

Psalms 19-02-07b

Let's resume our study now in Psalm 32. I really enjoyed our special music tonight. That is my father's favorite song, and he is going to really enjoy hearing that performance one of these days.

But let's pick up now. We've had several wonderful reminders, even musically, of the blessedness that comes from forgiveness and cleansing that is only God's to give. We cannot forgive ourselves.

The greatest love in life is not loving ourselves, and the greatest forgiveness is no forgiveness if you're just forgiving yourself. Even the forgiveness of others is inadequate to remove what can only be taken away by God's divine power, God's supernatural grace, and he does it on a basis. I've heard over and over again, I read an article in preparation for the study this week, there's a whole school of thought that says, even in Christian circles, and very much so in atheist circles, it says, well, you know, your whole God concept with this blood sacrifice and atonement and all the rest of it, if God was omnipotent, he should just forgive sin.

What's the need? Why all of this faldereal with guilt and sacrifice and blood being shed without the shedding of blood is no remission? If God's omnipotent and I sin, he should just say, I forgive it. Just forget it. What's interesting is that they will point to examples in scripture where this seems to have taken place, where God just says, I forgive based on nothing.

Back to the parable of the steward that owed the great sum, and the master says, we don't have to slay a lamb, we don't have to have anybody third party make a payment. I forgive the debt. And based on nothing.

And so the argument is, this is all a big human ploy to have religious authorities in power and forcing sacrifices and bending people to their will. It's always a boogeyman plot in somebody's mind. But in reality, there is a basis for forgiveness and there is a requirement for justice to be satisfied and for the penalty to be paid.

So what about these? And I could point to several passages, you can find them if you look. There's Old Testament and New Testament cases where without any penalty or sacrifice, God just says, I'm going to overlook that. Here's the thing, and we've covered this, especially when we went through Romans.

Sin is hydra-headed and it is multifaceted. And it does a number of things all at once. And you think about the work of Christ on the cross that we summarize under the three R's, redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation.

It's just like arithmetic as a third R. You've got to get the second letter there to make your R's work. But it is a helpful memory aid. There's actually more than that that went on in the cross, but it's a convenient summary.

Redemption, reconciliation, propitiation. And each of them has a direction. Propitiation is satisfaction of God's requirements.

Propitiation. Reconciliation is manward. It draws us back to God.

It solves a problem that man has. Your iniquities separate between you and your God. Well, the wall of separation has been broken down.

Be reconciled to God. Paul says, we are ministers of reconciliation. Be reconciled.

Come to God. Don't let there be a separation, a division between you. And redemption is sinward.

Redemption means that sin, in essence, holds us captive. If we are slaves to sin, sin is our master. It owns us.

And to be purchased out of the slave status in sin, sin has to be bought off. There is a price that has to be paid so that sin no longer has a claim. And so it is more complex than God just saying, oh, you sinned? Well, I forgive you.

In the same way that if I, in the course of stealing somebody's gold crown, yank it out of their head and create bleeding that leads to their death, I can't just come back and return the crown and I've reversed off the act that I committed. It had all kinds of consequences, intended or unintended, that aren't reversed by simply giving back what I stole. If you steal somebody's payroll in their business and they can't pay their employees and they have to shut down their business and orders are unfulfilled and it domino effects out and there's all kinds of consequences from one action, simply reversing that action can't fill in all of the consequences.

Well, in the same way, God's simply saying, okay, I forgive. What does it mean, I forgive? Is God now going to actively roll back all of the consequences of that sin? The guilt, the iniquity that it creates, the status of being an offender, I am one who has perpetrated this act. I didn't used to be an offender, but now I really kind of made me grind my teeth a little when through, in my mind, no fault of my own, I became at fault in an accident last year, backing up after checking my mirrors and listening for my backup sensor and everything else and I'm backing up and some gal tries to squirt around behind me, but unbeknownst to her, somebody else backed out and stopped her right behind me and before I could stop, I backed into her car.

Well, I'm at fault because I'm the moving vehicle and she stopped even though she should not have been there and shouldn't have tried squirting around an F-250 that had its backup lights on and was already coming out of its space, but she was in a hurry and there was a guy waiting for in the front of the store and she wanted to shoot down there real fast and she was frustrated because they'd driven all the way to Claremore looking for a part that Walmart didn't have and it was the second store they checked and she was impatient and frustrated and it doesn't change the fact that I now have the first blemish on my driving record in 43 years because of this gal and it still chaps me, but the idea is that I am now forever a person who is

an at-fault driver for whatever reason. I didn't used to be and now I am and I can't reverse it off. I can't pay a fine.

I can't have it expunged. Anybody that knows anything says, well, you know, you did back into a lady with your F-250 and I have to say guilty is charged. Let me tell you all of the extenuating circumstances, but I'm still guilty.

I am a person who has committed this offense and certain offenses can disqualify you. You can commit felonies and never can you vote. Never can you own a weapon.

Never can you as a sex offender live within a certain distance of a school and there are restrictions and it doesn't matter if you've served your prison time. It doesn't matter if the penalty has been paid. It doesn't matter what you do.

There are concomitant and aggregated effects of sin and it is simplistic and ignorant in the technical sense of the term. It is an unknowing statement to say, God ought to be able to just wave his hand and say, it's forgiven. Simple forgiveness.

What you might do is say, God will declare that he himself is propitiated, but you've not been redeemed. You haven't been delivered from the power that you have granted to sin over your life. It's like once you've taken these powerful hallucinogenic drugs, it changes something in your brain and you are now somebody who has taken those drugs and who has made an alteration in your brain that cannot be undone and God could say, I forgive you for taking the drugs.

It doesn't change what happened to you and it doesn't change what you might have done under the influence of those drugs or what you did in order to afford those drugs. There's a whole complex. So what are we saying? Forgiveness.

When God is able to cover and forgive sin, he has authority to do so because he is the arbiter. He defines what sin is and he defines what the satisfaction for sin is and there's no higher court of appeal. If God says this is what it takes, you do not have the authority to say, well, I don't think it ought to take that.

You didn't define sin. You're not the arbiter of righteousness. Who died and made you? God.

God is the one who defines sin. His character and his absolute righteousness are themselves intrinsic to the definition of righteousness and what is not righteousness. And you can't shake your tiny mouse fist in his face and say, I don't think it ought to be that way.

You can try that, but it's absurd. God has defined these things and it is instructional. Why does God attach a blood penalty for sin? If he was a gracious and loving God, why didn't he just say, oh, it's a peccadillo, it's a minor thing, it's a misdemeanor, we'll just, come here, I'll wrap you on the knuckles, or okay, come here, my son, let me wrap you on the knuckles, and it's a mild thing.

Why is the penalty so severe? Why is it so tragically linked with death? Because sin is no small thing. Look at what it did to heaven when the original sin was committed. The five I wills and a third of the angels had to be cast out of heaven because it's kind of like a few cancer cells are no big deal.

So you got a few. Why do they take extra stuff around a tumor? Because you can't afford to have a single one of those things survive. They metastasize, they spread, they are death.

And you can say, well, but don't they have a right to live? They're living, they've got DNA, they're a part of my body. No, sorry, it's life and death. And the importance of that is underscored.

God teaches us about the tragic consequences and the awful nature of rebellious sin by attaching to it a severe penalty. Why do we have felony crimes and misdemeanor crimes? Why isn't everything a felony? Why isn't everything a misdemeanor? Because we try to communicate the fact that some of these, like selling vast amounts of classified information to our enemies is a much bigger deal than running a stop sign. You have harmed many more people.

You have put our agents and our intelligence personnel at the risk of or caused their death. And this has happened with people who have leaked classified information and all these people that want to be sympathetic to those that have been whistleblowers and try to romanticize them as all their heroes. They're exposing secrets.

There are generally good reasons why we have those secrets. And one of them is you are potentially and in reality causing the death of people who are serving their country in a clandestine manner. Because when you expose those secrets, one thing leads to another, and maybe their name wasn't in the file, but they suddenly turn up dead because they've been outed.

Somebody put two and two and two together and got six and they're dead. And it's because you thought you were going to be a crusader. You had the smarts.

You knew what you were doing in telling this secret. Somebody's dead. Well, we make that treason a death penalty offense in the United States for a reason.

Better you die as a warning to others to not put dozens, if not hundreds or thousands of lives on the line. You can start a war by revealing secrets. You don't have the clearance.

You don't have the training. You haven't been elected into office. You haven't assembled a staff.

You don't know what you're doing when you go on this idealistic crusade. And I have seen up close and personal what happens when intelligence is compromised. I have been in places where people got shot and got killed because information was not properly handled, because decision makers were misinformed.

Information was withheld. Information was twisted. Information was colored.

And as a result, you have 243 sailors and marines dead. And people who didn't know what they were doing are accountable for that. So God has to communicate to us.

That's one of the reasons we have human history. That's one of the reasons God tolerates sin. I've had people actually make the argument to me that, well, you know, if God's God, it's His fault that there's even sin, because He could easily stop it.

He could stop suffering. Just as somebody's about to pull the trigger in a mugging, He could just make the gun not fire. He could squelch any harmful behavior.

Somebody's about to come at their child with a lit cigarette and burn them. He could just stop them. Anybody that's going to starve, He could just rain manna on them.

Well, excuse me, but to think that God exists simply so that you can live a harm-free life and never see anything that troubles you is to vastly underestimate God's power, His plan, and His purpose. And He's got a purpose that's far bigger than just alleviating suffering. Of course He could make a perfect world, and He's going to.

But He's going to populate it with free will creatures. And the reason they can live there is they have already seen, been exposed to, and have built up a resistance antibodies, if you will, to sin, because they've been exposed and they've suffered. You get a shot, you get a vaccination, you feel bad for a few days.

That momentary light affliction keeps you from getting polio or measles or some other horrible disease. You suffer a little bit now and you don't die from something later. And the same thing with children.

That's why we have vaccination and inoculation. Well, that is a sort of a rough and feeble analogy to what God is doing with sin here. But He's got to attach a sufficient penalty to it so that we take it seriously.

Well, because it is serious and because it is severe, and the punishment and the penalty is actually symbolic of the actual harm that we cannot even comprehend. That's what makes forgiveness. That's what makes covering.

And that's what makes lack of reckoning such a gift, such a thing to celebrate. People are grateful for the rest of their life if someone saves their life, someone snatches them out of harm's way or delivers them. I saw somebody thanking a responder who got on the scene and kept them from dying.

You see this all the time. And they say, I wouldn't be here. Look, I've got a family.

I've got children. They would either be orphans or not even be here if you had not acted and put yourself in harm's way to save my life. And I'm grateful.

Well, it doesn't begin to touch the gratitude we have to God for delivering us from sin, not

reckoning to us iniquity. And because of that, we have eternal life. We have the potential to live in that kingdom where righteousness dwells.

Righteousness is at home. So it's a big deal. And David celebrates it here in Psalm 32.

He says, this bearing away, this forgiveness, this covering over, and this lack of reckoning, of guilt and consequence, penalty, is based on something. There is a condition. There is a necessary step to be the man to whom God does not impute iniquity.

What is the necessary step? Look at verse three. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night, your hand was heavy upon me.

My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Now, some people have claimed that there's a problem and maybe a missing phrase. I think Robert Alter is one of them here because he says, well, the poetic balance is off.

And there should be another phrase here because it doesn't make sense. When I kept silent, my bones grew old, and then there ought to be something that my body wasted when I was groaning all day long. Well, when I was silent, I was sick.

And when I groaned, I was sick. It didn't matter whether I was silent or whether I groaned. Either way, I had a bad consequence.

But I don't agree. What he's talking about here is when I kept silent, and you can put in parentheses here, about my sin. When I kept silent and did not acknowledge my sin, God's hand was heavy on me and forced me to speak in another way.

If I wasn't going to speak out my sin, then I'm going to speak out my groaning. I'm speaking one way or another because God's in his heaven, and I can either acknowledge my sin, receive forgiveness, and now my tongue can sing praise. My mouth can speak of his glory.

But we're going to speak one way or another. And if we do not first acknowledge our sins, we're going to be speaking in groans of suffering. This, by the way, is the same word that we use back in Psalm 22, verse 1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why are you so far from the sound of my groaning? And this is groaning because of the ongoing presence of sin, isn't it? You think about the Lord Jesus on the cross.

Why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from my groaning? Because the Lord Jesus is in the presence of and is having to bear unforgiven, uncovered, reckoned iniquity. God reckoned him to be sin for us who knew no sin. It's the reckoning of God.

God imputed our sin to Christ. He reckoned it to him so that we could have his righteousness reckoned to us. It's accounting.

It is how God views it. And it required bearing. Somebody has got to bear that penalty.

Why? When you look at the awfulness of the penalty and what Christ went through, why did he do that? You say, well, God loved us and wanted to deliver us from sin. Well, but why couldn't God have just skipped the cross and just said, I am such a big and gracious and loving God, I'm just going to overlook all of those sins and I'm just going to enfold you in my glory and I'm just going to gather you to myself. Well, what's to keep somebody from casually going off and doing transgression? What's to keep somebody from even trying to not step across the line or miss the mark, as kata'a means.

It's often said to mean miss the mark, to fall short, all of sin and come short of the glory of God. Shot the arrow and it didn't have the power to get to the target. You just didn't make it.

You kicked a field goal and it didn't make it across the goal line. The idea here is that we have to understand through the penalty, the penalty is a teaching tool. And you think, wow, that's a pretty severe teaching tool.

Well, look at the suffering in the world. Look at starvation and famine and oppression and man's humanity to man in dictatorships that kill hundreds of millions of people. Stalin, Pol Pot, Mao Tse Tung and Hitler and all the rest of these.

How could God allow, there can't be a God if all of these things go on. No, it's precisely because there is a God that these things go on. So when the law comes and by the law comes the knowledge of sin, as Paul says in Romans, now sin becomes sin indeed because it is contrasted with what ought to be.

And the severity, the seriousness of it. Somebody says, well, you know, I've got this little, uh, they tell me I've got a cancer here and, uh, I don't know if I'm going to have anything done about it or not, but, uh, there, there's a singer. I don't remember her name, but, uh, I think I mentioned it once before.

Uh, she got one of these little melanomas or something on her back and a very talented, very beautiful, uh, singing voice and, and a presentation. And, and she is the favorite of a lot of professional singers, but she got a little melanoma, but she didn't really do anything about it. Well, a few months later, she was dead because she didn't take it seriously.

And she had the most aggressive, fast moving form of this. And they moved heaven and earth and they could not save her because it just got away from them. These flesh eating bacterias, uh, if somebody doesn't know that that's what they've got and it's not treated seriously, it can get ahead of medical treatment and they cannot save you.

Um, I saw a guy that one of these, he had a rare, uh, form of one of these things and he lost all four limbs and his lower jaw, the lower part of his face. They managed to save his life, but he's, he's, he's a quadruple amputee and has had extensive reconstructive surgery on what's left of his face because it just got ahead of them and they didn't realize the seriousness. We attach penalties to things to enhance people's respect for how serious they are.

And that's what God has done. And what amazes me about the work of Christ on the cross is his knowledge that that act of sacrifice is purely to, it's for our benefit in a teaching mode to communicate to us the severity of sin. Could God actually deal with sin a different way in the realms of heaven? Probably so.

It's not like God is under some higher law that says sin can only be paid for by sacrifice. God has set that standard to communicate to us how severe sin is, how cancerous and deadly it is, and its infection and the suffering that it causes is reflected in the penalty. And the Lord Jesus came and reflected that penalty in bearing it on the cross.

And he says, this penalty is as bad as the consequences of the unforgiven, unaddressed, unremediated sin. This is what sin does. The penalty is like the crime.

You take a life, by man shall your life be taken. You shed man's blood, by man shall your blood be shed. Why? Because you are showing how severe that crime is.

That's all the way back in Genesis 9. God gave that instruction to Noah, precedes the law of Moses. It's a lex talionis. You need to see in the infliction of a penalty the severity of the crime.

And that's why you had an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life. Well, if you want to know how bad unaddressed sin is, look at the cross. Because the penalty that Christ paid, which is unimaginably high, is what happens if God doesn't weed out sin, doesn't judge it and remove it and destroy it.

It has to be removed. It has to be destroyed. Well, we are all infected with it.

So how grateful can we be when it is removed, when it is borne away, when it is no longer credited to us, and when God raises us immortal and sanctified and purified? What a deliverance. It's incalculably great. So David is dwelling on that and reflecting on it here.

But I could not receive this wonderful blessing if I do not acknowledge my sin. And I kept silent. The penalty was in my bones.

The penalty was in my physical housing for my spirit. And when he talks about his bones, he's talking about the inmost self. This is the structure that makes you who you are.

The bones define the shape of your face. Your bones are your inmost structure. And there's a metonymy there that suggests that this is really your spirit.

It's what makes you who you are. My bones became decrepit, my groaning all the day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me.

And this is God saying, if you don't let me do my act of grace and forgiveness and cleansing, you are going to bear the consequence of this sin. It is going to metastasize and make you suffer. And it says, my vitality.

This is kind of like the sap in a tree and that which energizes and makes fruitful and healthy and vibrant and glowing. My zest, my inmost life was turned into the drought. The word drought there is plural.

And what it means is a dry ruin. It means both dryness and ruination. And because it's in the plural, what this says is it wasn't just one summer drought.

It wasn't just, well, we never got enough rain and the crop never came in. This crop has started to grow and then it got withered. And then maybe you had a little bit of rain and it started to come back and then there was another drought.

And the ruin has been cyclical and repetitive. It's one ruin after another. It's plural.

These are droughts, plural. These are drynesses and successive ruinations. Reading the Little House on the Prairie books and you've got Laura Ingalls' father planting crops and later on you have her daughter's husband, Manly, planting crops.

And these guys are out there working themselves to the bone. Manly gets a problem where he can barely walk and he's staggering around out there trying to get these crops to come in. And one summer there's not enough rain and they shrivel and die.

And the next time there's a hailstorm and they're blasted into pulp. And then there's a fire that sweeps through. There's just one thing after another.

It's multiple ruminations. And year after year something happens and they can never get ahead. You look at the tragedy and the helplessness of being subject to forces beyond your control.

Well, that's how David says, my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. And then there's selah. Selah comes from the verb.

We don't know exactly what selah means. And we've talked about this before. Does it mean take a rest and have an instrumental break? Selah means something that lifts up.

It's used of building a highway. And you put a maim on it and change the vowels a little bit. And it is the word for a highway.

It's a raised highway. Raise up a highway. Put it up on bank so that it won't wash away and so that it will stick out and be easily traversable.

It'll smooth out the hills and valleys. Raise a highway. Selah.

And so selah is somehow related to that word. It could mean raise up the accompaniment. It could mean come back and do it again.

It could be like a colon in our sheet music that says go back and repeat. Play that again. Go back

and think about it again.

Whatever it is, it definitely causes us to pause and reflect on what has just been said. And so David says, look, don't just blow over this. Let me tell you what it's like when sin is present and forgiveness is absent.

When iniquity is present and you are under the due and proper punishment from God, your bones crumble. You've got no life. A lot of us have days, could have even been today, where we just don't have any joy day vive.

You know, your battery's drained and you forgot to put your phone on the charger. Well, you forgot to put your body on the charger. You wake up in the morning and you're at like two percent.

And it's like, well, I've got a whole day to go through here and I barely got enough gumption to roll out of bed. Well, what if your whole life is that way? And you look around and there's just nothing. There's no bright spot.

There's nothing to look forward to. Nothing to, no light. No, no.

It's all dismal. David says, that is what it's like when I did not acknowledge my sin. And sometimes when we feel that way spiritually, it's time to look and see if we've got some unconfessed sin, if we've been lackadaisical or sloppy about examining ourselves and coming before God and saying, I need your forgiveness.

I need your removal of your heavy hand on me. It could be that this darkness around me is designed to bring me back to the throne of grace and to throw me back on your mercy and your divine power that is the only recourse for the sin with which I am infected and with which I am surrounded. And you can't take it lightly.

David says, go back and read that again. Think about that again. Lift that up a little bit in your estimation.

It's important. So then verse five, I acknowledged my sin to you and acknowledged here that this is a really good English translation. I don't get to say that much, but this is really good because Yadah is the Hebrew verb that means to know.

Well, this is the causative. The hyphel is the causative stem. And this is I caused to be known.

Now, God knows everything. God already knows that we've sinned. But when we cause it to be known, this is your homo logeo.

We confess. And so to acknowledge, I made it known. I brought it into the open.

I brought it out and brought it up here. God knew already. It's kind of like parents have all been through this.

You got little rascals and you know somebody did something they weren't supposed to do. But you stand there with your folded arms until one of them confesses and acknowledges, what's our rule? What did you do? What did I say was going to happen if that rule gets broken? And you've got to get them to say it back to you because this teaches and reinforces their idea that I am responsible. I am accountable.

I made this decision and it's my fault. Then the parent has the option of inflicting consequences or being merciful. But it's a whole lot easier to be merciful if there is an acknowledgement of wrongdoing.

So I made known my sin to you. And this is still sin in the kata'at sense. The degree of my complicity in it happening, I could have been trapped, snared, led, influenced.

I certainly have some responsibility, but the rebellion side of this is not in view. And my iniquity, I have not hidden. Not only do I acknowledge that I am in the wrong here, but the blameworthiness and the deservedness of punishment, I also acknowledge.

I also have not made a secret of. I know what is due this behavior. And I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.

And you forgave the iniquity of my sin. It's a little complication there with the, I said, I will confess. This is more like, I said my confession.

I said my transgressions. I recounted them. It's not, let me quote myself here, but it's difficult to straighten out.

I'm not going to bother with it. You get the idea. And you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

You obviated, you removed the blameworthiness and the penalty. That's what the iniquity is. I am not expecting the judgment that this sin deserves.

You forgave it when I acknowledged it. For this cause, everyone who is godly shall pray to you in a time when you may be found. What does this mean? Is there a time when God cannot be found? Yes, there is.

Now is the appointed hour. Now is the day of salvation. You have Hebrews quoting the Psalms.

Today, if you hear his voice, harden not your heart. There is a time when the ark door is open and there's a time when the door is shut. And the time to go to the Lord and make this confession and acknowledgement is sooner, not later.

Making excuses, rationalizing, God doesn't want to hear from me today. I better suffer and stew in my own juice. No, you need to respond while the way into the throne room is open.

Surely a flood of great waters, they will not come near him. And I think the idea here is the flood of great waters, the original flood of great waters was a judgment on sin, right? Noah

floating the ark with the other seven souls. If you wait till the flood comes and then you confess, sorry, ark door is shut.

Seek him while he may yet be found. Call upon him while he is near. And if you dally, what you're saying is, I don't consider this very important.

I don't think sin is very significant. I don't think it's a metastasizing cancer. I don't think that it is a threat to my very life and my relationship with God and others.

I don't think it's any big deal. I'm not that bad a person. I do a lot of good things.

And you minimize what God has emphasized. You may pass the window of opportunity. We need to think the way God thinks about sin.

It's serious. It is not to be tolerated for one second longer once we're aware and know enough to go before him and confess that we need to do it right then and not later. Because in a flood of great waters, they're not going to come near him.

By the time the flood comes, your cries of confession are too late and are likely to be falsely motivated. You're not doing it out of recognition. You're doing it out of desperation.

You are my hiding place. You shall preserve me from trouble. You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.

Selah. The hiding place is the ark. It's the cleft of the rock.

It is the place of safety, the secret place of the Most High, the shadow of the Almighty. And if God is for us, who can be against us? Other people may not forgive us. Other people may not overlook wrongs that we may deserve to be scrutinized for.

But God will preserve us from trouble and surround us with songs of deliverance if we are the righteous. Who is it that looks to him? Everyone who is godly. Those who are qesid.

This is qesid, loyal. Those who are in a loyalty covenant relationship with God. He is qesid.

They are qesid. He is loyally loving. We are loyally loving.

We return to God and throw ourselves on his mercy time and time again, as many times as it takes. If Jesus can tell Peter, don't forgive your brother seven times, but 70 times seven, well, I can tell you God's had to forgive me an awful lot more than that. But we can't be discouraged and give up on purging the next sin out of our life and having it be unreckoned, covered, forgiven.

However many times it takes, that's how many times we've got to do it. How many times are you going to go back and have cancers removed? As many times as it takes so you don't die, right? It's not like, well, I've already had 57 removed. This 58th one, I've just tired of messing

with it.

Well, do you want to die? No. So number 58, burn the thing off, lop it off, cut it out, whatever. You are my hiding place.

You will preserve me from trouble. You'll surround me with songs of deliverance. Let's think about that, silah.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will guide you with my eye. And you get the idea that this is God speaking here.

We have a change of pronouns. You have the capital M in my and I think it's valid here. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, having no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.

And the idea here is, I think Robert Alter actually translates harnessed as adorned. They have to be adorned. They have to have these be put on.

And what's great is if you can speak to the horse, if you can nudge the horse with your knee and it is in tune with you, it responds to you. Great horse, horsemen combinations. They know each other so intimately.

The person mounted on the horse never has to tug on the reins. They never have to put force on the bit. They nudge, they lean.

And the horse knows what they want and the horse is so anxious to please its rider, its friend, its human benefactor that it is anticipating and trying to figure out, what does my rider want? Let me do that. And God says, let me guide you in that way. Let's be in harmony and in tune with our understanding so that I don't have to put a bit and bridle on you and yank your head so that you don't trample someone.

Many sorrows shall be to the wicked. Why are they wicked? We're all wicked. We all sin.

But trials come to those who do not have their transgressions forgiven. They do not have their sins covered. They are reckoned.

They are imputed with iniquity. They are due for punishment. They are due for consequences.

And they are blameworthy. Why are they blameworthy? Because there's been a way out offered and they do not take it. They don't consider it important.

They don't value it. They don't appreciate it. They're not thankful.

Think about Romans chapter 1, suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. Know him as God. Don't glorify him as God.

Aren't thankful. They become empty in their imagination and their futile hearts are darkened.

And they are turned over to the consequences, to the iniquity.

And they dwell in it and live in it. He who trusts in the Lord, mercy chesed shall surround him. Mercy will surround him.

You may still have to go through consequences, but you are padded with God's grace. You are insulated with God's mercy. God's not always going to undo all of the consequences of our mistakes and shortcomings, but he does enfold us with his grace.

And cursing can be turned to blessing. And what Joseph's brothers meant for evil, God turned into good. He didn't excuse selling their brother into slavery and lying to their father, but he worked it together for good, to everyone's benefit, to everyone's salvation.

So be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart. Why can we be righteous and upright? Because God has forgiven. God has covered.

God has removed the reckoning of iniquity from us. That's why we're righteous. That's why we're blameless.

And it's a wonderful thing to celebrate. And it's a great reminder of how important it is to expunge sin in our lives by availing ourselves of God's grace. And it involves verbal confession of our sins.

You remain silent, your bones are going to rot. David says, I've tried it. He says, don't try this at home.

I've tried it. My bones rotted. When I confess my sin, God forgave.

God cleansed. And you've got to do it while he is near. You've got to do it when he may be found.

Well, good exhortation and encouragement for us. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for your grace, for the lengths to which you have gone in teaching us about sin and righteousness and judgment.

You've given us the Holy Spirit to impress these things on our hearts. And we pray that as we reflect on this psalm, that we will be motivated, we will be encouraged, we will be warned. And as a result, we can live our lives more fully in the right way, walking the right path, reflecting your righteousness, drawing others to you as they see your goodness in us.

And we can be blessed ourselves and we can be a blessing to those around us. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.