

Psalm 32

Written by K B Napier

Wednesday, 14 September 2011 00:00

Someone recently suggested that all Christians ought to write their own Psalms. Maybe that is not such a bad idea. The Psalms were written from the heart, with God in mind. They are some of the earliest examples of formal prayer to the Lord – yes, that is what they are, written in poem form. It would be good to write down our thoughts on how we are and how God is part of our lives.

Many Psalms express David's humility, his hurts, his fears, but they all contain his praise for God. The reason the Bible is made up mainly of warnings and woes is that this is what people are like! We are very good at messing things up and doing what is wrong. Then we expect God to pick up the pieces. And, very often, He does, because He is a merciful God. Why not meditate on Who God is and what He does for you? Thank Him just for being Who He is. Praise Him even when you think everything is going wrong. It is His due, and it will clear your head of self.

As David says (verse 6) - make no delay; pray to God when He will be found. We need to talk with God all the time; when we accrue anxieties and reluctances, our lives turn to dust. Be with God daily and see the difference! Or, He will not be found, but will have retreated to a distance until we repent. This is a time of loneliness and despair... David speaks of it many times. Repent and get back to God.

The title of this Psalm is "of David, Maschil". That means it is a song or poem of contemplation. To contemplate on God and His works is to *sakal* – be prudent; to understand wisely. With this comes prosperity and success, in God's terms. I can think of nothing more prosperous than the wealth of knowledge given by the Holy Spirit, and nothing more successful than to walk with God and know His friendship.

Verses 1&2

1.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2.

Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

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Is your sin covered? Then you are forgiven! However, sins can only be forgiven if we repent first and *seek* forgiveness. It is indeed a blessed state to be in. Being foolish humans we often get this wrong and put ourselves far away from God. Why, when being blessed is so wonderful? There is nothing better than for our sins to be covered, so why avoid it?

When we repent and live holy lives God does not impute us with sin and its guilt. That is, though we sin, when we repent, God does not lay its guilt upon us. When we are holy, it means we give our entire lives to God, which can be observed by everyone we meet. There is no such thing as a secret Christian! It is true that in some circumstances there is a need to be secretive (as in, say, soviet Russia), but even then our Christian character shines through.

So, in such a holy human spirit “there is no guile”. Guile is laxity, deceit and treachery... things we find in abundance in modern days. No Christian can be like this and be genuine. Yet, many who *claim* to be Christians not only refuse to study God’s word in depth, but they do not care. (Or, they study in depth – but heretical and wrong material). They put on a false face of evangelicalism, to hide a slothful heart and mind. They rely on superficial readings and popular sayings, thinking it is ‘Christian’. You will find none of this in the true believer.

What does it mean, to have our sins ‘covered’? To be ‘covered’, *kacah*, is to be concealed from view. Does this mean we can sin and that is alright? No, it means that when we repent after sinning, God will ‘forget’ about it, as if it is concealed. In reality, of course, God cannot forget anything, not even the smallest thing. What it means is that when we are saved, we are protected from God’s wrath by the righteousness of the Son who saved us. God looks upon Jesus, and not us. In effect, Jesus hides us from God’s eternal gaze. In this way our sins are ‘covered’. But, it takes our repentance to invoke the protection given by the Son. So, the one who is blessed and whose sins are covered, is the one who is saved and who lives constantly in the light of God.

Verses 3&4

1.

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

2.

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For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

David remembers times when he was not so holy, and when God's "hand was heavy" upon him. He "kept silence" and so his "bones waxed old", made worse by his "roaring all the day long". Surely this is contradictory? How can he be silent and roaring at the same time? He is not! The 'silence' in the text, charash, means in this context to be dumb or speechless because of his troubles.

His 'roaring', sheagah, is the distress he felt at being unable to articulate himself to God. How often do people suffer in silence? That is basically what David means. And all that does is make matters worse! David says his "bones waxed old" because he bore his grief inwardly. It is never a good idea to remain silent when we are raging or grieving inwardly, because we suffer physically, mentally and spiritually as a result! How do we get out of such a bad situation? Simply by telling God. And, if you know of a genuine Christian who will listen, you must tell him or her. A word of advice – be careful who you tell, because some folks will use it against you, or spread the information to others, not to help but to hinder, and to be sinful. Sometimes our cry of distress, sha'ag, must be within until we know God has heard us (and He always does), and until He identifies for us someone who can be trusted.

Do not suffer headaches, stomach upsets, sleeplessness, lack of appetite, etc., caused by your distress. Talk about it – mainly to God. Hand it over, lock, stock and barrel! It is what He wants you to do.

When we sin and do not repent, or when we suffer needlessly, it seems that the hand of God is heavy upon us (verse 4) day and night, being perpetually on our mind and heart. God does not do this to make us suffer, but to bring us to our senses. He allows us to feel awful so that we will call upon Him for rest! He does this for all His children who wish to praise Him. Thus, it is an honourable thing to feel the heavy hand of God upon us. It is a sign that God will help us if only we will repent and turn over the problem to Him.

Without this help from God and our willingness to turn the problem over to Him, even the best of times will seem miserable. We will dry out like an old piece of leather in the sun! Ever felt that miserable? I have! David then adds a 'selah' at the end, to make the music stop for a while,

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enabling us to meditate on what He has said.

And remember this – when we think we are “going through a dry patch” as if in a desert, it is God’s hand upon us. He has not gone away but is pressing us to acknowledge Him and to give Him our worries and allegiance.

Verse 5-7

1.

I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

2.

For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

3.

Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

Then, David says something all of us should do: “I acknowledge my sin unto thee”. It is the first step to healing of the soul! If we will not, or do not, recognise our sin, then we will never repent of it. Forget those gloss-over prayers that are not prayers, asking for God to intervene generally! Instead, recognise that this or that is sin, and then present it to Him with an apology! Repent!

Like David, do not hide your sins. It amazes me when Christians try to hide them away – God knows everything, and sees what you have done; He knew about it before you even did it. David confessed to God, and that is important. It is not that God will not know unless we tell Him; no, we tell Him because it is His command to do so, probably because it is a sign of our intent and heart’s desire, a proof that we obey, even though He already knows. It is also why we must preach to all – it is a command, though God knew before He made the world, who would be saved.

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When we confess, which includes repentance, said David, He “forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” But, He will not forgive without the confession and repentance. This section ends with another musical break, giving people time to meditate again.

For this reason, said David, every godly person will pray to God when He is still with them (verse 6). Pray to God when you can, when big problems do not prevent you from remembering. These problems can arise suddenly and overwhelm you. They come like “floods of great waters”, and even the faithful will be silenced for a while. So, talk with God when you can, when the sun shines on your soul, warming every aspect of your mind and heart, preparing you for what may come, perhaps even without your prior knowledge.

This kind of prayer is intensely personal. Today, following tradition and not scripture, many pray corporately, but this is not how Jesus taught us; He commanded us to pray privately in our own rooms, alone. We cannot pray corporately any more than we can share our physical body with someone else! The only valid group prayers are those that arise suddenly for a very serious reason, and when all who attend are called as individuals by the Holy Spirit, to pray ONLY about one specific, God-called issue. (See article on ‘Prayer Meetings’).

God was David’s hiding place, his *cether*. That is, his secret place or covering (thus linking to his earlier statement), the place of protection, his *catha*
r. In this place, David would be kept from harm: God, he said, “will preserve me from trouble”. Even in the midst of the trouble, God will prepare with “songs of deliverance”. When we are in the middle of even the most awful times, God will surround us with His most precious love and protection, as if the deliverance was already there. This is because, with God, the joy and deliverance of what we think of as our future, is already in His present! It has already been brought into effect, even as we see the trouble still in our view. Another pause in the music, as David reflects on this truth.

Verses 8-11

1.

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

2.

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Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

3.

Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

4.

Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

In the last section David was talking to God. In this section, God is talking to David. Noticed how this often happens to David? Like a small child brought up to speak several languages, and break out into each seamlessly, so David talks to God, then God talks to Him, back and forth quite naturally. Do you experience this kind of 'walking with God'? You should, and you can! It is your heritage in Christ. God wants you to walk with Him every day, to talk with Him, seek comfort, and to hear your pleas and even your complaints.

He says He will instruct us and show us which path to take in life. See how easy it is, for those who are righteous? We just put one foot forward and find that God is already walking beside us. It is the first step that proves our holy intent to be serious in our Christian walk, and so He walks with us. Simple as that. God guides us with His eye. That is, by His *'ayin* – via the mental and spiritual faculties He gives us.

When we take the first step, God prompts the second. When we walk with God, we cannot veer off into the undergrowth, because He is right there with us! We will walk the path given to us by just walking normally . He will draw us back onto the path by our conscience and spirit. So, just walk! Your path is already mapped out, and you will not wander. Put a tiny child in the water and leave it go – it will automatically start swimming! It is like this for the righteous Christian. Just do it! God will guide you by His eye – you will know it is right.

We must not be "as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding." Animals have no idea Who God is, or what He requires. They do whatever He has given to them, by intuition.

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They do not understand but simply act as God intended, because they cannot think or decide as we do. So, they must be guided by bridle and bit “lest they come near unto thee” to do harm by being left to their own devices.

Unsaved sinners are much like this. They have no sense from God and act without true guidance or command. They just do whatever their sinful hearts dictate, and cannot really stop themselves. It is why Christians must inform them of God’s plan and demands. It does not mean they will listen, but it shows them you will not be taken along a foreign path of sin. Those Christians who thus sin all the time are like brute animals who need to be guided forcibly by God.

The wicked will know misery all their lives. Few atheists will admit to this misery, but it is there, staring them in the face. Christians who sin regularly are in the same position, but their misery is heightened because of conscience. Indeed, God promises they will know misery. But, the saved who live righteously will be surrounded by many blessings from God.

Therefore, if you are righteous “Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice”. You have every reason to rejoice, for God is with you. “Shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart”! Even in the midst of sorrows we can shout for joy, because we belong to God, Who protects us and shows us immense mercy and grace.

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