

Key Idea: Concealing our sin brings only death, suffering, and pain, but confessing our sin brings life, forgiveness, healing, and true joy.

## **INTRO**

Image: Two men are caught in the sin of adultery; one responds properly to being confronted with his sin, while the other does not.

Need: Each one of us, in our own way and at our own time, will be confronted with the fact that we are a sinner – but what do we do with that?

Subject: Concealing our sin steals joy and impedes forgiveness, but confessing our sin to God brings full forgiveness and complete joy.

Preview: In today's text, we will read a psalm that both warns God's people against hiding their sin and encourages them to confess their sin.

Restatement: David, having experienced both the pain of committing and covering up his sin *and* the joy of having his sin forgiven, warns God's people not to conceal their sins, but rather to confess them and be blessed with forgiveness and joy.

Text: Psalm 32 (read)

## **BODY**

- I. Concealing sin leads to suffering, pain, and death.
  - A. David experienced firsthand the fruits of burying his sin.
    - i. This psalm is believed to have been written after his indiscretion with Bathsheba.
      1. Psalm 51 is the psalm asking for forgiveness.
      2. Psalm 32 is the psalm celebrating forgiveness having been granted.
    - ii. Initially David tried to hide his sins and cover his tracks.
    - iii. The more he tried to cover up his sin with Bathsheba, the worse things actually got.
    - iv. Not only did he have to exert more energy to keep appearances up, but it also wore on him emotionally, spiritually, *and* physically.
  - B. As humans, we have a predilection toward hiding our sin.
    - i. We are often the mules and horses spoken of in verse 9.
      1. We grate against the very thing that we need – confession and forgiveness.
      2. If unbridled, we will trample everything – and everyone – around us.
    - ii. Even if we hide our sin, God knows and sees all – and we know it!
  - C. So, then, why do we hide our sin and keep ourselves from the only remedy?
    - i. We hide our sin because of pride.

1. Some people believe that if nobody says anything about it, and at least *some* people embrace it, it's not really a big deal.
  2. Some people, especially those in authority and more specifically religious authority, believe that "I can't be seen like this."
  - ii. We hide our sin because of shame.
    1. We stand in fear of the external, seemingly unending shame of "cancel" culture.
    2. We stand in fear of the internal, seemingly unending shame of people finding out exactly the kind of person we really are.
- II. Confessing sin leads to forgiveness, healing, and life.
- A. The text presents four different pictures of sin being removed.
    - i. The first is someone's trespasses being forgiven.
    - ii. The second is the person's sin being covered by something else.
    - iii. The third is God not holding iniquity against someone.
    - iv. The fourth is deceit, or negligence, not being found in the person's spirit.
  - B. These cover the gamut of sins being forgiven, and the resultant joy that comes from having one's account cleared.
    - i. This covers all people for all time.
      1. It covers David, and the Israelites to whom it was read, in the text.
      2. It covers Augustine, who cherished Psalm 32 so much it was on the wall as he lay dying.
      3. It covers all those who are granted righteousness by faith, according to Paul in Rom. 4:7-8 – and that means *us!*
    - ii. This connects the forgiver with the forgiven once more.
      1. To be in accord with God is true happiness.
      2. To be forgiven is complete joy.
- III. Confession and forgiveness enables us to radiate God's grace to others.
- A. The way we display God's grace is through the confession of sin.
    - i. It is dishonest to those close to us to act as though we have it all together and do not sin.
    - ii. It is dishonest to an unbelieving world to act as though we have it all together and do not sin.
    - iii. It is dishonest to God to rob him of his glory and delight in forgiving sinners.
  - B. The way we acknowledge God's grace is through the confession of sin.
    - i. Confession of sin, presenting ourselves to God as sinners, is the bedrock of our faith in the work of Christ.
    - ii. In the A-B-Cs of "becoming a Christian," the very first thing is "A: Admit to God that you're a sinner."

1. The word confess, broadly speaking, carries a sense of agreement with reality.
2. To confess one's sin is to agree that their behavior was sinful.
- iii. It is because of God's faithfulness that we can experience his *chesed*, in spite of our sin.
- iv. This is a core attribute of God's character: his gracious kindness toward sinners.
  1. God delights in forgiving the sins of his people.
  2. God delights in restored relationship with his people.

#### APPLYING THE WORD

- I. Have I confessed my sinfulness and my need for a Savior?
- II. Am I truly walking in the joy of forgiveness, or is there unconfessed sin I am holding onto?