know the Bible better than you, minister. I know my confessions off my heart and my catechism.

I've been here for years. And they're blind. And they're blind. And they're blind. I say they, but brothers and sisters, this was us, wasn't it?

This was once us, so blind and blinded by sin. We are those who departed from God. Those who fell short of the mark. And those who were crooked and corrupt to the very core.

And for these three descriptions of our rebellion, we then see three ways in which the Lord came and transformed us. And took us to his glorious light and gave us salvation.

Our transgression was forgiven. Literally lifted off. Our transgression was lifted off us.

[37 : 50] The burden of sin was lifted away from us. Think of Pilgrim. As that heavy burden rolls down to the foot of the cross.

If you ask a Christian here this evening about the weight of the burden of sin. Of the weight of the burden of punishment of sin being lifted off them. They'll be glad to tell you about it.

You go from having the Lord over you as judge. In wrath. In righteous wrath. In righteous anger. In his full power.

He is standing over you as king and judge. Saying you have sinned against me. I count you as dead. In a second.

In a second of salvation. God goes from being terrifying judge. To loving father. Yes he is still king.

[38 : 54] Be the king we willingly and lovingly and gladly serve. The burden is lifted off us. Our transgression is forgiven. It is lifted up away from us.

Our sin then is covered. This is the same language used. When we see the day of atonement being talked about.

Of course there's not time this evening. We've covered this in part before as a congregation. But just to remind ourselves. This day of atonement of course. Where the blood is sprinkled on the ark.

To represent the fact that. The sin of the people requires sacrifice. The evil of the people requires this covering.

The blood must be spilt for salvation. Of God's people. And we don't come this evening. Clinging on to the blood of a lamb.

- [39 : 56] The blood of bulls. As we sung a short while ago. We come this evening. And we come and we cling on this evening. To the final sacrifice.
- To the perfect spotless lamb of God. Who was both high king and high priest. And the highest of sacrifices. He himself is high priest.
- And he himself is the lamb. And his sacrifice is final. We know this. But how often we need to remind it of us. Brothers and sisters. This evening we are who we are.
- Because our sins have been covered. In the finished work of our saviour. And our iniquity is not counted against us.
- Our iniquity is not counted against us. This is an accounting term. It's a financial term. The debt has been paid. God no longer counts that debt against our name.
- [40 : 58] The debts are cleared. Never again to be written. Never again to be brought back from the files as it were. They are gone. Brothers and sisters.
- We stand this evening. And yes we might be those who are weak in our faith. And small in our faith. We stand this evening. We say with Christ. And in his finished work. And who he is.
- And what he has done. And who he is at this moment. What he does at this moment. That we are secure. In his finished work. Secure.
- As he at this very moment. Brings us before the father. In constant intercession. We have been rescued. From sin. Brothers and sisters. That is our place.
- Before him just now. But the psalm carries on. Doesn't it? Come to verses 3.
- [41 : 53] And verse 4. We see the reality. That yes we are those who are saved. And yes we are those who know Jesus. And who love Jesus. But our lives are often so complicated.
- Verse 1. Verse 2. Is real for every Christian here this evening. That is our eternal reality. That cannot be taken away from us. It cannot be removed from us.
- If we know him. We know him. If we are his. We are his. If we love him. We love him. If he says that we have been saved by his blood. We have been saved by his blood. But day by day. Day by day.
- We find ourselves falling away from him. Falling into sin. Backsliding. And again. This is not for anyone else. But ourselves. Myself included. Not one of us.
- Dear brother. Dear sisters. It escapes from verses 3 and verse 4. The truth is.
- [42 : 50] As we engage in sin. As believers. As we engage in hidden sin. As we refuse to confess that sin to God. It has a real effect.
- If we at this moment are engaged in hidden sin. Ongoing private sin. I want to see yourself in these verses. Verses 3 and verse 4.
- There is a silence in hidden sin. There is a real silence. In hidden sin. It is ongoing. Deafening silence. As you find yourself. Drifting slowly. Away from the God you love.
- From the Saviour. Who you know has rescued you. When I kept silent. And even the wording of that first phrase in verse 3. Even the grammar of it. It is an ongoing sense.
- [43 : 53] When I kept silent. The implication being. That silence lasted for quite a while. When I kept going in my silence.
- We could say it is bad grammar. But it is perhaps closer to the sense here. As the psalmist found himself. An ongoing. Unproclaimed.
- Unrepented. Quiet sin. He felt the silence grow loud. He felt the silence grow. Pain.
- Fully loud. This willful. And ongoing. Refusal to repent. It leads to nothing but pain. Silence. Guilt.

And fear. Is that your story this evening? Dear brother. Dear sister. Are you coming to this communion weekend. And you are saying to yourself.

[44 : 48] I have engaged in sin. Ongoing. Private sin. Perhaps. This season. This past few months. These past few weeks. Past few days. And it is burning you up inside.

We will see in a second. It is hurting you. And you think to yourself. What do I do? The shame. The pain. The pain. The guilt. It bars me from going to him.

I can't go back to God just now. I can't ask again for forgiveness. I have asked for the same sin. Ten times. A hundred times before. And you let the shame.

The guilt. Keep you away. From one place you should be going this evening. When I kept silent. What does the psalmist say? My bones wasted away. There is a real physical pain.

My bones wasted away. Through my groaning. All day long. The reality is. That ongoing. And hidden sin. It has a real physical impact on us.

[45 : 49] There is no denying it. There is no denying it. What so ever. Even in our studies in Edinburgh. It is a known thing. We are taught.

That because we can only keep something hidden for so long. As we engage in hidden sin. And perhaps grievous sin. And ongoing sin.

It will show itself eventually. The hidden things are seen. The quiet things are known.

Eventually the hidden sins are broadcast. Eventually the quiet sins are held up for all to see. We know that ourselves. Our own recent history. God is not mocked.

He is not mocked. There is a real physical pain. To hidden sin. As he groans. As he groans in himself.

[46 : 47] All day long. He is so pained by his sin. It is as if. His very bones. His very pershing. We say literally there. His very pershing. It is wasting away.

It is almost like a tooth decay. The image here isn't it? An abscess. Or something. Like that. And it is there. And it is hidden perhaps to all outside.

But you know it is there. Every time that the courier touches your tooth. You know it is there. Every time you have something sweet. Or whatever else might cause it.

You know it is there. Every time you do the thing you shouldn't be doing. You know it is there. The pain slowly and surely grows. And the abscess grows.

The damage grows. The groaning grows. The wasting away grows. My brother and my sister.

[47 : 46] We are not here this evening. For theological only. We are not here. For head knowledge only. A genuine plea. We come to in this psalm just now.

Brothers and sisters. If this is you this evening. If you find yourself in verse 3 and verse 4. This is your evening. This is your chance. Come to the Lord just now. Remember verses 1 and verse 2.

Who you are in him. What he has done for you. Do not remain in unrepentant. Groaning filled. Pain filled. Misery. It's going on day and night.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up. As by the heat of summer. There was no reprieve.

From hidden sin. There was no reprieve. From ongoing unrepentant sin. Eventually it will catch us up. Eventually it will become too much for us.

[48 : 48] Night and day. Day and night. There is no ending of this poor man's misery. And note the horrifying but simple detail.

For day and night. For day and night. Your hand was heavy upon me. The great irony. And the great sadness of Christians.

Who live a life of ongoing unrepentant sin. Is that we are so scared. We are not in our sin. To go to God. And we forget. That he knows our sin anyway.

He is not surprised. He is not shocked. He is not somehow taken off guard. As we come and confess to him. He sees all. He knows all. And his hand is heavy upon us.

It is him who is doing the crushing. Not out of joy. Not out of some sadistic intent. He is doing that gentle. But sure pressure. That ongoing crushing.

[49 : 51] Of his hand. Because he disciplines the ones he loves. Brothers and sisters. If you feel this evening. As if the doors of heaven have been shut.

And of course there is often other reasons. But you know yourself. If it is because of ongoing sin. Remain silent. No longer.

Come. Back. To the Lord. Be like. The psalmist. Be like David here. In verse 5. We see the joy.

Of forgiven sin. The joy of forgiven sin. Verse 5. I acknowledge my sin to you. I did not cover my iniquity.

I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. And you forgave iniquity. Of my sin. Brothers and sisters.

[50 : 47] There is no ritual. I can give you this evening. There is no song and dance. I can come and tell you how to perform. There is no as it were secret magic for us.

No secret ritual. No handshake to be done. If you are here this evening. If you are consumed with sin. If you are here this evening consumed with hidden sin.

With guilt. With agony. As your bones waste away within you. The answer is in verse 5. And it is a simple answer.

What does the psalmist do. When faced with this hidden ongoing. Unrepentant reality that exists in.

So simple. I acknowledged my sin to you. And I did not cover my iniquity. How do you return?

[51 : 45] How do you come home again? Christian to where you should be. You confess your sin. I guess we said God sees and he knows anyway. He's not surprised.

He's not shocked. He knows what you're doing. What you're thinking. He sees it all. He knows it all. Confess your sin. I acknowledged my sin to you.

Come and confess. And then stop the hiding. I did not cover my iniquity. The light of God sees all.

There is no darkness with him. As Psalm 139 reminds us so beautifully. All things are known to him. All things are seen and perceived.

And understood by him. Every word. Every thought. Quite simply.

[52 : 45] He trusted in the promise. Of God. Sin. Even for Christians. Sin makes us look. Away from God.

Back to ourselves. It makes us. Takes our eyes of Christ. And onto us. And us alone. We find rescue.

From hidden. Ongoing. Secret sin. Not by trying to make our lives better. You will fail. Not by trying to act. Like a better. Like a better Christian. You will fail.

Not by improving. Your theological knowledge. You will fail. You come. First and foremost. Back to the one. Who rescued you. From your sin.

In the first place. Who tells you. That he has forgiven you. And taken you from death. To life. Follow the advice.

- [53 : 41] Of the psalmist. In verse five. Confess your transgressions. Confess your waywardness. Your departure. And no one's more. What it is to have.

The guilt. Lifted away from you. Come back to the one. Who has not moved. And here we see. The glory of the Lord. Here we see. The beauty of the Lord. And of course.

Note. The spelling of Lord. Capital. L-O-R-D. Of course. Tells us. Yahweh. I will confess. My transgressions. To Yahweh. The covenant keeping God.

I am. But I am. And because he is. The covenant. Keeping God. We can be sure. His promises. Do not change. He does not change.

He who saved you. In the first place. Has not abandoned you. Has not forgotten you. And will take you. Back to himself. Brothers and sisters.

- [54 : 38] You need not remain. In the guilt. Of unforgiven sin. Precious. Child of God. He has not forgotten you. He has not abandoned you.

Quite the opposite. The coldness. That you feel. Is his hand upon you. Reminding you. That he is there. He sees all. He knows all. And telling you. To come home. Repent.

And come back. Confess. And come back. The guilt. Needs not lie. On your shoulders. Any longer. The continued.

Blessing. Of knowing. Our sins. Are. Forgiven. Very briefly. We can look. Just to.

Verses 6. And verse 7. As we see. The ongoing. Preservation. From sin. As a psalmist. Now. Turns. To the crowd.

- [55 : 32] As he. Addresses. The wider congregation. Therefore. That 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. As we come to an end. This evening. We end.

With this thought. Today. Today. Today. Today. Is the day. Of salvation. You've heard it. A plenty of times. Before. And the fact.

You've heard that. More than once. The fact. You've been given. More than one day. As a reminder. Of God's graciousness. And God's goodness. Towards us. Friends.

We've addressed. The Christians. This evening. Friends. I'll address. Part of this. To you. Don't waste. Your time.

- [56 : 28] Don't waste. Your days. We enjoy. Our communion. Seasons. But a communion. Sunday. Is no more holy.

Than ever Sunday. A communion. Weekend. The Lord. Is no. Far away. Or no closer. Brothers and sisters. Every evening.

Every Sunday. We worship the Lord. Friends. Every Sunday. You come to this place. But today. This evening.

On this Thursday evening. This is the moment. For you. This is the day. For you. And how do we know that? Because tomorrow. Is not guaranteed. Tomorrow.

Is not. Guaranteed. God is gracious. God is gracious. But do not. Presume. On his grace. For all time.

- [57 : 25] The day. Will come. And is coming. When you will meet your end. Everyone here. We know that. Is the situation for us. We will. Come to the end of our lives.

May. Is. If we are soon. Or in the future. And nothing matters. On that day. Do we die. In Christ.

Or not. do not give up this opportunity this evening we read at the start in 1 John this evening go home again we have time even the quiet of this evening and read again the chapter that we read in 1 John we'd hold it all 1 John it won't take you more than a few minutes to do it 1 John 1 and verse 9 simplicity but also the enormity of the gospel brothers and sisters for you just now first if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness come back to him this evening come back to him just now he has not changed, he has not moved he who set his love on you has not removed his love from you come back now the same verse again if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness friends and those who as of yet don't know Jesus for yourself friends do not waste your time if you confess your sin he is faithful and just to forgive you your sin and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness drop your excuses at the church door leave them there they mean nothing eternally come to the one who has done all the work come to the one who is in all his person he is the finished work come and know forgiveness at the start of this communion season you've heard the gospel countless times you've heard these gospel calls and appeals countless times it won't take visiting ministers it won't take special sermons or special weekends you know the gospel you've heard the gospel you've heard once more that in Christ you're being offered full and total forgiveness and cleansing of all sin and unrighteousness in your life if only you would come and confess that sin to him it's all for you it's been bought for you purchased the precious price of his blood if you will come to him you will find in him a saviour who is ready and willing to hear that call to hear that cry to find yourself forgiven to find yourself loved and kept by the father to find yourself now serving him for all joy and all peace in your heart in Jesus we have one who is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness

Christians waste no more time in coming back to him friends waste no more time in coming to him for the first time let's bow our heads now a word of prayer Lord we give you praise once more for the gift of your word we thank you for it in it we have not just the glorious reminder of to your love and your grace and your mercy but also a reminder of the warnings we have the warnings to your people to follow after you carefully to serve you well to not to find ourselves giving in to sin and temptation but also a reminder that for those who do give in for those who find themselves harboring secret and ongoing sin that there is salvation that there is relationship that there is love and the saviour who saved them who has not forgotten them who has not left them

I pray once more for our dear friends this evening who have not yet come to Christ that you come to him afresh the first time this evening who have come and known it is to have their sins forgiven to have all their unrighteousness cleansed away from them and to begin as it were this new season calling themselves and knowing themselves and being sure of themselves as one of your people or you would forgive all that was said or any that was said that's not in accordance to your word to give you praise that the power is not in the jar of clay who stands to your power as in you as you work through your living word bless the rest of this evening to us bless the rest of this communion season to us bless even the words from your word this evening to us help us to go away from this place being encouraged having grown not only in our understanding but grown in our love for our saviour ask all these things relying on him and his finished work in his name and for his sake alone amen let's bring our time to a conclusion this evening by singing again from a psalm that we read from the Scottish Psalter in Psalm 32 the Scottish Psalter

[63 : 27] Psalm 32 we can sing verses 6 down to verse 11 Psalm 32 verses 6 down to verse 11 for this every godly one his prayer make to thee in such a time he shall thee seek as found thou mayest be surely when floods of waters great to swell up to the brim they shall not overwhelm his soul nor once come near to him Psalm 32 verses 6 to 11 to God's praise for this shall every godly one his prayer make to thee in such a time he shall receive andunge droid name■ il

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit both for you now and forevermore. Amen.