GROUP GUIDE

Forgiveness

The Shelter of God’s Forgiveness 1/29/2023

Psalm 51:1-19; Psalm 32:1-5

MAIN POINT

God’s forgiveness brings restoration and joy.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What did you hear in the sermon today that left an impression?

Were you able to memorize Psalm 27:1 this week? If so, say it together as a group.

When are some specific times you chose to trust in God as your stronghold this past week? How did doing so change your perspective on that situation?

In our session today, we will embrace the reality that all of us will fail. We will all fall short in obedience. Even in this, God is still our shelter. His forgiveness is ample and available to cover all our sin. From the failure and repentance of David, we will see that God’s forgiveness brings restoration and joy.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

As a group, read Psalm 51:1-19.

What is the tone of this passage? What do you think David was feeling?

Remember, as Philip said, David wrote this psalm after he had committed both adultery and murder, and then been caught in his lies.

Now as a group read Psalm 32:1-11.

How is the tone of this psalm different than the other one?

Philip helped us see the huge burden of unconfessed sin. When we choose to ignore sin, hoping it will go away, we are left with the burden of guilt and a deep sadness. But as we see in this psalm, God delights in forgiving and restoring.

Can you relate to David’s joy about experiencing God’s forgiveness and restoration? When is a time you have felt that?

What does that joy show us about God’s desire to forgive and restore? If God delights in doing so, why are we so slow to confess sin sometimes?

How is God’s forgiveness and restoration different than the kind of forgiveness we experience from other people? Why is it better?

As Philip told us, Psalm 32 unfolds God’s character of grace and love in front of us. In light of His desire and willingness to forgive and restore, we should be quick to confess whenever we find ourselves in sin.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How does not only confessing your sin to God, but also to others, relieve the guilt of sin?

Is there any unconfessed sin in your life right now that you need to share with a trusted friend, or accountability partner?

How do we become a safe place to confess sin?

How does knowing God is so quick to forgive change the way you approach forgiving others? Is there anyone you need to fully forgive right now because of how God forgives you for your sin?

PRAYER

Pray to close your group. Pray that your group would be quick to ask for forgiveness from God, and be quick to forgive others.

COMMENTARY

Psalm 51

51:1-6. After realizing the error of his sin, David appealed first to the mercy of God, even before he mentions his sin. No matter the monstrosity of sin, God has infinite amounts of mercy to lavish upon those with repentant hearts. He asks God to blot out his transgressions - this word in the original language is a judicial word. David realizes that he is guilty. He asks that his sin be wiped away and no record would appear against him, which is only possible through the mercy and grace of God. David was deeply sorrowful for his sin and committed to turn from it.

51:7-15. David asked God to clean him with hyssop, which was traditionally sprinkled into the water of purification and directly relates to the sprinkling of blood of Jesus in Hebrews 12:24. David asks God to not look upon his sin and to not remove the Holy Spirit from him. David knew that he had grieved the Holy Spirit by his sin, which had caused him to withdraw.

51:16-19. David recognizes that he cannot make satisfaction for sin, but that men despise what is broken but God does not. David knows that God alone can renew his spirit and redeem him through the forgiveness of his sin.

PSALM 32:1-5

32:1-2. King David began his psalm with a beatitude expressing the joy of God’s forgiveness. The expression what joy also could be translated, ‘the happiness of’ and further stresses David’s joy. David used several words to describe his failure to meet God’s holy standard. These words also may describe our own sinful situations. The terms that follow mirror those found in Psalm 51: Transgression denotes a defiant rebellion against God’s standard, one in which sinners deliberately cross the line God has established. Sin denotes falling short, missing the target, missing God’s righteous standard. David used the word covered to mean ‘covered once and for all,’ that is, God would never uncover David’s sin again.

David described the joy of the one who no longer had sin charged to his account. God had straightened out his life as David had lived in complete honesty. The joy of God’s forgiveness also had brought to David an inner change of attitude. Joy is a natural by-product of God’s forgiveness. Forgiveness should also help us grow in our desire to serve Him. Our human nature encourages us to pursue that which will make us happy, but happiness can be elusive and temporary. Real happiness does not come from fleeting circumstances, but from knowing God and the joy of His forgiveness. As we confess our sin and receive God’s forgiveness, we find true freedom and happiness. We also experience a greater desire to follow Him.

32:3-4. David described the terrible battle that occurred within his soul as he refused to confess his sin. He felt as if his body was wasting away due to the internal anguish of his groaning all day long. Outwardly, David tried to act as if nothing was wrong, but inwardly he knew his guilt. He also probably sensed that others around him knew of his sin. Almost certainly those within David’s ‘inner circle’ of leaders had figured it out. David’s inward groaning of spirit finally became too much for him to bear, and he experienced God’s forgiveness when he confessed his sin.

The Hebrew word translated evaporated also can mean ‘overturned’ and aptly describes the churning of David’s soul within him. The summer heat could be quite oppressive; temperatures might well reach 100 degrees or more in the wilderness of Judah and the Jordan Valley. Typically, no rain falls between May and September in Israel, so no relief is readily available from the heat. David’s sin sapped his spirit as the summer sun sapped his strength. The turning point came in David’s life when he acknowledged his sin against the Lord. He literally made known to God a sin God already knew, but David needed to confess it to experience the true joy of God’s forgiveness.

32:5. The Hebrew word translated hide also means ‘cover’ and is the same Hebrew word used in verse 1. David might try to cover his sin, but only God could permanently cover it and deal with it. The words I said reflect the decision David made. He would confess his rebellion to the Lord. For David and for us, confession is more than admitting our sin. It involves seeing sin as God sees it and turning from it in repentance. The words You forgave me emphasize God’s personal role in securing David’s forgiveness.