

## Removing the Pain of Guilt - Psalm 32

***Guilt | (Psychology Today) - Guilt is aversive and—like shame, embarrassment, or pride—has been described as a self-conscious emotion, involving reflection on oneself.***

People may feel guilt for a variety of reasons -

- Including ***act's they have committed*** (or ***think*** that they committed)
- A failure to do ***something*** they ***should have done***
- Or ***thoughts*** that ***they think are morally wrong***.

How do I deal with my guilt? ***\*Understand the purpose of guilt.***

Most of the time, we feel ***guilty because*** we have ***done or said something*** that ***caused harm*** to someone else.

Recognize ***unproductive guilt*** - Sometimes we may feel guilty when we ***don't need to feel*** guilty. ...

- ***Identify what*** you feel guilty about. ...
- ***Write*** about your feelings. ... ***Apologize*** if necessary.

What are some ***symptoms*** of guilt?

Not feeling whole:

- ***Body*** - ***inaccurate view of self, feeling disconnected, preoccupied***
- ***Thinking*** - ***confusion, unclear, trouble communicating thoughts***
- ***Feelings*** - ***difficulty identifying or expressing, taking on feelings of someone else***
- ***Behavior*** - ***difficulty controlling your own behavior and the impact it has on others***.

***Feeling guilty - when it's not your fault...***

- This can come in many forms like ***survivors' guilt*** (Why did I survive).
- ***Divorce*** – (You may not have caused it, but the kids make you feel guilty).
- ***Blended families*** – (Not how we do it at the other house). Ect.
- ***Feeling guilty for something you didn't do is also possible***.

## **Today's Sermon - Removing the Pain of Guilt**

**Psalm 32:1-5 - Of David. A *maskil*.**

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.

<sup>3</sup> **When I kept silent**, my bones wasted away through my **groaning all day long**.

<sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy on me; **my strength was sapped** as in the heat of summer.

<sup>5</sup> **Then I acknowledged my sin to you** and **did not** cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

We are guilty people.

- We are guilty of bad thoughts, false statements, and hurtful deeds.
- Mostly, we are guilty before a pure and holy God.
- We have sinned.
- We have fallen short of **God's perfect ideal**.
- We stand in the need of forgiveness and grace.

**David**, the man after God's own heart, knew the magnitude of guilt and the need for amazing grace.

This sermon will remind the hearer of **David's sin with Bathsheba** and the steps he took to remove the guilt of that sin. Our story is intertwined within David's story.

**God's love and forgiveness** seeps out through the seams to refresh our hearts and eradicate our sin.

**Intro:** Noel Coward, the famous playwright, pulled an interesting prank. He sent an identical note to twenty of the most famous men in London. **The anonymous note read simply:** "Everybody has found out what you are doing. If I were you, I would get out of town."

Supposedly, all twenty men actually left town.

What if you opened your mail one day and found such a note?

- What would race through your mind?
  - The income you failed to report on your 1040 form.
  - The time you spent on the internet watching pornography?
  - The expense account you over inflated?
  - The lies you told about an honest, hardworking individual?
  - The misrepresentation of facts you informed a potential client?
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I. What is guilt?

***Guilt is the dread of the past; a pain that wells up within our heart because we committed an offense or failed to do something right.***

It is a ***phantom pain*** - You know, ***like amputee's experience*** after a limb has been removed. A part of the body that ***does not exist screams for attention.***

Often people experience this same kind of **dread obsessed by the memory of some sin** committed years ago.

- It ***never leaves them, crippling*** their enjoyment of life, their devotional life, their relationship with others.
- They ***live in fear*** that someone will discover their past.
- They work overtime trying to ***prove to God*** they're truly repentant.
- They erect barriers against the enveloping, ***loving grace of God***.

**Guilt** is one of the most **crippling diseases** among people today.

- Psychiatrists and doctors say that ***unresolved guilt*** is the number one cause of mental illness and suicide.
- It prompts ***millions of Americans*** to gulp down ***pills to tranquilize their anxiety***.
- Psychologist discovered that ***the average person*** spends approximately ***two hours a day feeling guilty***.
- And for 39 minutes of that time, ***people feel moderate to severe guilt***.

Before we **beat guilt up too much**, let me remind you that **guilt for the most part is very constructive**.

***Guilt is like an electric fence that gives us a jolt when we begin to stray beyond our boundaries.***

- It sends ***an alarm to wake us up*** that something needs our attention.
- Like pain, ***guilt tells us when something is wrong***.
- ***When you feel it***, you ***don't*** just sit there, you ***do something about it***.

## II. How do we relieve the pain of guilt?

So, what do we do about it? How can we relieve the pain caused by guilt?

For answers let's examine Psalm 32. - ***David had good reason for feeling guilty***.

Scholars believe that David wrote Psalm 32 after he cried to God for forgiveness for his double sin of murder and adultery.

David's guilt was immense. He writes, Psalm 38:4 - ***"My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear"***.

David's release from guilt was sweet. This Psalm offers practical steps to release one from guilt.

### A. Admit your guilt (v. 5)

***Our society has witnessed the downfall of politicians, ministers, businessmen, and other leaders.***

- ***Isn't it interesting***, that when caught many side stepped the issue of admitting guilt?
- Instead, they blame others or are blinded by their own self-righteousness.

Several years ago, ***one TV preacher***, however, stood before his congregation, both in person and on television, ***with tears streaming down his face***, and cried out, ***"Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned."***

***David made a similar acknowledgement to a similar sin***.

He said, Psalm 32:5 - ***<sup>5</sup> Then I acknowledged my sin to you*** and ***did not*** cover up my iniquity. I said, ***"I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."*** And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

**Gordon MacDonald wrote:** "We cannot expect to live healthily in the future when the baggage of the past keeps banging away at the trap door of our minds demanding attention."

**The first step** on the road to recovery and relief is **admitting** that something is wrong in our life.

**Guilt is the result of the inner spirit, created in God's image, crying "foul."** God's laws have been violated; His honor diminished. Something **deep within me** shouts in protest. I feel **the shout as guilt**.

## **B. Confront the guilt (v. 5)**

Next, David Psalm 32:5 - "***did not conceal my iniquity***".

- He stopped **trying to hide** his sin.
- Guilt must be **confronted** and **dealt with**.
- To overcome it we can't continue to hide its reality. We must **deal with it**.

**The truth is:** If we don't deal with our guilt, then our guilt will deal with us.

It may affect you psychologically. Psalm 32:3 - "***When I kept silent, my bones became brittle from my groaning all day long***".

- David's **conscience** "groaned all day long."
- David **could not** get the wrong out of his mind.
- It awoke with him.
- It followed him throughout his daily activities.
- It gnawed at him as he tried to sleep.

It may affect you **spiritually**. David said, Psalm 32:4 - "***For day and night Your hand was heavy on me***".

- Sin **separates** us from God.
- It drives a wedge in our relationship with our Maker.
- That barrier will remain until we deal with it.

It may affect you physically. It did David. Psalm 32:4 - "***My strength was drained as in the summer's heat***".

Like water that evaporates on a sunny day so did David's physical condition.

I've heard of people who have lost their appetite, unable to sleep, experience a shortness of breath, and are sick **all because of guilt feelings**.

Can guilt really make us physically, mentally, and spiritually ill?

The truth is that if we don't deal with our guilt it will deal with us.

C. Confess your guilt (v. 5)

David said, Psalm 32:5 - "*I will confess my transgressions to the LORD*".

The next step to recovery is to tell God like it is.

- Confession is not telling God something he doesn't already know.
- In fact, the word confession means "to agree with."

When we confess our sins to God,

- We agree that we have rebelled against his authority.
- We agree that we have missed the mark or standard set for our lives.
- We agree that something twisted in us needs straightened out.

Guilt is dispelled only when the truth is told.

Only when confession is made will guilt melt like a block of ice.

Guilt is like that huge block of ice.

- Kept in a dark, cold place, it remains hard.
- But brought into the light, identified, and confessed, *it begins to melt, and soon is gone*.
- And free is the soul that no longer is **frozen by unaddressed guilt**.

Psalm 32: <sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.

When we confess our guilt to the Lord, He promises to forgive (v.1).

- This means that he takes it away, like a burden lifted.

He covers it over (v. 1).

- In other words, he hides it from his sight.
- He does not count it against us (v. 1).
- The debt is paid or cancelled.
  
- Wouldn't you like a clear conscience?
- Wouldn't you like to know that your debts were paid in full?
- Wouldn't you like to know that your sins were forgiven?
- We can.

1 John 1:9 - *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness".*

D. Forget your guilt (vv. 1, 5)

David said, Psalm 32:5 - "And You took away the guilt of my sin".

- God forgets our confessed sin and so should we.
- They are gone forever.

*That's exactly what God did for David. When David confessed his sin to God, suddenly his sin and guilt were gone - gone forever.*

*And that's exactly how it is for us. When we confess our sin God erases the sin and the guilt.*

- We need to forget it and get on with our life.
- God doesn't remember any confessed sin so why should we?

CLOSE:

I confess that there have been times in my life that if I received a note like the one Noel Coward wrote,

***"Everybody has found out what you are doing. If I were you, I would get out of town,"***

- I would have to leave town.
- During those times I was **spiritually paralyzed**.
- I, too, felt like David, **like my guilt was overwhelming me**.

***I would cry out repeatedly, "God, I'm sorry. I'll never do it again."***

***Then in one of those wonderful moments of God-granted insight, I realized I had no need to ask for repeated forgiveness.***

***It had been forgiven the first time I asked.***

***Every time I cried anew for release from my guilt -***

***I was denying the effectiveness of Christ's death.***

***How dare I demean forgiveness bought at so great a price.***

***Admit – Confront – Confess – Forget YOUR GUILT TODAY!***

***1 John 1:9 - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness".***