

Message Reflections

a little something extra to keep you connected to Jesus this week

Message Reflections accompany the [weekly message](#).

I have to admit, I've had trouble writing the reflection on this week's message from Psalm 32. No one enjoys talking about sin; no one wants to disclose their shortcomings or mistakes, or even think about them. There are things about ourselves that are for public consumption and things we would like to keep to ourselves or only share with a select few. What David describes in this psalm is complete transparency. I'm thankful that he doesn't say we are to be vulnerable and transparent with everyone, but he describes this level of intimacy with our God. If we can't acknowledge our sin before God, then how can we truly understand our need for a savior? In order to truly grasp the gift of salvation, we must first understand the hopelessness of our sin and the separation from God that it causes.

I always thought there was only one consequence for sin and that was death. Yes, ultimately all sin leads to spiritual death. However, there's another consequence found in scripture. It is complete separation from God; it is what precedes physical death and ultimately eternal death. Frankly, I'm not sure which one is more devastating.

- 1) Psalm 51:10-11 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me."
- 2) Genesis 4:13-14, 16 "Cain said to the Lord, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden.' Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden."
- 3) Jeremiah 7:13, 15a "While you were doing all these things, declares the Lord, I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer. Therefore, I will thrust you from my presence..."

Rather than being separated from God, David gives us a roadmap on how to remain in His presence despite our sin. If we humble ourselves and confess our sin, if we seek the heart of God, He forgives us. Wouldn't it be easier to apologize if we already knew that the other person would forgive us and remember our offense no more? God tells us over and over

again that if we come to Him, He will forgive us. I don't know why it's still so hard to actually do it. Is it pride? Shame? Ignorance? Blindness? I don't have the answer; maybe all of them.

Sometimes I can almost talk myself into believing I don't have too much to confess lately because I already confessed the "big ones" from the time before I had dedicated my life to Christ. Ha! The Ten Commandments seem like really bad sins and I don't go around killing people or cheating on my husband or stealing merchandise. God is so holy that He can't tolerate even a speck of sin in His presence. I don't kill but I withhold kindness or inclusion. I don't cheat on my husband but I may admire another man longer than I should. I don't steal but I may covet that vacation I saw my facebook friend take recently. I have a way of keeping myself grounded. When I *really* convince myself I have the big ten under control I jump to the new testament and quickly glance through the fruits of the spirit (the big leagues): love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Yikes! I mess all those up just getting my kids ready for school and out the door!

The fact of the matter is (Romans 3:23) sin is the great equalizer of humanity. We all miss the mark...the very holiness of God. Not one of us can ever master sin on our own. No worries! Jesus has us covered! Literally! God sent His holy and precious son to cover our sin. If we believe in Him, we get to put on the holiness of Christ so that we can be in God's presence for all eternity. BOOM! Sin problem fixed! Oh, that everyone would accept this precious gift.

But wait! There's more! I feel like I'm on The Price Is Right and they keep opening up more curtains with exciting prizes! David says that confession of sins has even more benefits than just our salvation. God would still be good if He had just stopped there but He didn't:

- Psalm 32:10 "Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but **steadfast love** surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord."
- Psalm 32:7 "You are a **hiding place** for me; you **preserve me from trouble**; you surround me with shouts of deliverance."
- Psalm 32:8 "I will **instruct** you and **teach** you in the way you should go; I will **counsel** you with my eye upon you."

The Lord is not only our merciful judge; He is our father. He wants to take His rightful place in our hearts. He will love us, protect us, instruct and teach us, and He will give us wise and perfect counsel if we turn toward Him and leave our sin at the foot of the cross. I have grappled with this idea of God as a father for many years. My earthly father has faltered many times in my life and has not been the best example of a fatherly relationship. He has

been largely absent. Here, God says He will keep his eye on me and be a daddy to me. I've had a longing for a father my whole life and to finally have that in my perfect heavenly father has been one of the most treasured aspects of my Christian walk. This father is present, keeps His promises, guides me, protects me, gives me advice, encourages me, and will never leave me. I am forgiven and, as an added bonus, I am free to be in complete relationship with Him. I don't ever have to be separated from God ever again.

So, I encourage you! Spend time with your Dad today. If you don't know Him, ask Him to reveal Himself to you. I know He will because He is a good good Father.

