

Introduction

- Many of you will know that last summer Mark, our youngest son, scalded his hands in hot bath water
 - before that happened I knew that running the hot water first and then cooling it down to the right temperature carried a degree of risk
 - I knew - it is one of those stock truisms parents trade! - that things can go badly wrong in seconds when your back is turned...
- But after he'd actually reached into the bath to retrieve a toy, overbalanced and planted his hands in the hot water - while I was in the room, looking out the window - I know those same facts in a completely different way!
 - I feel, appreciate, live with, have changed the way I behave because of that knowledge!
- I could give other examples:
 - the central place of people in Christian ministry.... but 5 years in Motherwell changed the way that I know and feel that (though I've still got loads to learn!)
 - etc, etc...
- This is Psalm that describes that kind of distinction in David's life:
 - he just know with his head that repentance and confession are critically important to faith and forgiveness
 - he feels and appreciates their absolutely critical and central role!

Blessed is he...

- (1) *Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (2) Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.*
- This is a bald statement of fact, addressed to fellow worshippers (not addressed to the Lord), but not particularly exploring personal experience
- Blessed are four things - but really one thing, that is the same thing
 - a variety of different, rich images!!
 - (1) forgiven; relational image, capturing the broken relationship sin brings between us and God... that is restored when sin is forgiven
 - (2) covered; like a stain covered over, or a hiding place whose entrance is covered
 - (3) not counted; like a debt relieved
 - (4) no deceit; thought is reality of sin is not lied over, it is out in the open, and it is therefore able to be dealt with by the Lord

Experiencing Sin... and Salvation!

- (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. <Selah> (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. <Selah>*
- This is a personal statement of experience, addressed to the Lord.
- Contrast at start is with the previously described blessings!
- Almost like they (vs.1,2) are a summary position that he has now come to understand in a deeper, fuller way...
 - ...but that to get to that understanding he looks back to times when he was "silent" about his sin
 - when there was "deceit" in his spirit (cf v.2) so that he did not confess/admit/face his sin
- When that was the state of his heart, his attitude, he certainly didn't enjoy blessing!
 - rather his strength was sapped, the Lord's hand was "heavy upon me"

- So much so that when he does confess (v.5) you can "feel" the pressure being released, the tension relieved, the relief and the blessing flooding in.
- This has been his experience; he is remembering before God what he doesn't just know theologically but experientially
 - talk again about this distinction in our experience, from just a head knowledge to something that is felt too; cf introduction. He knows now the reality of forgiveness

This is telling:

- we need to "not be silent": learn again and again the painful humility of confession and repentance
- this is very, very easy to drift away from; theologically we still believe in grace, in forgiveness, but in the way we live and order our lives we neglect to confess, to root out sin and lay it bare in all its shame and ugliness before the Lord
- and our bones waste away, we groan... faith becomes a duty and a burden, not a joy and delight!

Encouraging Others

- (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. <Selah>*
- In light of what he has not just head-knowledge known, but also experienced and lived, David encourages others to follow his footsteps, to learn the same lesson, to experience the same blessing
 - there is a sense of urgency... "while you may be found"
 - this opportunity to repent, to come into fuller relationship with God through Christ, is not going to last forever
 - life is limited...
- v.7 sees him finding even more rich images to express the blessing of sins forgiven, blessings that flow from repentance:
 - hiding place: security, safety
 - deliverance: danger now passed, defeated even, no longer over-shadowing life
- What was life like for David - fleeing for his life in the wastes of Israel at different times in his life; those are the images he draws on to describe the deliverance it is to have sins forgiven!

Instructing Others

- (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.*
- Again he wants to encourage other worshippers to take the same path he has taken:
 - the path of honest repentance
 - this time the "encouragement" is couched in terms of instruction & advice
 - and the contrast is with those who resist that counsel, who want to go their own way, who refuse to admit and face their sin and have it dealt with...
 - they are like stubborn animals, proud of their independence (particular danger today!), but not going anywhere useful!
- v.10 is like a summary of the divergent paths:
 - wicked are those who will not repent... leads them to non-blessing, to woe, to lack of forgiveness
 - on the other hand, those that trust the Lord are those who have confessed their sin, who have taken God at his word (eg 1 John 1:9, below) and know the Lord's love surrounding them

- "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Conclusion

- (11) *Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!*
- Consequence/result is rejoicing and gladness!
- Sometimes we want to learn about things, be challenged to do things, rather than remember to revel in what God has done for us, be assured of our salvation, and simply glory in the greatness of what God has already done for us!
- David, presumably reflecting back on particular personal experience, does just that!
 - revels in the love of God, experienced as he confesses his sin and knows the sweeping joy of forgiveness...
- **Are we....?**
 - ...are we still **coming to God in repentance**, not being silent, with no deception in our hearts? **Or have we relaxed into a spiritual-life-sapping lack of repentance?**
 - ...are we **reveling and rejoicing in the greatness and wonder of the gift of salvation?** Or have relaxed into taking our salvation for granted?