

Sins Forgiven

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Preacher: Rev Iver Martin

[0 : 00] Well, we're going to turn back to that psalm that we've been singing and that we read earlier on, Psalm 32 on page 555, and think about it together for a few moments. I'll just read the first few verses. Psalm 32, blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. This psalm, as well as the whole Bible, gives us an answer to something that you'll never find an answer to anywhere else in the world.

You can ask any expert in any field of knowledge, and they cannot. Whatever they can tell you about the world we live in, about science and technology and astronomy and biology and everything else, there is so much knowledge in the world.

And so many answers have arisen as a result of the knowledge that we have. We have never lived. Humankind has never existed in a world with so much knowledge as it does today.

[1 : 30] And yet there is only one place that we can find an answer to this problem, and that is the problem of sin. St. Augustine said this, It is the beginning of knowledge to know ourselves, ourself, to be a sinner.

And what that means is that whatever knowledge you have, that it hasn't been founded on the right place unless you begin at that place to know yourself to be a sinner.

And that's because essentially, no matter what we say we are or what we pretend to be or how much denial there is, that we are created by the living and the true God and that we are accountable to him.

And that means, if so, that we have to, we absolutely have to deal and find an answer to this problem of sin. And here it is in the Bible, in the Bible.

Now, some people, of course, they accuse us of glorifying in sin and wrongdoing, and they tell us that we're never so happy as when we're wallowing in guilt.

[2 : 37] That's not true. But what we're doing is recognizing guilt to be a reality. It's not just a feeling. It's not just an illusion. It is a reality that rises out of the fact that we are accountable to God and that we have done wrong in the eyes of God, every single one of us, no exceptions.

We have done wrong in the eyes of God, and that means that we have fallen and we are hopeless unless there is an answer to this problem that keeps us away from God.

Here's the answer. And that's why David is rejoicing in that psalm, not because he's wallowing in wrongdoing, not because he's wallowing in guilt or finding any pleasure whatsoever in his guilt, because it's quite the opposite if you read through the psalm, and we will do in a few moments. He's not wallowing in guilt. He's rejoicing because his guilt has been taken away. And no matter how much you laugh at the Christian gospel, no matter how much you ridicule the Bible, you can't find an answer to guilt.

And you know in your heart of hearts that guilt is a reality. And it's not something that can be explained away psychologically. You can try, but you can't ultimately take it away.

[3 : 52] Guilt is a reality. And you know that in your heart of hearts. Well, here's the answer. And if you've come, you've perhaps lived for years in your life, and you've tried to battle with guilt and tried to deny it, tried to say that it's not there, but now you, perhaps for whatever reason, you find yourself in church tonight, and you're wondering, is there another way of tackling, how can I find the truth about myself and about God?

Then here is the truth. And here is a God who wants to take away your sin, and who wants to remove your guilt and bring you to himself. Now you tell me, is there any better news than that?

I can't think of any other reason, of any greater reason to rejoice this evening. And that's why the man who's writing this psalm, King David, he's got everything. He's a king, he's got everything at his disposal, all the riches and wealth and power.

He's got anything that he wants to his hand. And he's not writing about anything else but the joy of his heart, which is that he is a forgiven man. He's found freedom and forgiveness and cleansing in God.

And that's why he begins this psalm in exactly the same way as the very first psalm in the Bible with the word bless. And it's important for us, if we're ever going to understand the Old Testament, to try and understand the word blessed.

[5 : 11] It essentially means happy. But it's not the kind of happiness you get out of watching the football or whatever. It's not that kind of temporary, superficial happiness.

I'm not denying that you can find happiness in whatever you find happiness in. Of course we do. There's not an Israel happiness. But this is a happiness that can't be found anywhere else. And it lasts forever.

It's a deep-seated peace and contentment in knowing that you're right with God. And you'll never find that happiness, that kind of happiness, until you come to be reconciled with God in the gospel. That's what we're talking about this evening. And that's the word blessedness. Blessed, he says, is the one whose transgressions are forgiven. Be glad, he says, in the Lord.

Here's a man who is rejoicing. He's jumping up and down with gladness and a joy that will never be taken away from him. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous.

[6 : 07] And shout for joy, all you upright in heart. Now that's not a man who's morose and who's wallowing in guilt. No, not at all. That's a man who doesn't take any delight at all. Here, it's quite the opposite.

He's not doing what we do and pointing the finger at other people and their guilt and their wrongdoing. He's opening up a window to himself. And he's giving us, he's telling us his own experience of how he went catastrophically wrong, of how he was made to feel that wrong. And it was his own fault because he didn't come to the place of forgiveness right away. He chose to deny that wrong and to try and put it away from him, to try and get rid of it in some other way, rather than doing what he should have done in the first place.

And that's come straight to the God who forgives sin. You see, if when we sin, when we go astray, we sin against God. That's why David said, it's against you and you only that I've done this wrong. But he didn't realize that in the first place. He was blinded to it. And so he tried to deal with it. So he tried to get rid of his own sin, tried to pretend it wasn't there. And the more he did, the more he tried that, the worse it became.

[7 : 18] And here he is at the end of the day with hindsight. And he's opening up his heart to us. He's doing something what you and I would find incredibly difficult to do.

And that is to confess before the world our own folly. The last thing any of us wants tonight is to make a fool of ourselves. The way we always present ourselves to the world around us is a respectable face.

There's something in us that always wants to do that, isn't there? I guess I'm the same myself. We want to present ourselves with a respectable face. But here is the king of Israel.

And he's saying, he's telling us the worst thing that ever happened to him. The worst thing that he ever did. And it wasn't something that happened to him beyond his control. It was something that he walked straight into.

But he's telling us because he's found the forgiveness that God can give each one of us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[8 : 16] Now I want us to think this evening then of three or four different things with regard as we go through this psalm very briefly. I want us to think first of all of the reality of forgiveness.

And as we do so, I want us to make a comparison between the way in which God comprehensively deals and washes our sin away. And the way in which we very often, very glibly speak about forgiveness when we're dealing with one another.

I want us to see tonight, more than anything else, the completeness of the way in which God tenderly deals with us. Even as people who have broken his word and his law.

I want us to think first of all of the reality of forgiveness. And we see that in the first couple of verses. Let's look at the first couple of verses with me. And we'll see first of all in the words that the psalmist

uses as he describes sin.

Now remember, he's not pointing the finger at anyone else. He's looking in the mirror and he's remembering his own. He's looking inside himself. And this is a psalm in which he confesses not only to God, but he's confessing to all of us for our benefit what he has done in order that we'll find the same thing as he found.

[9 : 25] Three words he uses in the first couple of verses for sin. First of all, the word transgression. Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven.

Then he uses the next word. Whose sin is covered. Then he uses the next word. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity.

Now it's not by accident that he uses these three words. Because they're all describing the same thing in his own life. We'll talk about that in a few moments. But they all have a slightly different perspective on wrongdoing.

First of all, the word transgression, which has been lifted away or which has been forgiven, it means rebellion against authority. That's what it means.

It means when the authority, whatever it is, whether it's the local authority or whether it's the law or whatever, tells us to do one thing and we decide to do the opposite. You know there's something in us.

[10 : 22] That was one of the Sunday schools today, the Mary Bank Sunday School, I was saying that. And it just occurred to me, I was just talking to the children, that it's true, isn't it? There's something within us that when we're told to do one thing, why is it that there's a voice that tells us to do the opposite?

I mean, thankfully, nine times out of ten, we won't do the opposite. We'll keep the law. We'll do what we're supposed to do. It's like when I was giving the example of a story I heard of somebody who saw a door where there was the notice wet paint on the door.

Now that notice was put up on the door in order for someone not to go near it. It was a warning. And yet there's a voice within us. I was reading about this, a young boy who went past the door.

And the first thing that came to his mind was, I wonder if it really is wet. There's only one way to find out. So he puts his finger on the door and he discovers it is wet. And then he tries to get rid of the paint that's on his hand by putting it all over his clothes.

That's the way it works. That's the way it works. That's the word transgression. When the wet paint sign has been put on the door and you deliberately, you put your finger in the door because there's some voice that tells you.

[11 : 33] And that's a picture of what happened at the very beginning. God said of all the fruit that you can eat in the garden, you can have any one you want except one. And that was the one that Eve couldn't take her eyes off.

That was the one when the devil came into the garden and suggested, has God really said that you mustn't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Well, that's the one that she focused on. She had the whole world at her fingertips. She could have anything she wanted. And yet that was the one where the voice said, go on, do it. And we all know what that voice is.

We all know it from our own experience. And it's not something to be trivialized or laughed at. It is part of our fallen human nature, our sinfulness, where we rebel against authority.

Augustine used to say, forgive me for referring to Augustine once again, but he used to ask himself, why is it that it's the neighbor's grapes that I want to steal?

[12 : 30] Why is it that the neighbor's plums are the sweetest? Why is it that my own plum, my own fruit is not as sweet as the neighbor's? Why do I want to cross the wall and steal?

That's what is in us. Blessed, he says, transgression is forgiven. Transgression is rebellion against authority. I don't believe there's anyone in here tonight. It doesn't matter how young you are.

You know what I'm talking about. It's when somebody says one thing and you're tempted to do another with your parents. But most importantly, it's God. Now, the second word he uses is the word sin.

Whose sin is covered. Now, sin is a slightly different meaning to the word transgression. This time, we're on a target practice. And if you can imagine, you're trying to learn how to shoot with a bow and arrow.

Archery. And somebody shows you how to, and you're trying to, the whole point of archery, of course, is to hit the bullseye in the middle. But you very rarely do it.

[13 : 35] You'd have to be pretty good to have, you'd have to practice a lot to get right on target. This word sin is actually, it means missing the mark.

Missing the target. Coming short of where we're supposed to hit. That's what it means. This came home to me this week when there was that enormously long tennis match at Wimbledon. And where these two players were playing, I guess, what, ten hours? More than that? The longest ever recorded tennis match in history. And you had to feel sorry for the guy who lost, didn't you? Because he lost by one point.

But that's the thing. He lost. One point. And it's the same with sin. Sin is when we come short. When we miss the mark of what God has set us. That's what that word means.

The third word means iniquity. And that's what we find in verse 2. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity. Iniquity simply means something that's twisted or warped or perverted.

[14 : 36] Something that should have been straight. But something that has become twisted. Now I want you to notice how God forgives all of these. What God does in relation to all of these words.

First of all, the word transgression. Which was rebellion against authority. He lifts. He forgives. When God comes into a person's heart. He lifts it away. That's what that word forgiven means. It means something that is taken. It means something completely removed. You remember some time ago.

That we went through the pilgrim's progress on a Sunday evening. For the sake of the young ones. You remember the main character in the pilgrim's progress. Was a man called Christian. You remember how the whole story.

Or at least part of the story. Is about how he has this massive great weight on his back. And he feels that there isn't a single moment. The more he reads his book.

[15 : 32] Which is his Bible. The more he becomes aware. Of this great massive weight. He feels he can't bear it any longer. And it causes him all kinds of sorrow. And sadness.

And he needs to get rid. He needs to lose this great weight on his back. And of course. The whole point of that story. Is that he has become aware. Of his own wrongdoing before God.

And his own accountability before God. And he knows that he can never be right with God. Unless and until. This great weight is taken off him. And so he starts down the road. And eventually.

After many pitfalls along the way. He reaches the point of the cross. And it's only when he looks up at the cross. That suddenly he's released.

From this great weight. And the burden. It falls off him. And rolls down a hill. And it's never seen again. Well that's what this word means.

[16 : 27] It means that your transgression. Is forgiven. Now here's where it becomes. Completely different to the way that we. The way that we deal with one another.

When someone sins against us. When someone wrongs us. Well if we're nice. And if we're kind. We may find it within ourselves. To try and move on. And try and say. Well that's okay. But the offense is still there.

And no matter what you can do. You can put it right. As best you can. But if the offense. And the guilt is still there. It remains. That's the difference. But when God forgives.

A person's sin. He literally. Takes the guilt away. Now only God can do that. Can remove the guilt. And that's the whole point.

Of the Old Testament. Was to show. For example. Particularly. At the day of atonement. When the goat. When somebody placed their hands. On the goat.

[17 : 24] And it was led away. Into the wilderness. Never to be seen again. That goat. Symbolically carried. The weight. Of the sin of Israel. Now God is telling us.

In that. That this is what he wants to do. And this is why he sent Jesus. Into the world. So that. Our sin. The guilt of our sin. Could be lifted away. Completely removed.

God has. There's no half measures. With God. He doesn't do things in part. And when he forgives. He really forgives. He forgives. Past. Present. And future. Never to remember it anymore.

When that goat was taken out. Into the wilderness. No one was ever to find out. Where it went. Never to see that goat again. And it's the same with God. Once he removes. A person's sin.

That's it. It's gone. It's finished. I think we're. Beginning to understand. I hope now. Why the psalmist. Is so joyful.

[18 : 22] He still has to tell us. What he did. And how he got to where he is. But he's so joyful. Because he knows. That his sin. Is forgiven. When it comes to. Missing the mark. He tells us that.

His sin is covered. And shame. And sin. Go together. Don't they? You remember. Noah. After he came out of the ark. He got drunk. And you remember. He was lying. In his drunken state. One day. And he. His sons. Found him. In his tent. And you remember. How one of his sons. He carefully got a. A mat. Or a rug. And he carefully. Went in. Backwards. And he covered. His father's shame. And that's always a great picture. It's always a. Very vivid picture. Of how God wants to cover. Our sins. Not brushing it under the carpet. That's not God's way at all. Quite the reverse. Our sins are forgiven. Because Jesus. Paid for our sins.

[19 : 19] He paid the. The full price. Of the anger of God. On the cross at Calvary. So that we could be. Set free. And washed. But here's what God does. He covers us. He covers our shame. The shame. That always goes along. With sin. And it's the same. It's true for. For iniquity. What does it tell us here? Blessed is the man. Against whom. The Lord counts. No iniquity. See. Sin. Is counted. Against us. Rather like. When you spend too much. And you become. Into. You get into debt. And it's counted against you. By your bank. And you get a statement. In the. In which you're. In the red. But when God. Forgives us. He clears. Our account. He pays off. Our debts. That's what it means. It means that. It's as if. We have never. Sinned in the first place. That's the marvel. And the uniqueness.

[20 : 13] Of the way. In which God cleanses. And washes us. From our sins. So there's three things. Three words. Transgression. Sin. And iniquity. Transgression is forgiven. Sin is covered. And iniquity is not. Counted against us. So here's the psalmist. And he's telling us. How thoroughly. And how comprehensively. And how lovingly. God leaves no stone unturned. There is nothing. That we need. That God doesn't do. And hasn't done. And that means. That we. We can rejoice. In the Lord. Tonight. If we know this forgiveness. To be. Our own. But the second thing. I want us to look at this evening. Very quickly. Is the repentance. That always goes along. With forgiveness. We looked at the reality. Now we look at the repentance. That always goes along. With forgiveness. Now for most of us. Repentance. Doesn't come easy.

[21 : 09] For some people. Involves a long time. Of painful. Awareness. That something. Is wrong. And most people believe. That this psalm. Written by David. Goes along. With psalm 51. Which tells us. Of how. After having fallen. Catastrophically. Before God. In committing adultery. With. With Bathsheba. You remember. How it happened. In 2nd Samuel. Chapter 11. Just shortly. After. David. Had become king. Of how one. Day. He sent his army. Off to war. And it was because. He stayed behind. That he. Looked out of his palace. And he saw. A beautiful woman. But she was someone else's wife. And he. He was tempted. When he saw her. And he brought her to his palace. And he. He committed adultery. With her. But then she became pregnant. And then he tried. To. Make out. As if. The woman's husband.

[22 : 03] Uriah. Was the father. He called him back. From the army. And tried to. Persuade him. To go back to his house. Two or three times. He tried to persuade him. Even made him. Drunk on one occasion. To try and persuade him. To go back to his house. But. Marvelously. Uriah. Didn't do it. Maybe he suspected all along. There was something going on. I reckon he probably did. Suspect all along. And he refused to go back. To his wife. And then of course. The. Then of course. David. Went the ultimate extent. And he arranged. For the murder of Uriah. By putting him in the front line. Of the battle. So that the enemy. Would kill him. And then he took his wife. To be. His own wife. That was a terrible thing. It's an awful thing. Started off. Well. I'm sure. He reckoned. It was. Quite innocent. He was having a day off. Or whatever. It probably. His defenses were down. And it was then. That he. Fell into the temptation.

[22 : 57] And from there. Things spiraled. Completely. Out of control. So he was then. In a situation. That he. That he couldn't do anything. About. She was. She was pregnant. And he had been killed.

And the whole thing. Had become chaos. That's what. That's what wrongdoing does. That's what sin leads to. It leads to chaos. Unless it is. Controlled. And here he is. And he's telling us. Not what was happening. On the outside. Because. If you read. Second Samuel. Chapter 11. That will tell you. The story. Of. What happened to David. As other people saw it.

But here. Is. What. David felt. His first reaction. To being told. His first reaction. To the awareness. The awful. Horrible. Sickly. Awareness. He spent a long time. Without confessing it. Spent at least.

[23 : 52] Nine months. Without. Letting on to anyone. Trying to deceive himself. I'm sure. Trying to pretend to himself. The way that. Many of.

Very often. People try and react. To when they know. There is something wrong. In their lives. Some people deny. That there is such a thing. As guilt. Trying to try and say. Well. It's only to do. With my upbringing. It's the way. I was brought up. I was brought up. To think of. Some things being wrong. And some things being right. But. An actual fact. When you really think about it. Is it true. That all these things. That I've been conditioned. To believe. Are they true. Or are they not. That's the way. Some people think. And then other people. Try to pretend. That what has happened.

Is not so serious. They try to trivialize it. Other people. Try to compare. Compare themselves. With others. Who they know. Have done. They think. Worse things. That's the way we are.

[24 : 45] Isn't it? We very often. Compare ourselves. With someone else. I could be worse. I could be like. The person I read. About the other day. In the newspaper. Well he did something. Much worse than I did. Other people. Try and use.

Every possible means. To shut it out. Shut the memory out. And to shut the feeling. Of guilt out. And you know. What some people do. They some people. Become religious. Or become more religious. When they know. That something has gone wrong. In their lives. And they've allowed. Something terrible. To take place. And they know. They've done wrong. What I mean. By being religious. Is putting a front. Where they keep. All the appearances. Up. And where. So that nobody. Gets to know. What they're like. On the inside. It's the easiest thing. In the world.

To be perfect. On the outside. As far as other people. Can see us. And to live. And act. In such a way. That they don't suspect. Anything is wrong. Because we become. More and more religious.

[25 : 40] Do all the right things. Make sure we take. All the right boxes. And I reckon. That David did the same. To make sure. That nobody would suspect. Anything was wrong. With him. But inside.

There was utter turmoil. And chaos. Here's what he says. When I kept silent. In other words. As long as I kept myself. From confessing. To the Lord. And coming clean.

To the Lord. Before. What I did. When I kept silent. My bones. Inwardly. It was just a fire. It was chaos. My bones. Wasted away.

Through my groaning. All day long. And the more I. Tried to put up. That front. In front of others. The more. The more. Ill I felt. The more turmoil.

There was going through. My groaning. All day long. Day and night. Your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up. As by the heat. Of summer. You see. There was no way. Try as he might.

[26 : 34] That he could. Eliminate. The awareness. Of God. And as never before. He was aware. Of the presence of God. Now you ask any Christian. And they'll tell you. The one thing.

That they really want. More than anything else. Is to feel. And to know. The presence of God. But here is a man. And he feels. And knows. The presence of God. But. It's in the wrong way. It's because he knows.

That God has. He knows everything. About him. And he's seen. Everything that's taken place. And he's. He can't get rid of. That awareness. And you know. If you know something. Of the love of God. In your life.

And if you've gone wrong. Then you'll be aware. As never before. Of God's proximity. His nearness. But not in the way.

That you want to. In a way. That makes you feel. It makes you feel. Far away.

[27 : 30] From what you should be. Well that's the way. That God. He has to do that. In order to bring us. To our senses. But as well as God. Working on the inside.

Of course. We know from. Second Samuel. Chapter 11. That God was working. On the outside. And he sent. Nathan the prophet. To David. And it was when Nathan. He told him the story. You can read it for yourself.

Of the man with the lamb. That all of a sudden. At last. David came to realize. The extent. Of his own. His own guilt. Before God. And it was at that moment. That he confessed.

What he had done. And that's the moment. In verse 5. I acknowledged. He said. My sin to you. And I did not cover up. My iniquity. I said.

I will confess. My transgressions. To the Lord. He couldn't go any further. He was a spent man. There was no other answer. No amount of denial. Or play acting.

[28 : 23] Or pretense. No amount of putting on. The right front. Or the right face. No amount of self persuasion. Could shift the fact. That he was accountable. To God.

God. And so he confessed. And it was at that very moment. That the Lord. Forgave. The iniquity. Of his sin. You know. In that little verse. Is. A total transformation. At long last. He has come to see. What. The folly. Of what he has done. And the awfulness. Of what he has done. And at long last. He has come to his senses. A bit like the prodigal son. And he has gone back. To the father. The only place he knows. Where there is. Forgiveness. And he says. That he uses. Those same words again. Notice in verse five. I acknowledge my sin.

[29 : 17] Before you. I did not cover up. My iniquity. And he says. I will confess. My transgressions. To the Lord. You know. People very glibly. Say that confession.

Is good for the soul. But. Very often. When they say that. They don't real. They don't realize. What they're saying. And that's. That may or may not be true.

In a. In a kind of a social sense. A kind of a community sense. Or a family. Family sense. But when the Bible. When we come to. Really take seriously. What the Bible says.

Confession. Is the way. It's not confession. That saves us. But the Bible. Tells us. That if we confess. He is faithful. And just. And will cleanse us.

From all. Unrighteousness. It's not as if. It's not like some kind of. Mind exercise. It is. When you come.

[30 : 11] To the living. And the true God. On the basis. Of what Jesus Christ. Has done. On the cross. And giving his life. On the basis. Of his death.

And his death alone. And when you confess. Lord. I. Am. Finished. There's no place else. I can go tonight. I need you.

I've always need you. Needed you. And I've been such a fool. To believe. And to try and pretend. That I can do this. Without you. That's what.

Confession means. And it's when we take hold. Upon. What Jesus. Has done. For us. And what he has done. Alone.

That we discover. God's forgiveness. His complete forgiveness. And the life. Changing. Experience. That he can bring to us.

[31 : 07] In. Jesus Christ. I. Confessed. My sin. I will confess. My transgression. To the Lord. And you. Forgave. The guilt. Of.

The iniquity. Of. My sin. Now. Perhaps. I'm talking to. Two different people. Tonight. I'm talking. Perhaps. First of all. To a person. Who's a follower. Of Jesus.

And yet. You know. That something. Has taken place. In your life. Maybe one thing. In particular. And like David. It's gone from. Bad to worse. And you're now. Really struggling.

You didn't think. It would ever become. Like that. You would. You didn't think. That it was. Small at first. But now. You're really struggling. You begin to think. That I'm in this. Too deep. And I can't get out of it.

And I've allowed myself. To backslide. And yes. It's easy enough. Nobody else. In this room.

Tonight. Knows. What is going on. In my life. I'm able to put on a flunt. Use all the right language. I'm able to read my Bible.

[32 : 02] I'm able to sing. With the rest. And nobody else knows. And yet. I know that God knows. And it's tearing me apart. And I can't live with it much longer.

Then you're in the right place. And you're reading the right passage. That's exactly what David experienced. And as long as you go on the way you are. When I kept silent.

My bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. My day and night your hand was upon me. So what did David do? He confessed his sin. He came to that place. Where in the secret of his

own heart.

In his own bedroom. Or wherever it was. He bowed down before the Lord. And out it all came. God knew it all already. And yet. Out it all came. And that was the moment.

Of the turning point. And that will be your turning point as well. And I'm saying that to you Christian. Maybe there's people unconverted here tonight. And you're saying. Well why is he talking to Christians? Surely they don't fall.

[33 : 05] Of course they do. If David can fall. Anyone can fall. But that doesn't give you an excuse. If you're not a Christian tonight. For staying.

In a place of unforgiveness. Because. God will lead his own people. Back to himself. He tells us. He restores my soul. And makes me to walk in the paths of righteousness.

Psalms 23. But I want to talk to you tonight. Who have never experienced God's forgiveness. And for whatever reason. You're listening to what I'm saying tonight.

And perhaps. You're taking this on board. Perhaps for the very first time. And you're beginning to see. What your own wrongdoing.

That is. First of all. It's never brought you happiness. Or contentment. Or peace. In this world. It's never brought you anything. And. And perhaps. You feel that. The older you get.

[34 : 03] The harder you're getting. And the further and further away. You're. You're. You're getting from the Lord. Lord. And perhaps. It's because. Because you realize that. That you're here tonight. And there's something within you.

That really wants to be reconciled to God. Perhaps you've given up hope. Upon yourself. Perhaps. There's. You feel. There's no forgiveness left. In me. Well. Look at these three words.

All of these three words. Apply to you. For as long as you've been in this world. And it doesn't matter how long. You could be the oldest person here. There is. There is. The forgiveness of God. Applies.

To you. If you take it. If you taste. And see. That God. Is good. There is no one. Who is beyond. God's ability.

To forgive. Transgression is forgiven. Sin is covered. Who counts. No iniquity. God is in the business. Of forgiveness. And cleansing. And washing.

[35 : 00] That's why Jesus. Came into the world. God so loved the world. That he gave his only begotten son. So that whosoever believes in him. Shall not perish.

But have everlasting life. And that applies to you. You could be the worst sinner in here tonight. I don't know. Nobody. We don't know each other.

We don't know one another's heart. And you're not accountable to me. Or anyone else. You're accountable to God. And whatever shameful stuff. Has been going on in your life. Then come to the Lord.

Come to the Lord. You could be the most respectable person. In storm. But inside you know. That you're a proud person. You're a bitter person. You're a person who has resisted the gospel.

Because you're afraid of admitting your own wrongs. That's the way the Pharisees were. The chief priests. So respectable in front of everyone else. But the fact is that it was all a front.

[35 : 56] Because they were scared to admit their own wrongs. And how much they needed to be forgiven. And they thought that religion was for good people. Jesus came into the world to show that his message was for bad people.

And that's why he surrounded himself with the prostitutes. And the tax collectors. And the sinners of his day. That's what you are. That's what I am. Completely depended upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus.

And that's why tonight I rejoice with David. Because I can stand here. Not as a minister. Not because I'm a minister. Being a minister has done nothing for me.

In terms of my relationship with God. In terms of my forgiveness. I'm as much in need of God's forgiveness. As you are. But I stand here tonight. On the basis of what Jesus has done.

And my forgiveness is grounded on him. And him alone. I thank the Lord. That I and many of you here tonight. Are able to say be glad in the Lord.

[36 : 57] And rejoice oh righteous. And shout for joy. All you upright and out. Do you have that this evening? Well if you don't come. And take it. And leave behind all the wrongdoing.

And the shame. And the darkness of the past. And turn to Jesus. And take what he has done for you. As a payment of your sins. And you will know.

That joy. And that life. For yourself. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven.

We thank you for your word. And we pray that it will reach into our hearts. With power. The power of the Holy Spirit. We ask Lord. That you will speak personally. To each one of us. Through what we've been reading tonight.

And pray that we might see. How relevant. And how personal it is. That we are standing tonight. In front of the living. And the true God. The holy God. The God who is of purer eyes.

[37 : 53] Than to see iniquity. And yet. The God who loves to forgive. And who's willing to forgive. And able to forgive us. From all unrighteousness. Forgive our sin. We pray. In Jesus name.

Amen.