

PSALM 32

Psalms 32.¹⁻²

¹Truly happy is the one whose rebellion is borne away
and whose sin is buried.

²Truly happy is the one whose guilt YHWH does not consider
and there is no intention to obfuscate (author's translation).

For those who wish to compare translations, here is the KJV.

¹Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

²Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no guile.

Psalms 32 is the second of seven psalms known as penitential psalms (Ps. 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). This is the first of four readings from this Psalm.

1. In this reading, the Psalmist uses imagery to testify to God's ability and willingness to forgive.
 - ? What is the imagery?
 - ? What do you see in your mind when you imagine sinful rebellion being carried away from the sinner's life?
 - ? What do you see in your mind when you imagine sinful rebellion being made to disappear through burial?
 - ? What do you think when you imagine God giving no consideration to sinful rebellion?
 - ? What other images does scripture use for the removal or forgiveness of sinful rebellion?
 - ? What other scripture passages come to your mind when you consider the portrayal of forgiveness?
 - ? How does the following passage confirm and amplify the imagery found here?

“As far as the east is from the west,
so far hath he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103.¹²).

- ? How about this one?

“If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities,
O Lord, who shall stand?” (Psalm 130.³)

- ? What would it mean that God does not “mark” iniquity, sin, error, etc.
- ? How does the following passage relate to the testimony of forgiveness found in today's reading?

“He hath not dealt with us after our sins;
nor rewarded us according to our iniquities” (Psalm 103.¹⁰).

- ? How does all of this comport with your own understanding of and experience with God and his ability and willingness to forgive?
- ? If your understanding of and experience with God and his forgiveness is different, how would

you explain the difference?

2. These two verses played a key role in Paul's understanding of "justification through faith." Here is just a small portion of Romans 4 in which Paul expounds on how one is justified—is right with God, or is forgiven.

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying,

‘Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (vss. 5-8).

- ? What additional insights do you have into today's passage from Paul's use of it?

3. The final line reads, “and there is no intention to obfuscate,” or, in the KJV, “and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

? What does this final line mean to you?

? How does it relate to what proceeded?

? How does it relate to what follows: the Psalmist's belated confession that there was a time when he refused to confess his sins.

“Because I remained silent, my frame wasted away
while I raged all day long.”

- ? How does the following passage's “acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God,” relate to the “guile” or “obfuscation” mentioned in his Psalm.

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism—yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel” (2 Ne. 31.¹³).

- ? What can you do to move toward the realization of the promise made in today's reading?

(edition: March 6, 21025)

Psalm 32.³⁻⁵

³Because I remained silent, my frame wasted away
while I raged all day long.
⁴Because Your power rested heavily upon me day and night
my moisture turned into summer draught.
⁵I'll confess my sin to You
and no longer hide my guilt from You.
I decided, "I'll confess my rebellion to YHWH,"
and You, You bore away my sinful guilt (author's translation).

Today's reading is the 3rd for lent 2025. Psalm 32 is one of seven "penitential" Psalms (Ps. 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143).

For those who wish to compare translations, here is the KJV.

³When I kept silence, my bones waxed old
through my roaring all the day long.
⁴For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me:
my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.
⁵I 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.

1. There are any number of English words that can be used for human weakness.
? How many and which ones does the Psalmist use in today's reading?
? What does it suggest to you about the Psalmist's feelings, that he makes use of so many different words in such a short passage to indicate his error and weakness?
? Are you ever overcome and obsessed by feelings of guilt over your sins?
2. The Psalmist speaks of a time when he suffered because he "remained silent."
? Based upon your reading of today's passage, what did the Psalmist keep silent about?
3. In the KJV, after telling of his stubborn silence, the Psalmist speaks of his "roaring all the day long"—and, indeed, the word translated as "roaring" often refers to the roar of a lion.
? How do you square the Psalmist's "silence" in the first line of verse 3 with his "roaring" in the second?
? Consider my translation of "raging" rather than "roaring." How are "raging" and "roaring" related?
? How do we sometimes "rage" over our sins and at the suggestion or command that we must confess them to God?
4. After some stubbornness (see verse 3), the Psalmist finally confessed, or acknowledged his sin. Verse 5 of today's reading describes one thing that we must do in order to be forgiven. We must "confess," or "acknowledge" our sins. This applies to both specific sins and our general sinfulness. We must acknowledge specific sins and ask for help to overcome them. We must also acknowledge the truth that no matter how hard we try, we frequently come short of our expectations and sin.
? Why is it so important to God that we acknowledge our sin?
? Why is it sometimes so difficult to acknowledge our sin?

Consider the Brother of Jared's frank confession:

"... Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness

before thee; for we know that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens, and that *we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually*; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires” (Ether 3.²).

Consider, too, the confession of the writer of the Lectures on Faith:

“...such is the weakness of man, and such his frailties, that he is *liable to sin continually*”
(Lecture 3:20, questions and answers)

- ? How can we make such faithful confession without feeling demeaned, or engaging in ungodly and unfaithful self-hate?
 - ? Why is it so important to achieve a balance between the state of willing confession and an absence of self-loathing?
5. Upon giving up his stubborn refusal to acknowledge sin, the Psalmist reports that the Lord “bore away my sinful guilt.”
- ? How do you feel about the Lord’s quick response to the Psalmist’s delayed confession?
 - ? How strong is your faith, or your trust in God that he will respond as quickly and faithfully to your confession of sinfulness?
- ? How can you make better use of confession during this lent and Easter Season?

(*edition: March 5, 2025*)

Psalm 32.⁶⁻⁷

⁶For this should every devout individual pray to You
until such time as it is obtained.

Only then will the flood of rising waters, not reach them.

⁷You are my hiding place.

You keep me from distress.

You encompass me with deliverance songs (author's translation).

For those who wish to compare translations, here is the KJV.

⁶For 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.

⁷Thou art my hiding place;

thou shalt preserve me from trouble;

thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

Psalm 32 is one of seven "penitential" Psalms (Ps. 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). In addition, this reading is the third of four readings in this Psalm.

- 1 Having given up his stubborn refusal to confess his sins and experienced the joy of God's forgiveness, the Psalmist turns evangelist, recommending that all seek God and his forgiveness.

"For this should every devout individual pray to You
until such time as it is obtained.

- 2 ? What other examples of individuals in scripture who experience God incomparable generosity in forgiveness and then begin to recommend God to others?

- 2 The Psalmist declares that only through confession and forgiveness of sin can one avoid "the flood of rising waters."

? What is meant by "the flood of rising waters"?

? What do the following two passages say to shape your thoughts about "the flood of rising waters"?

"Save me, O God;

for the waters are come in unto my soul.

I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing:

I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

I am weary of my crying:

my throat is dried:

mine eyes fail while I wait for my God...

O God, thou knowest my foolishness;

and my sins are not hid from thee...

Deliver me out of the mire,

and let me not sink:

let me be delivered from them that hate me,

and out of the deep waters.

Let not the waterflood overflow me,

neither let the deep swallow me up,

and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me” (Ps. 69.^{1-3, 5, 14-15}).

Out of the depths
have I cried unto thee, O Lord.
Lord, hear my voice:
let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.
If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities,
O Lord, who shall stand?
But there is forgiveness with thee,
that thou mayest be feared” (Ps. 130.¹⁻⁴).

3 Consider the following imagery?

God is a “hiding place”
God surrounds “with songs of deliverance”
Mercy “surrounds” those who trust Yahweh

- ? From what does one hide in God?
- ? Who is singing the “songs of deliverance”?
- ? What is keep out and away when Yahweh mercifully “surrounds the faithful?

(edition: March 6, 2025)

Psalm 32.⁸⁻¹¹

⁸I will give you insight and teach you the principles by which you should live.

I will direct you, my eye on you.

⁹Don't be like a horse or mule, without discernment,
outfitted and controlled with bridle and bit.

Don't let them near you.

¹⁰The ungodly experience many pangs,
but those who trust YHWH, goodness surrounds them.

¹¹Rejoice in YHWH and be joyful, you who are just.
Shout for joy, all you who are truly upright (author's translation).

For those who wish to compare translations, here is the KJV.

⁸I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go:

I will guide thee with mine eye.

⁹Be 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.

¹⁰Many sorrows shall be to the wicked:
but he that trusteth in the LORD,
mercy shall compass him about.

¹¹Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous:
and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

Psalm 32 is the second of seven psalms known as penitential psalms (Ps. 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). This is the last of four readings from this Psalm.

1. While in verse 6-7, we seem to have heard the Psalmist's voice, in this reading we seem to hear another voice admonishing the Psalmist.
 - ? Whose voice do we hear in these verses?
 - ? What is the Psalmist admonished to do or not do?
 - ? What does God promise the Psalmist in these verses?
 - ? What is meant by not being a horse or mule that needs to be controlled by a "bit and bridle"?
 - ? How might this admonishment concerning being controlled by a "bit and bridle" relate to the Psalmist's earlier refusal to confess his sins?
2. The Psalmist encourages believers to "shout for joy."
 - ? What do you imagine this looks like to the Psalmist? What does he expect?
 - ? How does this relate to Nephi's assertion that those who have faith in Christ, repent, and enter into baptismal covenant with God receive the Holy Spirit, and can then "speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel." (2 Nephi 31.¹³)?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider the Holy Spirit's role in bringing us the desire and the know-how to praise God?
 - ? Can you relate to this experience? Has the Spirit so moved you? Have you engaged in such praising?

(edition: March 6, 2025)

Psalm 32. ⁸⁻¹⁻⁵—atonement

- ¹Truly happy is the one whose rebellion is borne away
and whose sin is buried.
- ²Truly happy is the one whose guilt YHWH does not consider
and there is no intention to obfuscate.
- ³Because I remained silent, my frame wasted away
while I raged all day long.
- ⁴Because Your power rested heavily upon me day and night
my moisture turned into summer draught.
- ⁵I'll confess my sin to You
and no longer hide my guilt from You.
I decided, "I'll confess my rebellion to YHWH,"
and You, You bore away my sinful guilt (author's translation).

For those who wish to compare translations, here is the KJV.

- ¹Blessed is he
whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
- ²Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no guile [guilt].
- ³When I kept silence,
my bones waxed old
through my roaring all the day long.
- ⁴For day and night
thy hand was heavy upon me:
my moisture is turned
into the drought of summer.
- ⁵I 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.

This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, "Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement." *

1. There are any number of English words that can be used for human weakness.
 - ? How many and which ones does the Psalmist use in today's reading?
 - ? What does it suggest to you about the Psalmist's feelings, that he utilizes so many such words in a passage as short as today's reading ("transgression," "sin," "iniquity," and "guilt.")?
 - ? Are you ever overcome and "obsessed" by feelings of guilt over your sins?
2. The Psalmist speaks of a time when he suffered because he "kept silence."
 - ? What did the Psalmist keep silent about?
3. After some stubbornness (see verse 3), the Psalmist finally confessed, or acknowledged his sin. Verse 5 of today's reading describes one thing that we must do in order to be forgiven. We must "confess," or "acknowledge" our sins. This applies to both specific sins and our general sinfulness. We must acknowledge specific sins and ask for help to overcome them. We must also acknowledge the truth that no matter how hard we try, we frequently come short of our expectations.
 - ? Why is it so important to God that we acknowledge our sin?

- ? Why is it sometimes so difficult to acknowledge our sin?
- ? How do you feel about the Lord's quick response to the Psalmist's delayed confession?
- ? Do you believe the Lord will respond as quickly and faithfully to your confession of sinfulness?

3. Consider the Brother of Jared's frank confession:

"... Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness before thee; for we know that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens, and that *we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually*; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires" (Ether 3.²).

Consider, too, the confession of the writer of the Lectures on Faith:

"...such is the weakness of man, and such his frailties, that he is *liable to sin continually*" (Lecture 3:20, questions and answers)

- ? How can we make such faithful confession without feeling demeaned, or engaging in ungodly and unfaithful self-hate?
 - ? Why is it so important to do this?
4. A "blessed" person is one who has been forgiven or whose sins are not "imputed" to them.
- ? What does "impute" mean?
 - ? Why does the Psalmist not say that the blessed person is one who does not sin?
- 5 In Romans 4.⁶⁻⁸, the apostle Paul quotes verses 1-2 to explain what he means when he speaks of "justification." When Paul speaks of a man or woman being justified, he is talking about their being forgiven for the sins that they inevitably commit. Paul's "justification" or "forgiveness of sins" is discussed in the Book of Mormon under the rubric of being "Born of God." So...

"Justification," "forgiveness," and being "born of God" are different ways of speaking of the same spiritual experience.

- ? Have you experienced justification, forgiveness, or the new birth?
 - ? If not, why do you think you have not felt this powerful encouragement?
 - ? Which is most likely? 1) You haven't experienced it because of your own distrust of God, or 2) You have not experienced it because God has not found you to have done what is necessary?
- * The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:
- "Fall: Our Need of Atonement"
 - "Grace: The Savior's Generous and Earnest Invitation"
 - "At-one-ment: The Savior's unity and connectedness with us"
 - "Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us"
 - "Glorification: The Savior's Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement"
 - "Justification: How We Repent and Change"
 - "Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement"
 - "Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement"
 - "Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement"
 - "Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me"

(edition: March 6, 2025)