

Exod 04-10-31b

Let's pick up our study now in Exodus chapter 34 and verse 7. When I was trying to give you an Ezekiel passage before the break, I think I said 34.7 of Ezekiel, but that does not pertain. I misread my notes here. It is Ezekiel, there's actually, let me give you three passages in Ezekiel because *Awain* is used in the sense of punishment or in the sense of a, and this is important because we saw in 1 John, John says in the 4th chapter, there is a sin unto death.

And he says, I'm not saying you should even pray for somebody that's in that category. Well, this is the Old Testament reference for a sin unto death and it's these Ezekiel passages. Take a look at Ezekiel chapter 21 and verse 30.

He's talking to the profane and wicked prince of Israel. And of course, when you think of the days of Ezekiel and to whom he is speaking, the sword of the king of Babylon has come and you have the whole deportation and so on. Because, in verse 24, it says, you have made your iniquity to be remembered.

And the word there for iniquity is *Awain*. Because you have made your iniquity to be remembered and that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your doing your sins appear. And once again, we have this complex of three words.

Iniquity, transgression, and sin. And what God is saying in Ezekiel 21-24 is, because your iniquity is not forgotten, it's not forgiven, your transgressions are not covered, they are uncovered, and because in all your doings your sins appear, because you have come to remembrance, you shall be taken in hand. Now to you, O profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose iniquity, and then you see the word shall end, this wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, his iniquity is an end iniquity.

It's an *Awain* of the end. It's a sin unto death. It's a sin unto an end, if you will.

This is the way the Old Testament phrases the sin unto death. So he says, remove the turban, take off the crown, nothing shall remain the same, exalt the humble, the humble, and humble the exalted, overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown. It shall be no longer until he comes whose right it is.

There will never be a throne in Israel again. This is an iniquity that brings about an end. It is the end of the Davidic throne in Israel.

And this is a sin of the end. And in this case, it's the end of the throne, but the idea here is that it is a sin unto death, much as Saul in his pattern of sin. You find the same thing in Ezekiel chapter 21 and verse 34.

2130, 2134. In 2130, he says, I will judge you. I will, in the place where you were created, in the land of your nativity, I will pour out my indignation on you.

I will blow against you with the fire of my wrath and deliver you into the hands of brutal men who are skillful to destroy. This is one-off. The versification is one-off in the Hebrew and in the English.

What I'm looking for is in verse 29. They see false visions for you. They divine a lie to you to bring you on the necks of the wicked, the slain, whose day has come, whose iniquity is an end iniquity.

And that's a sin of the end. It means you're done. You're being yanked out of the game.

Whatever you're doing, whoever you are, you're over with. It's finished. And then if you go down to, in this case, it's going to be verse 32 there.

You shall be fueled for the fire. Your blood shall be in the midst of the land. And you shall not be remembered, for I, the Lord, have spoken.

And you have this idea that the sin is unto death. 35.5 of Ezekiel gives us the same idea. Because you have had an ancient hatred and have shed the blood of the children of Israel by the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, when their iniquity was the iniquity of an end.

Theirs was the iniquity of an end. And so God allowed this ancient hatred to shed the blood of the children of Israel and exert the power of the sword. I heard a guy this morning preaching to a big congregation.

And he was in the section where God says, I will discipline you. I will curse you if you're disobedient. And he said, now this doesn't mean that God actively curses or that God actively causes harm or actively brings any kind of judgment.

And he said, now this goes into the Hebrew. And he said in the Hebrew, when they brought the Hebrew over into English, they left it in a causative form, that God causes harm, that God causes this evil. But that's not really the case.

It just looks that way in English, but it's really not. And he appealed to the Hebrew and kind of glossed this over and said, God does not cause harm. God is light.

God is good. There's no harm or evil or iniquity in Him. That's just complete balderdash.

There's nothing in the Hebrew, if anything. The Hebrew has a hyphel causative stem which does not come over easily into English. And he just got it completely backward.

God does wreak havoc. God will actively cause destruction. What does he do with passages like King Saul? For God removed his spirit and sent an evil spirit to Saul.

God will, he says over and over in the Old Testament, I will bring your enemies upon you. What about all of the curses on Mount Ebal? Where if you disobey, and the sevenfold, you know, the

fivefold national discipline that is involved there, God says, I will turn your sky to brass and your fields into iron. I will burn and destroy.

I will put you under the power of your enemy. I will, I will, I will. I mean, it's just, you can only inflict that kind of an error on people who are ignorant of their scriptures.

And unfortunately, he had a huge building full of people that he was preaching to that just, I guess, took that at face value. Look at verse 31 here, Ezekiel 23. I will pour out my indignation on you.

I will blow against you with the fire of my wrath. Now, that's not just God removing protection. That is God looking at Achan and saying, this is deserving of a penalty, and here it is.

Well, when you go back now to our passage in Exodus, God says, He forgives iniquity. This is a great blessing. God is merciful.

God is gracious. God is long-suffering. God abounds in goodness and truth.

God keeps mercy for thousands. Forgiving iniquity. And this is looking at our sin from the aspect of the punishment phase.

And as I said just before the break, this is important because... Now, play poker and don't let on, but I suspect all of us at some time or another, we have fouled up in some fairly major way. And we've gone to the Lord and we've confessed it and we've acknowledged it. But then later on, weeks, months, even years later, something calamitous has happened to us and the thought has crossed our mind, God is getting me for that thing that I did.

This is because of that thing back there. I knew it was going to catch up. I knew there would be a day of reckoning where I would have to pay the price for that foul-up back there.

I am here to tell you from the Scriptures that is not a valid conclusion to draw. God forgives a sinner. The word here translated forgive means to remove.

God removes the guilt. If the guilt is removed, then whatever is happening to you is for some other reason. Or you never got your guilt removed, one or the other.

But God doesn't remove it and then be an Indian... Well, I can't say that now. You used to say Indian giver. You give it and then you take it back.

That's politically incorrect even if you're Indian. But God does not give something and then later on say, you know, I'm going to take that back. The only time that takes place is when we bring it on ourselves by going back in.

Remember the parable Jesus told of the unjust servant. He was forgiven a great debt, millions of dollars by his master. But then he had an underling servant that owed him a few hundred dollars and he would not forgive that debt.

And he started persecuting this and saying, pay me every penny, pay me every penny. It was like a \$25 debt. When the master heard about it, he came back and he unforgave the big debt.

He unforgave it and threw him into debtor's prison until he should pay every farthing as it says in the Old King James. You can lose. And over and over again we've seen forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

If you do not forgive one another, you yourselves are not forgiven. Over and over again. The one condition on forgiveness, receiving it from God, is that we likewise forgive one another.

And if we do not forgive one another, God cannot only deny forgiveness, but He can revoke forgiveness. That parable tells us that the debt was eliminated and taken away and then it was reinstated after this individual would not forgive his fellow servant. And there is no way around it.

You can't gloss over it. You can't varnish it. You can't paint it.

You can't polish it. You can't get around it. God will revoke forgiveness if we are not forgiving one another.

It is exceedingly important that we do not bear a grudge, that we do not hold something against someone. We can lose the removal of the penalty part of sin. And that penalty that God removed can come back and we can bear the guilt of not only our sin, but the sin that we do not forgive the other person of.

We can get their punishment and ours. Their discipline and ours if we do not forgive. It is a silly and dumb thing to do.

God says, who are you to judge another man's servant? If he has fouled up, even if it's a sin against us, let God judge him. David understood that. He stood on the hill.

Saul had been hounding and persecuting him for years. And he said, let the Lord judge between me and thee. Awain.

Whenever you see the word generally in the New King James, it is translated iniquity. And when you see that, and if you want to check your straws, when it's the word awain, it is sin in the sense of the guilt. And the nature of guilt is that there is a penalty due.

That's awain. God forgives iniquity. The second thing He forgives is transgression.

Transgression. This is the word pesha in Hebrew. P-E-S-H-A This is sin in its effect on others.

I think a good translation of this word would be offense. Because when you think about offense, if you say, ooh, that's offensive. That's the effect that something has on me.

It offends me. It causes me a problem. And that's the nature, that's the general connotation of

pesha.

It is translated in the New King James generally as transgression. But that's not the best, that's actually a good translation for our third word. Pesha comes from the word pasha.

P-A-S-H-A But this is sin in the sense of being a crime against others. Crime. When we say a crime has been committed, we generally imply that there has been a victim.

They have to say a victimless crime because crime generally has a victim. So this is sin in the sense of what does it do to the victim. You can find a good example of this in Genesis chapter 50, verse 17.

They sent messengers to Joseph. These are the brothers who threw him into prison. Now he's a big wig.

They sent messengers to Joseph saying, before your father died, he commanded saying, thus you shall say to Joseph, I beg you, please forgive the pesha of your brothers and their sin. For they did evil to you. Forgive what they did to you.

He's not saying, I know they are due a penalty, please remove the penalty. He's saying they offended you. They threw you into the pit.

They sold you into slavery. They lied about you. They separated you from me for lo these many years.

Forgive the offense. Forgive the crime against your person. Awain is a judicial view.

And the judge decides what happens with Awain. God is generally the one who forgives Awain. Here, Jacob encourages his son Joseph to forgive the pesha.

Forgive the wrong that has been done to you. In principle, we cannot do an Awain forgiveness. God is the judge who decides what the penalty will be.

And who removes the penalty when we acknowledge our sin. Is this coming across? Does it make sense? God is the judge who determines penalty. And woe unto us if we set ourselves up as judge.

And that's the sin of judging. It is not discerning that someone has committed an offense. Or that someone has transgressed.

Or that someone has done some wrong that violates divine standards of righteousness. Judging, the sin of judging, is deciding that this is an Awain. And here is the penalty that you are due.

And I am now going to carry out the penalty on you. I'm going to damage your reputation by gossiping about you. I'm going to cold shoulder you.

I'm going to persecute you. I'm going to inflict some sort of penalty on you because you have done a wrong thing. And we get into the Pasha business.

And we generally do that because we ourselves feel wounded. We feel like we have been damaged in some way by someone's offense. We are offended.

And we say, I'll make you pay for that. That is the sin of judging. Jacob tells Joseph, forgive the Pasha of your brothers.

They have indeed done a wrong to you. Do not hold it to their account. We can forgive what is a wrong that we receive.

And that's what we are supposed to do. We cannot determine the ultimate judicial guilt. That's God's department.

But we cannot hold the damage that someone does against us, against that person. So, Pasha. Transgression, I think, is a bad... Transgress means to cross a line.

It isn't what it's talking about at all. Pasha is an offense, a crime. Either one of those words is a good translation.

Now, we learn a lot about Pasha from Psalm 19. Psalm 19, 13. In the Hebrew, it's Psalm 14.

But it's 13 in the English. This is one of my favorite passages. David is talking about God here and he talks about His Word.

And he says, "...the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward." Then in verse 12 he says, Who can understand His errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins.

Let them not have dominion over me, then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great Pasha. Many times we find Pasha modified by the word gadolah. Gadol means great.

Gadolah is the feminine form. Pasha is a feminine noun. And a crime against others, an offense against others, David says, If you'll keep me from presumptuous sins, and you see that sins is in italic, it's presumptuousness.

Let it not have dominion over me, then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great Pasha. So what he says here is, whatever this presumptuous thing is in the first line, that's what causes great transgression. The presumptuousness, and this is the word Zad in Hebrew, Z-A-D.

It's plural here, Zadim. David says, Keep back your servant from Zadim. From instances of pride.

Zad is arrogance, insolence, a disregard for what is right, a disregard for the interests of others.

It is the opposite of brotherly love. It is the opposite of sacrifice towards self and benefit towards others.

It is just the opposite. I will sacrifice others to benefit myself. Zad is presumptuous, arrogant, insolent, disregard for everything and everybody.

I will do what I see fit. David prays, Keep back your servant from Zadim. Multiple occurrences of pride, self-will, arrogance.

Let those not have dominion over me. Let that not characterize me. Do not let my pride, do not let insolence or arrogance define me.

Then I will be blameless and I will be innocent of sinning against others. I will not sin against others if I am not overcome by arrogance, selfishness. And this is a prayer.

And it's a prayer that we can pray. Because once we commit Pesah against others, once we sin against others and offend and perpetrate a crime, not only are we guilty of that, but the Awain aspect is going to come in. And there will be discipline if we are not forgiven.

So you can see this is another aspect of sin. Sin has many consequences, not just one. So Pesah, crime or offense against others.

And it is motivated by pride, by arrogance, by insolence. We are insensitive toward others because we are oversensitive to ourselves and our needs. There is a great passage in the national level in Amos.

Amos chapter 1. And if you're writing these down, just write down Amos 1. 3, 6, 9, 11, and 13. Amos 1. 3, 6, 9, 11, 13. And then chapter 2 verse 1. And when you go to Amos, you'll see this is a pattern.

It's easy to pick these out because it's repetitive. God says here in Amos 1. 3, Thus says the Lord, for three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not turn away its punishment. And you think, oh well now, wouldn't that be Awain? No.

Pesah, or here Peshai in the plural, these are offenses against Israel. God says this is a crime that Damascus has perpetrated. This is an offense that they have committed against Israel.

And God says I will punish it. But the emphasis here is it isn't God saying Damascus has done an offensive crime so I'm going to punish. He says you have sinned against my people.

I will bring punishment. Punishment is not divorced from Pesah, but Pesah emphasizes that this is a sin against somebody. What is the offense? They have threshed Gilead.

Damascus has threshed Gilead with implements of iron. They've torn them up. Look at verse 6. Thus says the Lord, for three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not turn away.

And you notice punishment is in italics there. God says I will not turn away. I'm not going to forget.

The punishment is not so much in view as look at what you have done to My people. You've plowed them with a plow of iron. You have taken captive My people and delivered them to Edom.

You've allied yourself with Edom and you've committed this offense. Look at verse 9. Thus says the Lord, for three transgressions of Tyre and for four I will not turn away because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood. They have offended My people.

God says I will not forget. I will not turn away. I will not forgive.

Verse 11, for three transgressions of Edom and for four I will not turn away because he pursued his own brother with the sword, cast off all pity, his anger tore perpetually and he kept his wrath forever. I will send a fire upon Tima on which shall devour the palaces of Basra. These are locations in Edom.

The old dominion of Esau. Verse 13, thus says the Lord, for three transgressions of the people of Ammon and for four I will not turn away because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead. Remember Gilead? There's some chiastic stuff going on here.

Gilead was the first one to be offended and they are the last. That they might enlarge their territory. Look at the selfishness.

They needed territory. They ripped open pregnant women because they wanted more land. I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah and it shall devour the palaces amid shouting in the day of battle and the tempest in the day of the whirlwind.

Their king shall go into captivity. He and his princess together says the Lord. Chapter 2, verse 1, for three transgressions of Moab and for four I will not turn away because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.

I will send fire upon Moab. Because of what you do to someone else, this is Pesah. Offense against others.

Now remember, there's not two different kinds of sin. There's not some sin that is deserving of punishment and other sin that is an offense. Sin is sin.

This is emphasizing aspects of sin. Particular facets of sin. You can have one gem with many facets.

You can have one house with many sides. And we look at a different side each time. But it's part of the same thing.

You can commit one act and it is a wane when God looks at it in terms of penalty and judgment. You can look at that same sin and find that it is Pesah in the sense of the damage it has done to others. And we're going to find in our third word found in Exodus 34, God says he forgives iniquity and transgression and sin.

And the third word here, sin, sin is the word katah, C-H-A-T-A. C-H-A-T-A-H, actually. Katah.

Katah is sin in the sense of having missed the mark. Of having lost the way. Of having crossed a line.

I think they should have translated katah as transgression. Because transgress means you've got curbs along the street but if you're driving along and you bump up over the curb you've transgressed. You've gotten out of bounds.

Katah is sin in the sense of being out of bounds. Losing your way. Going in the wrong direction.

It's an arrow that is shot at the target but it misses. And this is sin in the sense of losing sight of the goal. This is what it does to your purpose and the meaning of your life.

So if you think about it, these three words, you have awain in the sense of guiltiness and punishment. This is the God word aspect. God looks at it and says I have to do something about that.

You're guilty and that guilt comes with a penalty. And the penalty will be inflicted. Pesah, that's sort of the vertical aspect of sin.

Awain. Pesah is the horizontal aspect. What have you done to others in your sin? And katah, sin in the sense of losing your way, missing the mark, going out of bounds, that's what it does to you.

It neutralizes momentum. It knocks you off course. You're not fulfilling your purpose.

You're not accomplishing your goal. You're an arrow that has flown and missed the target. So it's fascinating with that understanding and you'll have to decode your English in passages like Psalm 38 and Psalm 32 by remembering that the translators used iniquity for Awain.

They used transgression for Pesah which we would call an offense or crime. And they used the word sin for katah which is actually the missing the mark idea. We have this same idea in the New Testament of course with Hamartia and so on in the sense of missing the mark.

By the way, when you get to the Hebrew Bible and it talks about the sin offering, you know what the word is for sin offering? Katah. The word for the sin and the word for the sin offering is the same. Why would God choose out of all of the possible words katah to characterize the sin offering? Because when you bring the offering, you're doing so as an Israelite, as someone who belongs to the people of God to restore yourself back to your purpose.

Get yourself back on the narrow road. Heading, aiming back through the straight gate that leads to life. You have to restore that first of all.

We can only restore ourselves. We can't remedy what we have done to others in the sense of reparation. We cannot be delivered from the penalty in the sense of Awaiting until we first redirect ourselves.

We pointed ourselves off the path. We have to point ourselves back in the right direction. This is why David says, I said I will confess my sins and God already started forgiving.

Because it's at the point that I turn my direction around that forgiveness begins. That's when God can cleanse. That's when God can remove the penalty.

That's when God can, either through us or in spite of us, repair damage that we have done to others. But it starts with the heart. Sin has multiple barbs.

It's like the goat heads I used to step on and run over with my bicycle in Barstow. I don't know if you've ever been to Barstow, California or anywhere else where they've got these giant goat heads that grow and blow and are all over the ground. You know how it is when you're a little kid and you like to run around barefoot? Well, people don't run around in barefoot in Barstow.

Because these giant goat heads, they have these sharp, long thorns that stick out in multiple directions. Any way one of those thorns falls, one or two of those barbs are sticking up. And you have to fix it flat on all your bike tires or you can't ride your bike one block without getting it flat.

Multiple directions of damage. That's what sin is like. Awaiting is the Godward aspect, the judicial aspect, the penalty phase that God brings.

And that is God's department. We are not to punish sin. It's not our place.

It's not our job. Pasha is the manward side. Who have we sinned against? Who have we damaged? What crime or offense have we committed against others? Kata is what it does to us.

It neutralizes us. It stops us. It snaps off our sail.

It breaks off our rudder. We no longer have direction. We can't hit the mark.

We can't stay on course. We cannot lay a straight path of bricks. We cannot rightly divide the Word of Truth.

We are blown about by every wind. We are useless. Turn with me to Psalm 32, our Scripture reading this morning.

This is a contemplation, a masquial of David. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven. What do you think the word is there for transgression? Pasha.

So, the topic under discussion here is I have committed a crime. I have offended someone. You get the idea of David against Uriah.

Of what David wanted to do to Nabal, the husband of Abigail. Blessed is he whose offense against a fellow Israelite, a fellow believer, a fellow child of God. Blessed is he whose Pesha is forgiven.

Whose sin... What word do you think that is? Chata. Whose self-neutralizing sin, whose wandering from the way, whose debility is covered. Covered over.

God doesn't look at us and see a wanderer. He doesn't look at us and see a rebel. He doesn't look at us and see a directionless, rudderless, fruitless believer.

That's covered over. We are covered with the blood. We are branded as someone who belongs to God, who does have a purpose, who is doing the right thing.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity. What do you think the word is there? To whom the Lord does not impute again.

He's not going to bring a penalty on our head. Guiltiness. And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

We have these three aspects of our sin handled, covered, rectified by the plan of God, by the sacrifice that was looked forward to in the Old Testament, that is looked back upon in the church age. It handles all of these aspects of sin. It covers us.

It forgives us. It relieves us of the burden of guilt and the accompanying judgment. When I kept silent, my bones grew old.

Keeping silent is a form of denial. It is a form of deceit. It is not recognizing and acknowledging the truth.

And we are either in the truth or we are in error. We are either of the truth or we are deceitful. Jeremiah 17.9, the heart is deceitful.

More than anything. Desperately wicked. Day and night your hand was heavy upon me.

My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged, verse 5, my sin to you. What word do you think is used there? Kata.

What is the first step? We don't come to God because we see somebody else weeping that we have hurt. And we say, oh, I better go to God because look at the damage to this person. We shouldn't be looking at the penalty and saying, I better go to God because I don't want the big hammer to fall on my head.

We look at our sin in the sense of kata. It is my change in direction. It is my loss of focus.

It is my drifting from the purpose. It is my driving up over the curb. It is my exiting the straight road.

It is my turning aside from the straight gate that leads to life. That's my fault. Not a focus on the penalty.

Not a focus on the damage done to others. It is me, myself, and I. My little personal trinity has screwed up. I acknowledge my sin to you.

And my iniquity, what's our word? My awane, my blood guiltiness, my penalty worthiness, I have not hidden. I said I will confess what? My peshai, my pesha, my offenses against others. Isn't this a fruitful study? Think about when we apply 1 John 1.9, we don't say, Oh Lord, I worried.

Oh Lord, I gossiped. Oh Lord, I was bitter. Oh Lord, I was angry.

We can think about the aspects of our sin. Oh Lord, I lost my focus. I drifted from my purpose.

I altered course and got off the straight path. I lost sight of my treasure in heaven, my citizenship in heaven, my opportunities in the millennial kingdom and beyond, my representation of the Lord Jesus Christ. I lost my sense of identity as a believer.

That's my first and foremost problem here. And I have brought penalty upon myself. I am penalty worthy.

I have done awane. There is a discipline and a judgment that comes on those who are faithless as servants, who are disloyal as sons, who say, I want my inheritance and I'm going to go to a distant land and spend it and be frivolous and profligate. And I have hurt others around me.

People who flippantly and blithely claim 1 John 1.9 and say, Oh Lord, I told a lie. Oh Lord, I gossiped. I did this.

I did that. And go on. Have not examined these three aspects of sin.

David brings them all before the Lord in his prayer of confession. I acknowledge my sin to you. My katah.

I will confess my awane to the Lord. I will confess my peshah to the Lord. I have not hidden my awane.

I will confess my peshah. And look at what he says in the last part of verse 5. You forgave the awane of my katah. The penalty that comes from drifting away from my purpose.

From my missing the mark. You have taken away the penalty. For this cause, notice he doesn't say what happened to the offended third parties.

You think about old Uriah. Not much we can do for Uriah now, is there? He has suffered the

results of David's transgression. David's peshah.

For this cause, everyone who is godly shall pray to you in a time when you may be found. Surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him. And again, who is the him here? The one who is godly will pray in a time when God may be found.

This flood of great waters, whatever the circumstances that are stirred up. I think about the fish when they clean the tank and all of this gunk gets stirred up and you can hardly see through the water. That's not going to distract the person as they come to God.

That's not going to deflect. You're not going to get caught up in the details and caught up in the conflict and caught up in the tribulation, the turbulence. They will not come near him.

Also, the flood waters in the sense of discipline and penalty that might come on. They will not come near him. David says, You are my hiding place.

You will preserve me from trouble. You will surround me with songs of deliverance. Then God speaks after the Selah.

I will instruct you, says the Lord. I will teach you in the way you should go. I will guide you with my eye.

How can God do that? We cannot receive instruction. We cannot be taught in the way that we should go. We cannot be guided with God's eye unless we have addressed these aspects of our sin.

Unless we understand what God does when He forgives. Do not be like the horse or the mule that have no understanding. Must be harnessed with bed and bridle, else they will not come near.

We have to judge ourselves, lest we be judged. We have to take a look in our heart. We have to take the initiative here and go to God while He may be found.

Israel didn't do that. God says your iniquities have separated between you and your God. Your penalty bearing sins have separated between you and your God.

Penalty and penalty and penalty is built up, built up and built up. And you did not come for forgiveness. You did not come for removal of that penalty.

Your iniquities have separated between you and your God and what? Your sins have hid His face from you. You have turned yourself in a direction where you can't see His face. And that's why He doesn't hear.

He doesn't even talk about what they've done to each other. He says you have committed these penalty bearing offenses and you have turned away from God. You can't see His face.

He can't hear you. Many sorrows will be to the wicked, but he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous.

And shout for joy all you upright in heart. Notice the righteous and upright in heart are not those that never sin, that never offend, that never commit an iniquity. They are those who know how to be restored, who know how to be cleansed, who know how to be forgiven, and who care enough to seek the Lord and claim that mercy.

That makes us righteous. That makes us upright in heart. Do not go back and revisit old sins, old iniquities, old offenses that you have taken to the Lord and He has forgiven and cleansed.

They are gone. They are removed. They are history.

Nothing in the present, no bad circumstance, no pressure, no difficulty, no bad experience has anything to do with your past sins if you have taken them to God, if you have acknowledged them, and if He has cleansed us. Forget it. It is not the case unless you are bearing a grudge, unless we refuse to forgive one another.

Now, you are liable for everything that has ever gone wrong. It's really not worth judging and refusing to forgive one another, is it? We open the Pandora's box that God was removing as far as the East is from the West. One of the most serious things we can do as a believer is to bear a grudge, is to refuse to forgive, is to hold something against someone and no longer give them the benefit of the doubt.

Now, we can be careful. If you know someone has a pattern of sin, you can be careful. You don't have to embrace them and enfold them in the arms of your fellowship and so on.

But do not inflict a penalty. Do not set yourself up as judge and decide that you will do the Awaiting thing on them. The Apostle says, Mark those who cause divisions and steer clear of them.

That's not inflicting a penalty. That is self-preservation. That is touch not the unclean thing.

Put a distance between yourself and those who breed.