

# Singing when sin seems good!

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[ 0 : 00 ] Welcome, everybody. Good to see you. Good to have you with us. We're going to look at Psalm 32 in our soul song series on the Psalms, the selection of Psalms.

And you're always aware, it's a bit like going to a concert of your favorite band. You know, you want them to play everything they've ever made, at least the ones you all like, and that they can only play so many. I think it's a bit like that with this series.

I think, why do we miss so much out between Psalm 23 and 32? But never mind. It's going to be like that. Partly because of the themes. And today's theme is not the most exciting.

Next slide, please. Singing when sin seems good. It kind of flows nicely, doesn't it? But sin is not a thing we like to talk about too much because it always appears very negative.

I hope you'll see at the end it doesn't need to be. It's a reality that we deal with, but it isn't the whole story. And so you're going to see that today.

[ 1 : 10 ] Hopefully that there are two sides of a coin here that we need to think about whenever we talk about sin in the church. Sin is a reality with which we have to recognize and deal, but redemption is God's cure.

The blood of Jesus is God's cure for sin. And that's the hope that is held out for us. A beautiful psalm, Psalm 32. You kind of take a deep breath.

I always take a deep breath when I begin to read this because I just love the start. Blessed is the one... Oh, sorry, I shouldn't miss it. A maskil of David.

Okay. Maskil means instruction. But it's a kind of note to tell you that this is meant to instruct you. Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

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

[ 2 : 19 ] For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I pause because cellar is a pause.

Okay. It just means stop and think about it. I acknowledge my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity. I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgive the iniquity of my sin. Take that in. Pause for a moment and think about the wickedness of your sin. It's quite a heavy weight you carry. But God forgives it.

Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found. Surely in the rush of great waters they shall not reach him.

You are a hiding place for me. You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.

[ 3 : 29 ] I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule without understanding, which must be curbed with bitten bridle, or it 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 and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Amen. And the Lord will bless to us the reading of his word. Next slide, please. You'll be familiar with Oscar Wilde. Very handsome fellow. Very handsome fellow and very vain, but a brilliant writer and a troubled man.

He famously said, I can resist anything except temptation. I guess you know what that feels like. He also said, the only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it.

Well, that's not true. But nonetheless, it's very easy to yield to. Isn't it? Especially when sin seems so very nice.

[ 4 : 36 ] It's a trouble with sin. It's a bit like chocolate. It's bad for you, but it seems nice. Tastes nice, I'm told. I don't like it, so. Well, milk chocolate I don't particularly like, but dark chocolate.

Eat dark chocolate. It'll put you off because it's not as nice. But that is good for you, I'm told. As long as you have a lump a day. Anyway, enough dietary advice. This psalm speaks of the joy of forgiveness.

It opens with the line, Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. And you know I've said it too many times now. Blessed means happy.

Happy is the one. Joyful is the one. At peace is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

We'll come back to the words in a moment. But also in this psalm, David speaks of the struggle he had with sin and the folly of his human nature in holding onto that which kept him at a distance from God.

[ 5 : 39 ] It's a strange thing about the human condition that we do so many things to ourselves that we know harm us. But we do them anyway. Sometimes we can't help it.

Sometimes we don't want to do it, but we're addicted to some kind of feeling or behavior or habit that is actually destroying us.

Now I read the other day that, you know, when the government put on boxes of cigarettes, smoking can kill you, didn't make any real difference to the people who smoked.

Of course smoking can kill you, but it probably won't kill me. At least I hope it won't. So I'll continue to smoke. Yeah? And they kind of said, well actually the only way we're going to get people to stop smoking is to get them to think about something positive about their life.

Just think of the life you could have, the health you could have if you didn't smoke. That's a better message. And it's actually the psalmist's message really. If you continue to wallow in sin, life is going to be terrible.

[ 6 : 45 ] Even if you enjoy it from time to time. But if you replace your love for sin with a greater love, you will expel the power of sin in your life.

And we'll come back to that as we go through this psalm. The psalmist reflects on the painful memory he had, the painful experiences he had of lost fellowship with God due to his reluctance to give up his sin.

A stubborn mule he was. A stubborn mule. Perhaps you've been a stubborn mule as I have over the years to your own detriment.

And so this psalm is a penitential psalm. And there are a number of penitential psalms. Psalm 6 was the first one. Psalm 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143.

I'll test you next week. So then, what can we see? Next slide, please. We're going to see the happiness of sins forgiven. We've already said blessed means happy or exuberant.

[ 7 : 54 ] Exuberant is the one who is forgiven, whose transgression is covered. The word transgression tells us that we've broken a law.

We've broken a rule. So we've broken God's rule, and the psalmist says it can be covered. Sin is falling short.

Falling short of God's standard, like the archer who fires an arrow at the target, but it falls short of the bullseye, of the mark. And it doesn't matter by how much it falls short, whether it's just on the outside of the bullseye, or whether it doesn't even hit the target.

Falling short is falling short. And Paul picks up this thought in Romans 3, 23, when he says, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We may be very good sinners, but we're still sinners. And only good sinners in comparison to others, of course. We always like to compare ourselves with people who are worse than us, because that makes us feel better about ourselves. And then he talks about iniquity.

[ 9 : 03 ] That's the other word he uses. And that word refers to the effect that sin has on a person's life. Iniquity is corrupting.

It is tainting. It is damaging. If we are covered or damaged by iniquity, we are twisted and we are crooked as a result.

So that's a very kind of comprehensive view of the idea of sin. Sin is breaking the commandments of God. Sin is falling short of the mark of perfection that God sets, the absolute requirement for obedience that he sets over his law.

And iniquity is the corruption or wickedness that results because we give ourselves over to a life of sin. And that's the next slide.

Just so you can catch up. So sin is damaging. It's always damaging. It has a cumulative effect, a bit like having a bad diet.

[10:10] You know, it's fine to have a burger once a week, as the guy who did that series on McDonald's, remember him? It's fine to have it once a week, but when you have it every day, you're killing yourself.

And that's kind of what sin does to us. It very rarely kills us outright, but it catches us in a snare and it becomes addictive. At first it was enjoyable, but when it becomes addictive, it becomes controlling and toxic and damaging, as you see every day on the streets of our city with those hopelessly addicted to drugs or alcohol who have ruined their lives.

It's a kind of external picture of what sin does to us on the inside. And if you've never read Oscar Wilde's diary, sorry, portrait of Dorian Gray, you must read it.

It's a fantastic picture of what sin does to people on the inside, however good we look on the outside. But now for the good news. Next slide.

The good news is provided, presented to us in this psalm as a contrast to the bad news.

Transgression is rebellion against God, expressed in relation to our breaking of God's law, but the psalmist says God forgives it.

[11:33] Sin is falling short of God's standards of perfection, but the psalmist says God covers it. And iniquity damages and corrupts us to the degree that we indulge in sin and we become tainted by it, but the psalmist says God refuses to count it against us.

Isn't that good? Every time we mess up, God provides an answer. Where sin abounds, Paul says, grace does much more abound.

There is grace to cover all my sin. Amazing grace. How sweet the sound that saved the wretch like me. And the psalmist is just parallel in these concepts.

Yeah, there's bad news, but the good news is so much better. To have our sins covered, for example, is to have them lifted off our shoulders.

Next slide, please. So if you've never read this book, you really ought to read it. John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. I love this book, especially in the old language, but never mind, read it in the new if you must.

[12:43] But the picture of the pilgrim, of Christian, with the burden on his back, like a big sort of traveler's haversack or backpack.

And he's dragging this around with him, but he can't get it off. And then he comes to Mount Zion. He comes to the, Mount Kari, rather. He comes to the cross, and there the burden rolls away.

His burden noosed from off his shoulders and fell from off his back and began to tumble and so continued to do so till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre where it fell in, never to be seen again. My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought. My sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more.

I do not carry its heavy weight. It does not weigh me down. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Oh, my soul. Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

[13:50] Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. Count against him. Luke will like this. It's a bookkeeping term.

Yeah? It's a set of accounts. There are all your sins, and they make of a great debt, and they're there, listed as it were, and then, over them all, God writes the word forgiven.

Paid in full in the blood of Jesus. Sins imputed to your account washed away in the blood of Jesus. the blood of Christ imputed to your account, not held against you, but cleansed in the blood of Christ. Fantastic concept Paul speaks about in Romans 4.

Again, we'll come back to this. So, here is happiness. Happiness comes from having our sins forgiven. Happiness does not pretend that we are something we are not.

[14:57] to find happiness. We acknowledge what we are by virtue of our nature, but we also confess that in spite of our nature, we are forgiven in the precious blood of Jesus.

Our sins are not counted against us. Next slide, please. So, that was the first idea, the happiness of the man whose sins are forgiven.

Secondly, we've got the sadness of our struggle with sin. Notice again verses 3 to 5. 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 sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord and you forgive the guilt of all of my sin.

What happens when we struggle with sin? Well, we hurt ourselves. It has an impact upon our body. [16:10] It has an impact upon our mind. It has an impact upon our conscience. It is staining and corrupting. It becomes addictive and unsatisfying.

And if you don't believe that, try and give something up that you know is a really bad habit that you just can't break and see how controlling it really is.

It takes an awful lot of willpower. But when it comes to sin, willpower alone won't cut it. We need much more than willpower to break the power of sin in our lives.

We've tried, haven't we? We call them New Year's resolutions. Or we set up a program to try and break a bad habit. But we realize we can do it for a little while, but it's hard to sustain, especially when times are stressful and difficult.

we struggle. Why do we struggle as Christians with sin? Well, we do. But we have a power, a seed, an influence at work in us that enables us to overcome sin in our lives.

[17:26] And that's the really good news we need to get. we do say, well, you know, I'm just a sinner. Well, you are just a sinner. That's absolutely true. So that explains why you behave badly.

Or I behave badly. But it would be wrong to say that as if that was all that was true of you. Because actually, you are a saved sinner, saved by grace.

God's Spirit lives in you and you need not sin. Have you ever thought about that? When John writes his letter in those wonderful verses about the blood of Jesus forgiving our sin and cleansing us from all unrighteousness, he opens chapter 2, verse 1 in 1 John 2, in 1 John, sorry, in his letter.

And he says, Dear children, I write this to you so that you do not sin. There's a choice. There's a choice. And it's unique to you as a Christian.

You have a choice. The power of sin is broken in your life by the blood of Jesus. The ability not to sin is available to you because the Holy Spirit lives in your life.

[18:38] You don't need to yield to the temptation for there is a greater power at you than the power that is in the world. But if you do yield, and we do yield, sadly, then you can be forgiven.

It's not excusing the sin. It's offering you the opportunity for forgiveness and for a way out. But you need not be under the power of sin.

We are not under law, Paul says. We are under grace. So what happens when we sin? When we sin against our better instincts?

Well, we feel its impact. Perhaps we find it difficult to sleep. Perhaps you just feel, ugh, I'm so fed up today. Had a really troubled night and now my bones are aching.

Yeah? I'm trying to get this out of my mind, but it goes round and round and round. How could I have been so stupid? Here I am again, Lord.

[19:46] Please forgive me. I know you shouldn't really because I've asked this so many times. You know what that's like, don't you? You know the impact of the struggle with sin in your life.

It can be harmful to our mental, emotional, and physical health. And Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11, when we read it all of the time in relation to communion, he says, look, some of you are sick.

Even some of you have died because of your sin. That's believers. Never underestimate the deceitfulness and the power of sin.

And never, even as a believer, think, well, I'm saved by the grace of God so it really doesn't matter what I do. It really does. But you see what sin is doing in your life if you're a believer.

You're not going to be condemned. So when the believer sins, your relationship with Jesus is not over. It's not as if God casts you out. That can never happen.

[20:54] But when it does happen, it damages you. That's the point. It damages me. The reason why, if you like, God is so hurt by our sin is not because it changes him but because it changes us.

Just think about relationships, human relationships, your loving relationships with your children or with your spouse or whatever it might be. Your parents. relationships.

Now, when you do something and you hurt one another and you feel bruised and you feel angry and frustrated at somebody in your family, the relationship is broken and it's a difficult place to be, isn't it?

To be in the home when that's going on and the relationship is so damaged. It's a difficult place to be. It doesn't mean that you're no longer part of the family, of course. It doesn't mean that the whole

relationship is going to end.

It's just that the relationship has a barrier that has to be removed. Our sin doesn't damage our Heavenly Father. It damages us.

[ 21 : 59 ] That's why He says to us, come on. Give it up. Give it up. It's not good for you, you know. Have you ever seen your children do something you know is harming them and you just say to them, come on, let me help you.

I don't want this to harm you. Give it up. And that's how I see it now. I see, I see, my Heavenly Father, the Holy Spirit whispering into my ear when I sin, come on, John, this is not good for you. He's not condemning me. He's saying, I've got better for you. Come and be cleansed in the blood of Jesus. Come and allow Him to break the power of that in your life.

Come and be free. I didn't create you to be in bondage. I created you to be free. And that's good news. If you're really in bondage to a sin, if you're struggling with some kind of sin, sexual sin, some kind of addictive sin of some kind of terrible thing, it's just going on and on and on and on.

You can be free of that. You can be free of that. Today, the blood of Jesus cleanses you, but the power of the Spirit will enable you to overcome as you trust in Him.

[ 23 : 17 ] When we struggle with sin, it harms us. We can break its power as Jesus comes to us and as the Holy Spirit lives in our lives.

So how do we overcome the desire to sin? Because that's the real problem sometimes when we're struggling with sin, isn't it? We just like it.

We don't want to give it up. It's like enjoyable. And God's a bit of a killjoy. He must know how nice it is. Well, I understand that.

The only way you can give up a desire is by replacing it with a greater desire. What Thomas Chalmers called the expulsive power of a new affection.

Chalmers, when he was preaching on 1 John 2, verse 15, talks about not loving the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

[ 24 : 14 ] And Chalmers posed a question. How shall the human heart be freed from its love for the world? He says, there are two ways one might seek to remove the controlling affection from the heart.

One is to show the world, one is to, sorry, is to show that the world is not worthy of our affection and will let us down in the end. The other is to show that God is vastly more worthy of the heart's attachment, thus awakening a new and stronger affection that displaces the former.

And he said, only the second will do. It's very good pastoral advice. When a preacher stands up and says, you are awful sinners and you should not do this and should not do that and should not do the other and you all think, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

That's not going to make a great deal of difference. That's like saying, I shouldn't have this fourth mince pie, but I'm going to have it anyway.

This massive cream cake for the third time this week is not going to do my cholesterol any good but it tastes so nice. It's like, it's not going to work. The way to change the desire is to find something that you love more.

[ 25 : 32 ] And Chalmers says, the thing that you need to love more is Jesus. The thing you need to do most of all is to follow the life of Jesus. What a happy, what a contented, what a blessed life that was.

What a wholesome life it was. A life in continuous fellowship with the Father. A life that was unhurried and unperturbed by the things that were going on around Him.

A life that was good and transparently at peace and you think to yourself, that's the life I want. Well, you get the life of Jesus by adopting the lifestyle of Jesus.

Yeah? You get the life of Jesus by adopting the lifestyle of Jesus. You replace your desire for sin by loving righteousness. That's the way to overcome sin.

Okay, next slide please. Oh wow, we've got a phone going. Next slide. The security of our safety in God. Verses 6 to 11.

[ 26 : 37 ] Let's notice what the psalmist says. Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found. Surely, when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.

You are my hiding place. You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you and watch over you.

Do not be like the horse or the mule which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. Many are the wars of the wicked but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

Rejoice in the Lord and be glad you righteous. Sing all you who are upright in heart. So, we talk about the happiness of sins forgiven but then we talk about the struggle we have with sin.

Okay, how do we overcome that? Where do we find security? Well, we find security in the safety of God and there are a number of steps the psalmist says we should take and the next step, next slide, is this.

[ 27 : 44 ] We should seek God in prayer. Okay, if you are overwhelmed by sin, if it is controlling you, if it is causing you deep hurt, if it is damaging your life, if you are at that point where you really want to be free from it, the writer says, let everyone who is godly pray to you.

Yes, you godly sinner, you can be a godly sinner. Pray. Pray. Pray when he may be found. That is to say, when there is opportunity to bring it all before God and when the Holy Spirit has put it into your heart to finally be done with that thing that is controlling you, then God has given you an opportune moment to seek him.

And if you seek him, then you are telling God that you are really serious about it. Have you ever got to that point where you kind of think, ah, you know, I am a bit stiff in the morning, I have put on a few pounds, I am going to take up exercise on Monday.

Monday comes, somebody rings you up, coffee John, yeah, yeah, we will go for a coffee, we will go to Costa, we will go to Costa, yeah, oh, there is a cream cake. I am going to take up exercise on Wednesday.

Oh no, Wednesday is not good because it is a senior's lunch and I get two lunches, oh no, no, Friday, oh no, no, Friday is not good because I go out, have a few pints, no, I am not going to do that, no, no, Saturday, no, that is a match, I am going to match, no, get a burger then.

[ 29 : 26 ] Next Monday, and next Monday, and the next one, I do not know if you are like me but there we are, it is like that, isn't it?

How much do I really want to change that will be discovered in the effort I am willing to put in and the sacrifices I am prepared to make.

So the sacrifice we must make begins with prayer, with seeking God, with finding an opportunity to say to God, God, I am really serious about this, I really want to break free of this habit, I am going to seek you every day for the power to overcome.

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near, let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts, let him turn to the Lord and he will have mercy on him and to our God and he will freely pardon.

You know, that is a bit like the person who is addicted by pornography saying, God, I really want to be free of this but I am still going on my computer and I am still going to look.

[ 30 : 38 ] It is not going to work. You might have to do something about the time you spend in front of your screen. You might have given up the screen for a while. To be serious about breaking an addiction requires you to move away from the addiction.

To put yourself away from the thing that controls you to replace it with time spent with God. You might be an angry person and you say, God, please help me with that temper.

I find myself getting so bad tempered but you never kind of take time to relax, go for a walk, chill out, you know, laugh, move yourself away from the things that irritate you because they tend to make you bad temper, don't they?

You're never going to be kind of breaking those bad tempers if you're continually in a place where you get easily irritated. That's part of the whole seeking of God process.

It's asking God to give you wisdom to break through those things that so easily entangle. Little wonder the Psalms describes the overwhelming nature of sin as great waters, great waters, great waters rise up against me.

[ 32 : 05 ] They reach me. They're kind of pulling me down under. I'm going to drown. I'm going to perish. And at that point, only God can lift me up and only God can set me free.

Charles Wesley got this, didn't he, when he wrote that hymn, Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly. While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high, hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is past, safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last.

God doesn't want us to be overwhelmed. God wants to set us free. We need to seek him and he will set us free.

We need to pray. Secondly, we need to have a teachable spirit. This is a mask. I will instruct you, verse 8, and teach you in the way you should go.

I will counsel you and watch over you. Do not be like the horse or mule which have no understanding but must be controlled by Britain, bitten bridle or they will not come near you.

[ 33 : 19 ] Don't be stubborn, God says. Don't think that you know it all. Don't think you can find your own way through this or get your way out of it. Have you ever thought like that? Well, of course, I will just do this, this, and I will follow the five perfect steps to a happy and fulfilled life as written down by Dr. Somebody and that will help me through.

Go and look with that. You notice something about the books on sort of self, sort of care and all of that. There are loads of them, absolutely loads of them, loads of experts, loads of doctors, all of them have got plans.

The reason why there are loads is because they work sometime for some people and don't work for others so somebody else needs another one and I'm not decrying them, they can be very useful, they can be very helpful if you want some advice and everything else but it won't work entirely because it doesn't take into account your sin.

What God does is He takes into account your sin and He says, I have a perfect remedy for you. The only thing that this world knows that can break the power of sin in your life and that's the blood of Jesus.

You need to have a teachable spirit. You need to follow the way I dictate. I will instruct and teach you in the way you should go.

[ 34 : 49 ] If you want to know how to break the power of sin in your life, God says, you need to follow Me. You need to trust in Me. I'm reading a very interesting book at the moment which conceives of the idea of people who've been involved in a shipwreck and then they pull out a man from the water and the man turns out to be Jesus and He calls Himself Lord and He tells them, I'm Jesus.

If you want to be safe, you have to believe in Me. Different people in the board, of course, are quite skeptical. They have nonsense. You're not Jesus. But then little things happen. Some people start to believe in Him and then other things, other people are trying to find explanations for it.

It can't be true. And at one point there's a discussion. Why is it that there are problems in the world? Why is it that you don't save everybody? Why is it that some of us have died already?

some of us have died already? Why is it that you don't answer everybody's prayer? Why is it that life is so full of trouble? To which the character who plays the Lord says, the reason why there is so much problems in your life is because you don't trust Me.

You don't trust Me. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not in your own understanding. in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path.

[ 36 : 14 ] It doesn't stop there, it says. It says, do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

See, the impact of trusting the Lord is not just that we'll get guided through this really difficult world, it's that actually it is a healthier life. Healing for your body, nourishment for your bones.

Remember what Paul says in Corinthians, the reason why some are weak and sick among you is because you're sinning. Break the sin and break the unhealthy habits that are damaging you and hurting your life.

Jesus doesn't just make a difference for eternity, He makes a difference for now, for the way we live. Have a teachable spirit. Don't be like a stubborn mule.

God calls us to intelligent cooperation. This is not the same as saying, well, you know, all I do every day is I get up, I say, thank you God that you forgive my sin and then I just live my life.

[ 37 : 18 ] No, no, no, no, no, no, no. God calls us to intelligent cooperation. That means, He says there are ways of living your life that are better than other ways. So you can start the morning with the BBC or the Daily Mail if you like, but better start with the Bible.

Much better. Yeah? You can spend your time, you know, listening to podcasts all day or you can spend some time in prayer. Much better. Yeah? You can read an academic book or read the Scriptures, study the Scriptures.

Much better. And if you do that on a daily basis, you will find your life is so much better because it's a teachable spirit that is allowing yourself to be instructed.

and it'll keep you from being like a stubborn mule. I'm not moving. I'm standing here. You have to put a bit in my mouth to pull me against my will.

A stubborn mule or a horse out of control will plunge headlong into battle and probably get killed. And the third thing, trust God to watch over you.

[ 38 : 28 ] I will counsel you and watch over you. I like that. I'll keep my eye on you. You trust me. You walk with me every day and I will just keep an eye on the head up on the road and I know what's coming your way and you'll be okay.

You'll be okay. Now when we wake up in the morning and we're worried about something, I think, how's the day going to go? It's really all okay. Jesus just says, just trust me.

I've got it. Don't need to worry about it. Just lay it on me. Now you can't help worry. Worry is kind of part of the human condition.

It's kind of there. It comes into your mind. A silly thought comes into your mind. What if I get on that bike and then I ride up there and I have a heart attack?

Well, you might. You might. What if I set off in my car and I travel on that journey and I go on that motorway and all the scary cars are going flying past me and they crash into me?

[ 39 : 30 ] Well, they might. They might. But normally we know that they won't. Normally we know that we'll get to our journey and we'll, you know, enjoy the fitness and it'll be fine.

We spend an awful lot of time worrying about things that might not happen, don't we? We do that.

Well, worry is there. The way to counteract it is to trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Not to be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. This is allowing God to instruct us and it's trusting God to watch over us.

There's a thing in psychology now called positive psychology. Positive psychologists encourage us to keep a journal. I keep journals. They're really good. But particularly to keep a gratitude journal.

The idea is that you make a mental note every day of the good things in your life and you keep a notebook by your bed and at the end of the day just before you go to sleep you write down all the good things that happen to you and you give thanks.

[ 40 : 37 ] And they say if you do this for six weeks they're quite specific about this. Sorry, not six months rather. If you do this for six months they're quite specific then you will probably never struggle with mental well-being again.

Well, I'm not sure about that. But there you go. Interesting thought nonetheless. I find it fascinating that psychologists discover the things that the Bible said for years. Be thankful.

You want to live a happy life? Be thankful. You want to overcome all those things that will cause you to worry and be anxious. learn to be thankful.

So do we do it by pursuing happiness? Our American cousins talk about being happy. The pursuit of happiness has been one of the inalienable rights of human beings.

Well, I'm not sure about that. Happiness. Should we pursue happiness? Well, maybe not. Oh well. Got some going on there. It's like a disco.

[ 41 : 38 ] I don't think we should pursue happiness. I don't think we should pursue happiness.

Happiness is not in itself the goal. It's just a consequence of pursuing Jesus.

If we pursue Jesus and we receive from Jesus all that he has to give, then we will receive so many good things. happiness. And that's the aim in life.

That's where blessedness comes from. Being humble enough to recognize that the answer is not in ourselves and all of our self-effort and all of our attempts to make ourselves happier in life.

It is to remember that the goal and end of our life is Jesus. And if we find him, we find everything that we need.

So, coming to a close. Psalm 32 talks about struggling with sin when it's nice. Sin is nice.

[ 42 : 41 ] Sometimes it's really more enjoyable if we're honest than pursuing Jesus. If we're honest but you know, even when I said that, I thought, how wicked that is.

But sometimes we live like that, don't we? My question is to you is how seriously do you seek God? How much do you really love Jesus? More than this?

More than it? More than these? To seek anything but Jesus is to do harm to our souls.

To break free from the addictive power of sin in our life is to find Jesus. So, I wanted to finish with three quotes, really good quotes in themselves. The first from Martin Luther, next slide.

The sin underneath all our sins is to trust the lie of the serpent that we cannot trust the love and grace of Christ and must take matters into our own hands.

[ 43 : 49 ] God's good quote that. Go on, you can be happy without God says Satan. You can be happy as long as you're fulfilled says Satan.

As long as you achieve all your dreams, you don't have to trust God. That's the essence of sin. It's not true. Test God in this.

Taste and see that the Lord is good. He is more satisfying and more fulfilling than any sin. Next quote, C.S. Lewis. It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak.

We are half-hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us. Like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea.

We are far too easily pleased. Oh, the joy of knowing your sins are forgiven and covered. There's nothing like knowing Jesus.

[ 45 : 01 ] God wants us to have the best life so no other life will do than a life with his son Jesus Christ. A life of abundance if only we will take it.

And then the third quote. Augustine of Hippo, he loved this psalm so much so that when he was dying he had it inscribed he had a verse of it inscribed these first two verses inscribed on his wall and then he wrote you've got the Latin if you prefer it the beginning of knowledge is to know oneself to be a sinner.

the beginning of knowledge is to know oneself to be a sinner. It's absolutely right but it is only half the story.

Only half the story. Yes, we are sinners but the blood of Jesus God's Son cleanses us from every sin and I said three quotes but actually there were four and this is the last one I promise.

Tim Keller the gospel is this we are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe yet at the same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared to hope and that's the truth of it.

[ 46 : 30 ] Yeah, there's a bad news the bad news is that we are sinful and we need forgiven forgiveness but here's the great news the good news Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses you from every sin that's the gospel and it's offered to you today to break the power of sin in your life you need the blood of Jesus applied