

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

Website: www.churchredeemeraz.org

Series: Spiritual Warfare
Number: 19
Text: Psalm 32
Date: August 15, 2010 (a.m.)

Pastor/Teacher
Gary L. W. Johnson

The Christian's Armor: All Prayer (Part 5) DAVID'S PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Wall Street Journal recently ran a story about Ted Haggard. "The Rev. Ted Haggard stood at a pulpit made of stacked buckets one recent Sunday and announced his resurrection. Mr. Haggard was forced to resign nearly four years ago as president of the politically powerful National Association of Evangelicals and to

David Frum has recently written a fascinating history of the 1970's. He points to this "slum of a decade" as the source for most of our present day social and cultural attitudes. "Early twenty-first century is a newly cautious society, not a remoralized one, and even that caution extends only so far. Americans born between 1963 and 1972, and who therefore came of age during the worst of the AIDS epidemic, are actually *more* sexually promiscuous even than their baby-boomer elders." We may indeed be more cautious today than people in the past have been, but Frum is absolutely correct when he points out that we are not, as a society, remoralized. We experience regret but not repentance. We change only when we realize that our present course of action is not bringing the desired results. Our motivation stems only from our own self-interest. This mind-set has deeply penetrated the Evangelical Church. How, for instance do we personally respond to the call for self-examination and repentance? Do we find this subject uncomfortable? You cannot read the Psalms, in particular, without coming across the theme of repentance again and again. Martin Luther was once asked, "What are your favorite Psalms?" - to which he responded, "The Psalms of Paul." This was Luther's way of declaring the O. T. foundation for so much of Paul's theology, especially as found in the "Penitential Psalms". There are seven of these: Psalms 5, 32, 37, 51, 102, 130, and 143 - Psalms that portray a deep sense of sin, and a heart-felt experience of forgiveness (Ps. 32:1, 2 cited by Paul in Rom. 4:6). Psalm 32 is the first of thirteen Psalms that bears the heading MASCHIL. The meaning is somewhat obscure. It could mean "a didactic Psalm", that is, used to instruct (cf. v. 8); it could mean "meditation", or it could refer to "a skillful Psalm", one that required delicate and artistic ability musically. In any case, the emphasis is on understanding, and attention to its parts are stressed. Chronologically this psalm was written after the great confession of Psalm 51, and II Sam. 12:14ff provides the historical setting for both Psalms.

I DAVID'S COMMENDATION (vv. 1, 2)

The blessedness of forgiveness - the Psalm begins with a beatitude ASHREY, lit. "Oh, the happinesses or blessednesses", the Heb. word is in the plural and express overwhelming gladness. This sense of blessedness is directly linked to forgiveness. "He who is not acquainted with God's holiness and purity, who knows not sin's desert and sinfulness, knows nothing of forgiveness."

A. Sin. vv. 1, 2 set forth the objective facts. Three different words are used to describe sin:

1. PESHA - "transgression", the LXX has ANOMIA - "lawlessness". The word means apostasy, rebellion, a breaking away from God, expressed by outward defiance of God's revealed will as stated in the Law.
2. CHATAAH - "sin", Gk. HARMATIA - erring from or missing the mark, a deviation from the path (comp. Rom. 3:12).
3. AVON - "iniquity" - This word describes the inward perversion of our nature - the depravity of our being manifesting itself in outward wrong-doing. "At first our conscience becomes awakened to the guilt of some act of transgression, but as the terrible question presses itself more and more upon our attention, we are finally landed in the painful conviction that behind the isolated acts of transgression, and in the manifestation of sin, there is *iniquity*, the natural depravity of our being." Cf. David's remark in Ps. 51:5.

B. Atonement. Three words are used to describe forgiveness, and all with "atonement" in mind.

1. NASA - "forgiven" - lit. it means to "bear away", in the sense that a burden is removed (cf. Ex.

- 34:7; Jn. 1:29).
2. KASAH - "to cover, to hide". This word and KAHPHAR are cognate. It is in the sight of God that sin is covered (cf. Isa. 38:17, 43:25, 44:22).
 3. LO-CHASHAV - "not reckoned or imputed" - refers to canceling the account after payment has been paid.

Note: These three terms can only be understood in light of Lev. 16 and the great Day of Atonement, which typified the "lamb of God", the suffering servant of Jehovah depicted in Isa. 53. Compare the terms used there.

- C. Sincerity. "... in whose spirit there is no guile"; that is, no deceitfulness. There is open honesty with oneself and with God; there is no attempt made to cloak or hide the facts (cf. Prov. 28:13). "God only thus forgives and justifies one who, with all truth and sincerity of heart, confesses his sin, making no reservation, no excuses, no attempts to still hold fast and hide some darling lust."

II. DAVID'S CONFESSION (vv. 3-5)

The way of restoration. Having stated the objective truth, David now illustrates the doctrine from his own experience.

- A. His Affliction (3, 4). He kept silent, and three things kept him company;
 1. His bones waxed old - *decay*
 2. God's hand was heavy upon him - *depression*
 3. his life dried up - *drought*

As one of the old divines has wisely said, "He who will not speak his sin to God has to groan." The Psalmist suffered and complained, but did not confess (comp. Hos. 7:14). v. 4 closes with a SELAH, meaning "stop and be thoughtful".

- B. His Confession (5). Stated in a threefold manner:
 1. *I will acknowledge* - "make known" - lit. "I will begin to make known". The tense of the Heb. verb graphically represents the confession being made or in the ongoing act of confession.
 2. *I will confess* - prefaced with "I said." Calvin observed, "While the wicked are dragged by force, just as a judge compels offenders to come to trial, he assures us that he came deliberately and with full purpose of mind; for the term, 'said' just signifies that he deliberated with himself."
 3. *I hid not* - lit. I did not cover; same word as in v. 1. Only God is allowed to cover sin.
- C. His Forgiveness (5). And THOU forgivest - The "thou" is emphatic in the Heb. text, and the form of the sentence expresses the immediateness of God's pardon. Another SELAH follows.

III. DAVID'S CONFIRMATION (vv. 6, 7)

He based this admonition upon his own experience - "For this reason" is instructional. Note to whom it is addressed;

- A. Everyone Who is Godly - that is believing, one who actually seeks after God, who does not ignore God. The Heb. word for 'godly' is CHASSID, one who loves God.
- B. Everyone Who...Prays - thus, who seeks after the true and living God (comp. Heb. 11:6).

NOTE: "... in a time when thou mayest be found" implies that there is a time when God may not be found (cf. Prov. 1:28 and 11 Cor. 6:2), a time when only judgment is found. The expression, "flood of great waters," describes judgment, a hearkening back to the time of Noah (Gen. 6) and the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14). Comp. also Isa. 28:2, 17, 30:28 and Nahum 1:8.

- C. His Appropriation (7) - David applies his own admonition, "Thou art my secret hiding place." Again the "Thou" is emphatic. Shouts of joy and deliverance accompany the redeemed, comp. with v. 11-SELAH.

IV. GOD'S COMMUNICATION (vv. 8, 9)

At this point the language of the Psalm points to God as the speaker, who declares what He will do and what His people are not to do.

- A. The Affirmation (8) - "I will instruct ... teach ... guide." Note the triple assurance. All of this involves an intimate relation with the living God.
- B. The Admonition (9) - "Be not" like horse and mule, that is without understanding. God desires willing obedience, but His will is not hampered by man's will; God can and does put bit and bridle upon men (cf. Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 4; and Pharaoh, Ex. 5-14).

V. DAVID'S CONVICTION AND CONCLUSION (vv. 10, 11)

God can and will deal with man, whether man wishes to deal with God or not. David confirms this in v. 10. Here he contrasts the mercy shown to the righteous with the misery of the rebellious; all of the saints are to rejoice and shout for joy. Note the final triplet - "rejoice", "exult" and "shout in triumph". David understood his forgiveness only in the light of atonement - "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22). Note the words of John Owen, "To see into the mystery of the love of the Father, working in the blood of the Mediator; to consider by faith the great transaction of divine wisdom, justice, and mercy therein, - how few attain unto it! To come unto God by Christ for forgiveness, and

therein to behold the law issuing all its threats and curses in his blood, and losing its sting, putting an end to its obligation unto punishment, in the cross; to see all sins gathered up in the hands of God's justice, and made to meet on the Mediator, and eternal love springing forth triumphantly from his blood, flourishing into pardon, grace, mercy, forgiveness - this the heart of a sinner can be enlarged unto only by the Spirit of God."

ENDNOTES