

BLESSINGS OF FORGIVENESS

Guilt is a powerful thing. You may have done something that you knew was wrong, but nobody knew about it. So you keep it secret and hope no one finds out. You, however, know about it. It gnaws at your conscience. It consumes your thoughts. It wears you down. At this point, if you tell others, there will be all the guilt you have hidden to deal with along with the shame that comes from the cover-up being exposed.

David, a man after God's heart, made some pretty bad mistakes in his life. One of these is recorded in 2Samuel 11. This is the story of David's sinning by taking Bathsheba who was the wife of another man. David saw her, desired her, and took her (after all, he was the king and kings can do and have anything or anyone they want). Nobody had to know, until she tells David she is pregnant and her husband had been away at war. David brings Uriah, her husband, home from battle hoping he would be with her a few nights and everyone would assume the child to be his.

Uriah doesn't play along with scenario, so David creates a new scenario in which Uriah ends up dying in battle. Now David thinks he is in the clear. After her period of mourning, he moves her to the palace and she becomes his wife. The baby is born, so it has been more than a year since this all started.

David is confronted with his sin by God through his prophet Nathan. David repents. We are certain that David wrote Psalm 51 after being confronted with his transgressions. Many also believe he wrote Psalm 32 at that time as well. This is the poem we want to consider here.

The psalm begins in the first two verses pronouncing the freedom that follows forgiveness. Sin put one under bondage but forgiveness brings blessings and freedom. In verses 3-5, David describes the burden of guilt. Guilt is what makes the shackles of sin feel all the more heavy, especially when we are trying to hide it from everyone else.

Verses 6-10 show the conflict that may rage within the guilty person's mind. Do I repent and confess what I have done and trust that God will protect and deliver me, or do I keep it hidden and allow my heart to grow hard because of my stubbornness?

It may be hard - very hard - to admit that we are wrong. The shame we feel might feel overwhelming. There will no doubt be consequences because of bad decisions. However, none of these things can outweigh the blessed freedom from sin and guilt that we can have when we are in a right relationship with the LORD.

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