Delighting in Forgiveness: Jesus and Psalm 32

**Intro: The burden of unforgiveness…**

**I. The Context (Background, Form, and Structure) of Psalm 32**

- Originally a “maskil” (a song) used in some form of Hebrew worship

- “Psalm 32 goes beyond the assurance of a pardon, in to a celebration of restoration” Beth Tanner

- A glimpse of how an ancient believer understands atonement and forgiveness

- Conventional Outline of Psalm 32:

Vs 1-2 What forgiveness feels like language meaning “a life of happy” which includes elements beyond positive circumstances..

Vs 3-5 The weight of sin, the burden of unforgiveness sin has a physical, grueling, heavy handed influence over us…

Vs 6-7 Celebratory joy “therefore..” God’s ongoing forgiveness allows us a mindset not available to anyone else

Vs 8-9 Imploring others to seek forgiveness language from wisdom lit..

Vs 10-11 Call to rejoice contrast between sorrows and hesed

**II. The Concept of the Covering (Psalm 32:5)**

- Psalm 32 is “looking back” to the concept of atonement and covering in Genesis 3:21

- Psalm 32 will “appear again” when quoted in Romans 4:7-8 as:

a. Paul explains how people in the Old Testament were forgiven and saved..

b. Psalm 32 used to explain God’s forgiveness on the basis of faith, not works

**III. Contemplations (on Forgiveness) From Psalm 32**

- Ask: on what basis can we say that our sin does not count against us?

- Ask: what is holding you back from exchanging the burden of unforgiveness for “hesed?”

Small Group and Individual Study Questions

1. Can you think of any examples of public figures that needed forgiveness, or to make amends for mistakes? Did they receive it? What ultimately happened?

2. Reread Psalm 32, and imagine that it was your responsibility to title it. What would you name it?

3. What are some of the words and phrases throughout Psalm 32 that the poet uses to communicate the weight of unconfessed sin?

4. Is there a such thing as a burden or deterioration that comes from living in need of forgiveness? What typically happens to the physical and emotional well-being of those engaged in feuds, arguments, and ongoing conflict?

4. What are some of the things that the poet does, or instructs others to do, as a response to sin in Psalm 32?

5. How is Psalm 32 referring to an event and concept from Genesis 3:20-21? How does Psalm 32 (both logistically and emotionally) respond to the idea that sin must be removed or covered?

6. Read the first half of Romans 4. Where does the author of Romans quote Psalm 32? How is Paul using this quote to develop a larger point?

7. Use a Bible dictionary or online resource to find a definition of the Hebrew word “hesed.” Discuss what it means that Christians are called in to this type of relationship with God. What gets in the way of our experience of this?

8. How should the certainty of ongoing forgiveness from our Lord impact the way we live? How should it impact the way we love and interact with others?