

In the name of our Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen

¹Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ²Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

⁵ 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.

⁶ Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. ⁷ You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. ⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. ¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD’s unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him. ¹¹ Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart! **This is God’s Word.**

Dear Forgiven Children of God,

“A picture is worth a thousand words,” is a saying that has been around for quite a long time and it is quite true. We all learn and understand in different ways and a visual picture sometimes can say so much more than volumes of words.

We have eleven verses full of words before us this morning but David, through these words, is painting a picture in our minds. He wants us to see, **“Forgiveness Painted in this Picture.”** He does that by describing for us, **“The Deep Pit of Sin,”** then **“The Court Room of Justification,”** and finally **“The Choir Room of Christian Living.”**

I. How did David get to the point described in our psalm? You may know the story of David’s adulterous affair with Bathsheba. In order to cover up the affair and the resulting pregnancy, David had Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, murdered. After Bathsheba mourned her husband’s death she moved in with David and a son was born to them. It seems like David got away with adultery and murder and everything was great... but appearances can be deceiving.

David had fallen into a deep pit of sin and he knew it. **“³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.”** For a whole year his lips were silent, but his conscience spoke through his body. The knowledge of these sins ate away at him causing his bones to ache and a deep depression sapped his strength and enthusiasm.

The guilt he felt was like an invisible hand piling heavy weights on his body and weighing him down more and more. Yet David was stubborn. He wanted to ignore his sin – maybe even hide it rather than acknowledge it.

Have you ever fallen into the pit of sin? I would hope you haven’t murdered anyone, but have you ever done something that you knew was wrong and tried to cover it up only to suffer

the consequences of a guilty conscience? Maybe you have taken something that was not yours and never told anyone about it. Or did something wrong at work but someone else got blamed and you kept silent. Perhaps you backed into someone's car in the parking lot and you drove away without leaving a note because no one saw what happened. Maybe you have told yourself, "I know God says this is wrong but I'm going to do it anyway."

But maybe it's just the opposite for you. It could also be that you haven't ever suffered a guilty conscience, but it isn't because you have never done anything wrong. In fact if we think that we are free from sin or just not such a bad person, then we have a different problem. John tells us **"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us...¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make [God] out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives"** (1 John. 1:8,10). The Bible makes it very clear that all of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). Sin is a big problem for all of us. Martin Luther described sin as the **"Three Headed Dog at the Gates of Hell."**

He came up with that description from the three words that David used to describe sin – words used in this psalm. **Transgression** – the times when we intentionally cross the line. God says, "Don't cross this line." and we defiantly step across it anyway. **Sin** – the times when we miss the mark or fall short. It's like shooting an arrow at a target. We can never hit the bulls eye and sometimes our arrow falls short and misses the target completely. **Iniquity** – we don't measure up to God's standard. Jesus proclaimed God's demand for us when he said, **"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."** (Matthew 5:48). **The only cure for this Trinity of Sin is the Trinity of Heaven – our Triune God who presides in the "Courtroom of Justification."**

II. The Courtroom of Justification is the only place where we can find happiness and forgiveness. David tells us, **"¹Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ²Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit."** Our transgressions are forgiven because their debt has been paid. Our sins have been covered by God with a cover that hides the filthiness of our sinful flesh from an all seeing God. The Lord does not count our sin against us because Jesus has stepped in to take our place.

David had not only heard about forgiveness, he had experienced this happiness and forgiveness. He tells us, **"⁵ 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."** The key to forgiveness is to acknowledge and confess our sins – to turn away from them and receive the forgiveness our Savior won for us on the cross.

Sounds easy but it is not always so. We speak the words of confession in our worship services but are we just mouthing the words along with everyone else? It's easy to fall into that trap, but as we confess our sins we want to stop and think about how far we have strayed from our Lord, feel the sadness of our actions, and then feel the joy and relief as we hear the words, "Your sins are forgiven." Our Savior has paid the price –taken the punishment in our place – so that we might feel the happiness that comes when God covers that sin and removes the burden of guilt from us. That happiness and joy takes us into the **"Choir Room of Christian Living."**

III. “⁴¹ Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!” Faith in Jesus makes us righteous – right with God – and that is a great reason to rejoice and sing! To sing songs and hymns that proclaim the reason for the joy that we have in our hearts. The Old Testament is full of songs and as the different people sang them it wasn’t so much the music they were sung to, but the words that proclaimed the sorrow of sin and the joy of forgiveness. That still continues today with our hymns and psalms that we sing – It’s not always the tune that is important but the words that proclaim the truths found in God’s Word and the joy found in our hearts.

As we sing songs of joy and live our lives for Christ, David reminds us that, “⁴⁰ **Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD’s unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him**” Isn’t that a beautiful promise? Just think, God’s unfailing love is wrapped around us like a life preserver. Because of that we won’t have to be afraid of drowning in this life’s difficulties or fears. God’s unfailing love will always keep us afloat. Of course it doesn’t mean that we won’t go through some rough weather but it does guarantee that no matter how high the waves get we will float on top of them sustained by God’s love. The problem comes when we see the huge waves, get scared and try to swim away and leave our life preserver behind. When that happens we do sink like Peter did when he was walking on water out to Jesus. Therefore cling to God’s forgiveness and trust that you are surrounded by his unfailing love no matter what storms in life you may have to go through.

May these words of David remind us of this beautiful picture of Forgiveness. May they remind us that we have been pulled from the Deep Pit of Sin and have been declared “not guilty” in the Courtroom of Justification because of the sacrifice our Savior made for us on the cross. May this forgiveness move us to join in the Choir Room of Christian Living and enjoy the blessings of forgiveness as we sing praises to our God. Amen.