

The Lord's Message: Grace: Confession Heals the Soul

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Where: Tilghman UMC

Scripture Reference: Psalm 32: 1-11

Anyone ever heard of Dr. Karl Menninger? Dr. Menninger was an American psychiatrist. He lived from 1893 to 1990. He established the Menninger Foundation and the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas to heal people not only of their physical ailments, but also their mental health issues. He wrote a book approximately 50 years ago entitled, *"Whatever Became of Sin?"* The book challenged the people of the world who tried to use that famous line, "the Devil made me do it," as a way of getting oneself off the hook from one's wrong doings. In the book, Dr. Menninger pointed that our understanding of healing and forgiveness of sins was something outside of oneself.

In this book he recognized that Humanism was taking over the world and the church. "Humanism teaches that everything is relative and there are no absolutes. As a result, there can be no sin because there are no fixed guidelines of morality. Under this doctrine, man is considered good and deserving of everything he wants." I would paraphrase this by saying that without an understanding of sin, then there is no accountability. Without accountability, there can be no healing, no forgiveness and no grace. This is the hopelessness of the world that we are all living in today, but there is Good News through the GRACE of God: God's Redemption At Christ Expense.

Let us pray.

I hope that you have your Bibles open to **Psalm 32**, because we really need to understand this Psalm and apply it to our daily lives. The Psalm begins with the word, "blessed." This word means to make holy or consecrated. I consider Holy Communion as a "blessed" sacrament. I considered every day as a "blessed" day that God has given me. What are some of the things that you consider as "blessed?"

Back to the Bible. So, why is one considered "blessed?" One's transgressions are forgiven and one's sins are not counted against them. Your life is holy and consecrated to God. You might find this incredulous that your transgressions are forgiven and sins not counted against you. You might be saying, "this Pastor does not know what I have done." I do not need to know what you have done. I know what the person that is writing this Psalm has done. If you look under the title, my Bible says "of David." David is the person that is writing this Psalm. In **1 Samuel 13:14**, Samuel tells King Saul that God has rejected him and

will establish another person to become king, one who follows God. In **1 Samuel 16:12b-13**, following God's instruction, Samuel anoints David as king. David whose heart is for God.

Temptation is around every corner. If you do not put on the full armor of God everyday as it says in **Ephesians 6:10-23**, then you are not prepared to defend yourself. This happened to David, a man after God's own heart.

The story is found in **2 Samuel 11**. I will give you a paraphrase of this story. David, who should have been with his army, decides to take some time off and spend the time at his palace. One evening, he is looking out over his royal city of Jerusalem and he sees a woman taking a bath. Now, he should have immediately turned his eyes away from the woman, maybe even gone back into the palace. Instead, David allows lust to enter into his heart. He sends for the woman and has sexual relations with her. Some would call it "a fling." Sometime later, the woman whose name is Bathsheba, sends word to David that she is pregnant. Bathsheba is the wife of one of David's most trusted soldiers, Uriah. David comes up with a plan to cover up his sin. David sends for Uriah to come home thinking that Uriah will go home to his wife. They have not seen each other in long time and so they will have a romantic evening. This does not work. Uriah is an honorable soldier and will not go home, even after David gets him drunk. David concocts another plan. He addresses a letter, which Uriah will carry, to Joab. In the letter, David instructs Joab to put Uriah where the fiercest fighting is and then have all the other troops draw back. Uriah will then be killed in battle. This works to perfection. Uriah is eliminated and David after the time of mourning takes Bathsheba to be his wife. Finally, all has worked out well for David.

Not so fast. We can hide nothing from God. God holds us all accountable. Listen to **2 Samuel 11:26-27**. God was not pleased with David's actions. I have often preached this text as David has got away Scott-free, or did he? I now realize that I was wrong. The more I read and understand in my own life. I now believe that the closer a person becomes in relationship with God, the more pain and sorrow they feel for their sins. That is why I believe in the next verses of **Psalms 32: 3-4** is what David actually felt. When we have committed "sin" not only does our body ache, but our soul aches. The closer our walk with God, the more we recognize the sin in our life and the effects that this sin has on our walk with the Lord. God moves away from us, because Holy God cannot be around sin. This causes our body and souls to ache. This is necessary for us to become more like Jesus. John Wesley would say that we are going on towards perfection.

How do we heal our aching body and soul? The answer is found in **Psalms 32:5**. Back to David. In **2 Samuel 12**, God sent Nathan to David. Through God, Nathan exposed David's cover up and lies. David, knowing that he had been exposed, being a man after God's heart, did not lie anymore, but confessed the truth. I feel that a huge burden was lifted off David. A

person who lies and covers up the truth has to be constantly on guard that someone might discover their lies and cover ups. That is a huge burden to carry, especially someone who is trying to live their life for God. Now that this burden of deceit has been lifted, the person has been forgiven by God, they are freed from this guilt.

Look at **Psalm 32:6-7**, David is rejoicing now that he has made his confession and the burden of the guilt of sin has been lifted from his soul. His body and soul are no longer aching, but free from sin.

Not only is David rejoicing that the burden of guilt of sin has been lifted, but now David is back walking with God, a man after God's own heart. God is back speaking with David in **Psalm 32:8-10**. I must make a confession here. I said the preceding sentence incorrectly. God was constantly speaking to David, David has so overcome with lust and deceit and David could not hear God. God was still speaking. David was not listening. It is like when the TV is on and JoAnn is trying to talk with me. She is talking, but I cannot hear her. All my attention is on the TV. I have to turn the TV off to turn my focus on her. Now after David's confession, this burden has been removed and David is back to hearing and following God.

David has wandered far off the road. David has wandered far off the narrow pathway. Through God's grace, David confessed his sins. His sins, which are many, are forgiven. His soul is restored. David is back listening to God and directing his life to walk with the Lord.

Look at **Psalm 32:11**. David is filled with overflowing joy. God's grace has been poured out on David. His confession of sins has healed his soul.

I find this good news for me. I hope that you find this as good news for you. I want my walk to be with Jesus, but I fail. When I do, I do not have to carry this burden of sin with all of its guilt and shame, but I can make a confession to God and ask for forgiveness from others and be released from it all. Then my walk with God will be restored and I will be filled with abundant joy.

With accountability comes healing. With healing comes forgiveness. With forgiveness we experience God's grace. Every day we should make our confession to God and ask for forgiveness from others that we have harmed. This wonderful grace of confession will heal our souls. Amen.