

INTRO

- Have you ever been gifted something really expensive? What was it? How did it make you feel?
- What would it be like if all your debt was wiped out today? How would that change the way you think about debt going forward?

Jesus teaches us the importance of confession and forgiveness in Mt 6:12. The scriptural idea of confession is towards forgiveness, and the aim of forgiveness is restored relationship.

READ

Psalm 32

REFLECT

In this Psalm, David shows us some great insight into confession.

1. The Truth: Forgiveness leads To Happiness

Read v1-2. *Qu: Who does David described as blessed/happy?*

Read v3-5. *Qu: How does this blessing come?*

Happiness comes through forgiveness and forgiveness comes through confession. Instead of concealing your sin from God, we are encouraged to acknowledge and confess our sin to God. The person who doesn't conceal their sins but confesses them to God finds the joy a clean conscience *and* restored relationship with God brings.

Qu: Think about how many of us deal with sin—avoidance, justify, minimize, blame-shift etc. Why is honesty important in confession?

2. The Application: Confess Freely to God

Read v6. The point of David and this psalm is found in this verse. In other words, we should live lives that regularly and freely confess sin to

God. However, the reality is we are more like v9 — stubborn like a mule!

Qu: what are some of the reasons we are hesitant to be fully honest and confess our sin to God?

And when we are stubborn and resist acknowledging, confessing and repenting of sin, we experience what David describes in v3-4.

3. The Goal: Happiness Rooted in God

Read v11. The goal for David is that we'd know we are deeply loved by God already and find our great joy/happiness in Him. When our deep gladness and joy is rooted in God, we'll find ourselves coming more readily to him in prayer. And as we come to him in prayer, confess, and experience restored relationship with him, our joy and gladness becomes deeper. And so on.

Qu: Why do you think its important for us to know we are deeply loved and accepted by God to confess our sin regularly and freely?

The Tension: The Costliness & The Freeness of Forgiveness

Regular confession and repentance of sin requires us to remember both the cost of our forgiveness and the free gift of our forgiveness. When we hold both sin and grace in tension, we will more often go to God with our sins, confess them, remember Jesus' sacrificial death, and relive in miniature the joy of our salvation.

Qu: Why is it so crucial to remember Jesus—his sacrifice and love displayed on the cross for us—when we deal with our sin? Do you find it harder to face your sin or face God's grace? Why?

RESPOND & PRAY

- What challenged you the most from this discussion? What comforted you?
- Use Ps 32 or Ps51 to close in prayer.

Quotes

*"If we can't discern God's presence in our day-to-day lives, it's unlikely that we'll find him at a revival. We may find a lot of excitement, great speakers, superb music, and maybe even some "signs and wonders." **But unless a person learns to find God as much in the ordinary as in the exciting, the exciting will do nothing more than serve as a momentary distraction.**"*

— Greg Boyd, Present Perfect: Finding God in the Now

"Pleasures are shafts of glory as it strikes our sensibility.... I have tried to make every pleasure into a channel of adoration. I don't mean simply by giving thanks for it. One must of course give thanks, but I mean something different ... Gratitude exclaims, very properly, "How good of God to give me this." Adoration says, "What must be the quality of that Being whose far-off and momentary coruscations (flickers, sparkles) are like this!" One's mind runs back up the sunbeam to the sun."

— CS Lewis

Further Resources on Prayer:

Face to Face: Praying the Scriptures for Intimate Worship

By Kenneth Boa

Prayer: Finding the Hearts True Home

by Richard Foster

Red Moon Rising: How 24-7 Prayer is Awakening a Generation

by Pete Grieg

A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World

by Paul Miller

Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God

by Tim Keller

Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer

by Eugene Peterson