

A HIDING PLACE WHEN WE ARE IN TROUBLE

Psalm 32: 1-11 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

One of the mysteries of life relate to people who have faced the awful reality of an amputation. Recently, I read about a man who had his right arm amputated. However, years following the amputation, the man reported regular bouts with something called “phantom pain.” Although his physical right arm is missing, the man’s brain still remembers the past pain in his arm and it regularly sent out “phantom pain” signals. The doctor decided the only way to help the man was to have him face a mirror and tell himself, to tell his brain that his right arm was gone. In this way, this course of therapy slowly got the man better and today, he testifies he is free of the “phantom pain.” Most of us can relate to this man’s predicament spiritually. After we have received Jesus, our sin and its penalty are gone—buried in the depths of the deepest sea. Jesus cried out His death sentence over our sin and its guilt at Calvary. Jesus died to atone for our sin and cried out in victory, “It is finished!” Yet, even after we are saved, most of us have experienced not always feeling forgiven and free of sin. We still suffer guilt and self-condemnation—which is a kind of spiritual “phantom pain.” James 1: 23 tells us to face ourselves in the mirror of God’s Word. I John 3: 19, 20 tells us how to deal with our spiritual “phantom pain.” We read there, “By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before God. For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and He knows everything.” As we believe in God’s full and complete forgiveness and His divine forgetfulness of our sins, we can be healed and extricated from the trap of “spiritual phantom pain” and guilt for sins we have repented of and been forgiven for. We can be set free to walk in the light and in the grace of Christ. Beloved, if you are forgiven, God wants you to walk in confidence and not in fear, in holiness and not in worthlessness.

As we come to Psalm 32, this mighty psalm of David, know for sure he was not suffering from spiritual “phantom pain.” Verses 3 and 4 are graphic. “For when I kept silent (about my sin), my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. (Selah—Think of that! Pause and reflect) Psalm 6: 6 is even more graphic. “I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping.” When I ponder forgiveness and pardon, I remember a date in America’s history that many of us remember, September 8, 1974. In a controversial executive action, President Gerald Ford pardoned his disgraced predecessor, former President Richard Nixon for any crimes he may have committed or participated in while in office. President Ford later defended this action before the House Judiciary Committee, explaining that

he wanted to end the national divisions created by the Watergate scandal. The Watergate scandal erupted after it was revealed that President Richard Nixon and his aides had engaged in illegal activities during his reelection campaign--and then attempted to cover up evidence of wrongdoing. With impeachment proceedings underway against him in Congress, President Nixon bowed to public pressure and became the first American president to ever resign. At noon on August 9, 1974, President Nixon officially ended his term, departing with his family in a helicopter from the White House lawn. Minutes later, Vice President Gerald R. Ford was sworn in as the 38th president of the United States in the East Room of the White House. After taking the oath of office, President Ford spoke to the nation in a television address, declaring, "My fellow Americans, our long national nightmare is over...I feel that former President Richard Nixon and his loved ones have suffered long enough...My conscience tells me clearly and certainly that I cannot prolong the bad dreams that continue to reopen a chapter that is closed. My conscience tells me that only I, as President, have the constitutional power to firmly shut and seal the book."

That day, forgiveness from the highest officer in the land was given, but that free pardon, though it preserved former president Nixon from imprisonment, did not free him from guilt or give him back the confidence of this nation. There is no earthly power great enough to forgive a man's sins and give him back not just a place, but an honorable place again. Forgiveness is not cheap, but neither does it have a price-tag that any man can pay for. The price of forgiveness was fully paid at the place of the Skull, Golgotha, when Jesus died on the cross for the sin of the world. The death of Jesus Christ is the only means of real forgiveness that is forever, for time and eternity. Today, as I preach this 32nd Psalm, I am moved to approach it from the diving board of verse 7. There I read, "You are a hiding place for me; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah!" Beloved, sin separates us from God and sin immediately creates a desire to hide. There are two ways to hide as sinners, and for that matter, there are two ways to hide, as born again believers, when we know we have sinned. One of these ways to hide is hopeless, and the other is our only source of hope forever. (1) The first way to hide is HIDING IN SIN FROM GOD and the second (2) is HIDING IN GOD FROM SIN. This psalm speaks to both hiding places clearly. May God help us all today to leave our first, natural hiding place, hiding in sin from God, as Adam and Eve did, and as David did, to find God is our hiding place, a place where we can daily be hiding in God from sin. I call us all today to consider at this very moment where we are hiding. We know we all have sinned and come short of God's glory. We all go astray as sheep, and we all are hiders. I ask you today, "Where are you hiding, beloved?"

ARE YOU HIDING IN SIN FROM GOD? (I.) Parts of Psalm 32 clearly portray the heart of a man, woman, boy or girl who is hiding in sin from God. I see a number of clear signs for all of us to know where we are hiding. Here are six indication signs that we are hiding in sin from God. Let me start with verse 9. “Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.” The first indication (1) **We are wild in sin, ungovernable, unwilling to surrender or be caught, tamed, and made obedient by a master, to surrender to God’s control.** I have enjoyed spending many days in my 36 and a half years in Rock Springs being out in the wild, searching for and photographing wild horses. They are so much fun to watch, but oh, what a bad example they give us of all of us as sinners, and most of us from time to time, as we as born again believers, still run wild from God in certain areas, wild in our pet sin, ungovernable, unwilling to be caught, unwilling to surrender to the Lord and unwilling to obey the Master’s voice, unwilling to come under His control. We hide in sin by running away from God and His voice. When God calls out to us, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3: 9), our only reply in our guilt and shame is as Adam—“I’m hiding.” A second sign we are hiding in sin from God is found in verse 10a. **(2) We are filled with many sorrows.** Have you ever watched a horse that loves his owner run up to the fence for the master to hold him, to pat his neck? What does a horse or a mule without understanding do? He runs away from anyone bent on making him obedient. If he is corralled, he fights the bit and bridle. He fights a cinch and a saddle. How do you know you are hiding in sin from God? You are ungovernable, unwilling to surrender to God’s control. You are angry and sorrowful with God, unwilling to stay near to Him and very sad.

(3) We are sadly silent, unwilling to confess and forsake our sin. Notice verse 3. “We keep silent about our sins, our bones dry up, we waste away, and our sorrow builds into a groaning all day long. We are dried up in our walk with God, and if we are unsaved, we are wasting away in sin. This word silent in the Hebrew, is **charash**. In context here, it means to be secretive, to be silent, to be deaf to the voice of God and dumb to obey His voice, we clam up and refuse to speak a word. When this happens, beloved, know you are hiding from God. In verses one and two, David speaks of what we are silent about as fourfold in nature. **(a) transgression--- peshah**, to revolt, to cross over the boundaries of love, respect, honesty and obedience, and to enter the forbidden land of wrong. **(b) sin—chataw-aw**—means to miss the mark and fall short of our aim that God has for us as His children. **(3) iniquity—awvone** which means perverse, crooked, distorted, a departure from the right way. **(4) deceit, guile – remiyah** means insincere, treacherous, deceitful. Beloved, when we are sadly silent about confessing our sin,

we are outside God's boundaries, in forbidden territory, missing God's will by a mile, departed far from the right way, treacherously deceitful. Are you sadly silent?

(4) We are oppressed under the heavy hand of God on us. Notice verse 3—our strength is withered and dried up in our sullen silence under the pressure of our guilt. The sap of our life is dried up. We need hydrated with the Word of God, in a steady daily drip as from an intravenous drip—drop after drop from the Word of God. Verse 4 speaks about us being under the great hand of God pressing down on us in His displeasure. God's hand is heavy on us day and night. The one hiding in sin from God is groaning, v. 4, literally roaring—**she-agah**. The more God's hand is heavy on us, the more we are grumbling, groaning, and literally roaring like a lion. When we are running from God—we strike out at people, our pastors, our spouse, and anyone who tries to speak to us. Find a man or woman ready to bite your head off, and you have uncovered someone hiding in sullen silence from God and experiencing His heavy hand of pressure to repent, and confess and forsake sin. **(5) We cover our iniquity.** Notice verse 5, “I acknowledged my sin to you and I did not cover my iniquity.” When we cover our iniquity, we are cherishing it, and unwilling to break with our past. **(6) We are prayerless when we are hiding in sin from God, flooded with our guilt.** Notice verse 6, “Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to You, Lord, at a time when You may be found. Surely in the rush or the flood of great waters, they shall not reach him.” The godly man is not hiding from God in prayerlessness. When we hide from God, it shows up first right here, in prayerlessness. Now I ask you, “Are you hiding in sin from God?” Are you wild, untamed, ungovernable, out of God's control, unwilling to surrender? Are you filled with sorrow, sadly and sullenly silent? Are you unwilling to confess and forsake your sin? Are you oppressed by God's heavy hand in your sullen silence, covering up your iniquity, and are you hiding in prayerlessness? There's a better place to hide for sinners who seek a hiding place, for believers who sin and seek a hiding place. Here's the second question?

ARE YOU HIDING IN GOD FROM SIN? (II.) That's where David finally turned to hide after finding hopelessness and sorrow hiding from God in sin. Notice verse 7. I love these words of David. “You are a hiding place for me; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah” In David's experience and in ours, Psalm 32 shows us six signs we are hiding in Jesus, hiding in God from sin. **(1) We have made a clear break with the past in honest, open, intimate confession before God.** Notice verse 5. “I acknowledged my sin to You, Lord.” The interesting word David used for acknowledged is yada. It means to let God know everything in the most honest, open, and intimate way. This word is used for the deepest intimacy of a husband and wife. Beloved, when

we are hiding in Jesus, hiding in God from sin, it is one of the most intimate actions we can do with the Lord. We run to Him and spill everything to Him. We hold nothing back. We tell the Lord everything. David says in verse 5, “I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah.” Beloved, when we are hiding in God from sin, He knows it all. We make a clean break of hiding one speck from Him. We may spend time working up to this clean break, but when we transparently and openly and honestly confess our sins, that is a sudden break with the past of hiding things from the Lord. Immediately, the sorrow and sadness begin to lift. God’s heavy hand of pressure and discipline is removed. Our strength is back. We are forgiven.

(2) We are on praying ground with God. Notice verse 6. “Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to You at a time when You may be found. Surely in a rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.” Don’t mistake the accusations of the enemy for the prodding heavy hand of the Holy Spirit. When is this time when the Lord can be found? The Lord can be found when we are crushed because of our sin; we are repentant and brokenhearted for our disobedience to the Lord. In Psalm 34: 18, David tells us, “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and He saves the crushed in spirit.” Just know that God can be found by a sinner who is brokenhearted and crushed over his sin who turns to God for salvation. Know as well that God is near to us as believers when we quit hiding from Him, and we run to hide in Him with our confession and our tears over our sin. We know we are hiding in God when we have made a clean break with the past in open confession, praying without being prodded, weeping before the Lord. We will have found the joy of singing and saying, “You are my hiding place.” When we hide in God from sin, what other indications are clear?

(3) We are happy, on shouting ground with God. David says in verse 7, “You surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah.” In the secret of God’s presence where our souls delight to hide, we are blessed. Notice verse 1 and 2. “Blessed is the one whose transgression is not hidden, but forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity—no perversity or treachery, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. Blessed means how very happy we are. Give up hiding from God and your spirit will turn from sadness to joy. Many years ago, the Moravians were translating the Bible into the language of the Eskimos. The Eskimos were honest enough to tell them they had no word for forgiveness or what forgiveness meant in their language. It was foreign to them. The Moravians worked and worked, searching for a word. Finally they put some Eskimo words together into a compound word. Their new word for forgiveness was **issumagijoujungnainermik**. The word looks impossible, but the Eskimos

now began to understand what Jesus wanted to do for them. Now they came to understand the cross as many came to know the Lord. This big, almost impossible word simply means, “not being able to think about it anymore.” That’s why we are on shouting ground with the Lord. We are hiding in Jesus, where we are not able to think about our sin any more. That’s shouting ground and you find the psalmist in verse 11 exalting in his Hiding Place. He ends the psalm saying, “Be ye glad. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!” There’s another way to know you are hiding in Jesus.

(4) We know we are hiding in God when His tone with us is tender and He guides us with His eye upon you. We also know when we are leaving our hiding place in God when His tone changes into solemn warnings, because of our obstinate disregard of God’s leading. Hiding in Jesus is interrupted when we disregard His leading and the look in the eyes of our watching Lord changes from approval to disapproval. Notice verses 8, 9. God is speaking, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding which must be curbed or checked with bit and bridle or it will not stay near you.” (Some translations say, or it will butt at you or come near you or come after you.) Those hiding in the Lord are done with obstinacy. **(5) We are preserved from trouble.** (Verse 7) Natsar is the Hebrew word for preserve. It means kept, guarded and watched over. We know we are out from under the covering of the Lord when we know His keeping of us is being temporarily held back, when God is saying, “Then go ahead and see the consequences of disobeying My will and My warnings. When we hide in God, we are kept. Verse 6 tells us that “in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach us.”

A sixth and last indication we are hiding in God from sin is **(6) We are trusting in the Lord, and knowing His steadfast love is surrounding us.** Notice verse 10. “Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord.” This last indication is pictured in the awesome hymn of William O. Cushing in 1876, called “Hiding in Thee.” He wrote, “O safe to the Rock that is higher than I, My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly; So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine would I be, Thou blest “Rock of Ages,” I’m hiding in Thee. Refrain: Hiding in Thee, hiding in Thee, Thou blest “Rock of Ages,” I’m hiding in Thee. 2. In the calm of the noontide, in sorrow’s lone hour, In times when temptation casts o’er me its pow’r; In the tempests of life, on its wide, heaving sea, Thou blest “Rock of Ages,” I’m hiding in Thee. 3. How oft in the conflict, when pressed by the foe, I have fled to my Refuge and breathed out my woe; How often, when trials like sea billows roll, Have I hidden in Thee, O Thou Rock of my soul.” Where are you hiding? Are you hiding from God in sin or hiding in God from sin?