

MY FAITH LEADS ME TO LEARN FROM MY MISTAKES

(Psalm 32)

1) The text.

- a) David starts off the psalm by pointing out how a person is blessed when they have obtained forgiveness (Psalm 32:1-2).
 - i) No doubt, the fact that forgiveness can take place leads to a sense of great joy.
 - ii) There would be no pointing in learning from our sins if we could never be forgiven of them.
- b) The heaviness of sin is shown to be a weight that David could not bear (Psalm 32:3-4).
 - i) In ancient times, one death sentence involved chaining the condemned face to face with a corpse.
 - (1) The condemned had to bear the weight of the corpse while breathing in the its corruption.
 - (2) This is a very apt and chilling description of sin.
 - (3) It is a weight that kills us slowly but surely.
 - ii) David understood the sin he had committed and until it was brought to light by Nathan, if that is the sin under consideration, it was killing him.
 - (1) His bones ached.
 - (2) He cried out in pain because of the wound of sin on his conscience.
 - (3) He wept because the hand of God was on him.
- c) Not being able to stand it anymore, David confessed his sin to God (Psalm 32:5).
 - i) The old saying is, "Confession is good for the soul".
 - ii) David finally admitted his sin.
 - iii) It took a while, and it took God, through the prophet Nathan, letting David know that his sin was known, but it got to David eventually.
- d) This moved David to realize more deeply that God is the only place to find comfort and refuge from sin (Psalm 32:6-7).
 - i) There is a time when God can be found through prayer, which lets us know there is a time when He cannot be found.
 - (1) If we hold onto that sin, whatever it is, we can become hardened to it.
 - (2) The Hebrews writer wrote about becoming hardened to sin (Hebrews 3:13).
 - ii) When we go to God in prayer, admitting our sins and seeking forgiveness for them, the floods may rage but they won't overcome us.
- e) Because of his coming to his senses, David was ready to tell others about the forgiveness, mercy, and care of God (Psalm 32:8-10)
 - i) David wanted others to not make the same mistake he made.
 - ii) He encouraged them not to be stubborn in their sin.
 - iii) Notice the last phrase of verse 9.
 - (1) "Lest they come near unto thee".
 - (2) The ESV has, "or it will not stay near you".
 - (3) The idea is the horse or mule has to have a bit in its mouth or it will run away from you.
 - (4) Don't be the type person who is always on the run from God.
 - (a) Instead, allow your conscience and awareness of God to reign you in.
 - (b) Don't be like a brute animal who must be forced into line.

- f) Those that have received forgiveness can be glad and shout for joy because they are right with the Lord (Psalm 32:11).

2) Why don't we learn from our sin?

- a) Why do people, including me, commit the same sins over and over again?
- b) There are at least three reasons we don't learn from our sins.
- c) The first is stubbornness.
 - i) Some people just don't want to change.
 - ii) Whatever sin they keep committing brings them more physical or mental pleasure than change would.
 - iii) This person is like that stubborn animal about which David spoke.
 - iv) Pride gets in the way as well.
 - v) Some believe they can overcome their problems on their own and don't need God.
 - vi) This person has more faith in himself than in God.
 - vii) Notice what Jeremiah was inspired to write about this type person (Jeremiah 17:5).
 - viii) The Proverbs writer said... (Proverbs 14:12).
 - ix) God thought this was important enough for Solomon to write twice (Proverbs 16:25).
- d) The second is stupidity.
 - i) Some people don't think they can learn.
 - ii) Whatever it is, has had hold of them for a long time and they don't believe they can overcome it.
 - iii) This is definitely a sign of a lack of faith in God.
 - iv) Our God has told us time and again that He wants to and will help us overcome our sins.
 - v) When we have this attitude, we are saying, not that we are weak, but God is weak.
 - vi) The God we serve can and will forgive and also equip us to deal with the sin that has hold of us.
 - vii) This takes effort on our part and some are too weak spiritually to put up a fight.
- e) The third is speediness.
 - i) Some don't take the time to learn from their mistakes.
 - ii) Simple mistakes are easy to learn from:
 - (1) You grab a cup of coffee and take a gulp before realizing how hot it is.
 - (2) You probably won't make that mistake again.
 - iii) The sins we commit are more complex than not thinking before taking a drink.
 - iv) It takes a deliberate effort to learn from our sins so as not to fall into the same trap.
 - v) There is a need for reflection and question asking:
 - (1) What went wrong?
 - (2) What led up to the sin that could be avoided?
 - (3) What do I need to look for in my life that needs to be strengthened so I won't give into this temptation again?
- f) These may seem a little blunt but we have to be with ourselves.
- g) Notice Psalm 32 again, specifically the last phrase of verse 2:
 - i) "In whose spirit there is no guile".
 - ii) That word guile is said to mean, treachery, deceit, or fault.
 - iii) The worst kind of treachery or deceit is that which we practice against ourselves.

- iv) We will lie to ourselves in a heartbeat because we generally like the sin we are committing.
- v) We have to be blunt, brutally honest with ourselves, to confront our own sins.
- vi) That stubborn mule David mentioned will get brought back in line through painful administration of blows.
- vii) Don't be a stubborn mule: remove the self-deception in order to learn from your mistakes.

3) What can we learn from our mistakes?

- a) Sins have lessons in them if we will pay attention to them.
- b) We can learn how awesome our God is when we think of the forgiveness we receive.
 - i) David had to own up and repent.
 - ii) This brought him a deeper awareness of God's forgiveness.
- c) We can learn sin has consequences.
 - i) David lost a child and ended up with problems with his son Absalom.
 - ii) Not all sins have that drastic of consequences attached to them.
 - iii) However, all sin has consequences.
- d) We can learn clarity in regards to how we want to live.
 - i) Someone said, "Mistakes wake us up and focus our attention like a flashing sign that says "fix this"."
 - ii) There isn't a person here who really wants to continue in sin I wouldn't think.
 - iii) When we sin, we are awakened to what is truly most important to us: our relationship with God.
- e) We can learn to tell the truth about sin.
 - i) It is natural for each of us to want to hide our sins because we don't want people to think less of us.
 - ii) That's garbage.
 - iii) That person we don't want thinking less of us has sins of his own.
 - iv) Repent and feel the burden lifted.
 - v) When the sin is out in the open and let go of through repentance, then we can truly learn and grow as Christians.
- f) We can learn what does and does not work for us.
 - i) There are some ways of dealing with a temptation that may work and other ways that may not.
 - ii) If I have tried one way and it didn't work, if I've truly learned from my sin, I won't try that way the next time.
 - iii) We will be able to have it engrained in our minds that God's way always works if we are really honest with ourselves.
- g) We can learn that acknowledging and repenting of our mistakes inspires others.
 - i) I love when people respond to the Lord's invitation for several reasons.
 - ii) One of which is, that person has inspired me to try harder and do better.
 - iii) You may not feel that way but I do.
 - iv) There may be someone in the room who is struggling with the very thing of which you're repenting.
 - v) You and I can inspire others to live better lives for Christ by getting them to realize others struggle with it and only God can help remove it or deal with it.

- h)** We can learn that God still deeply loves us.
 - i)** Sin is the great separator.
 - ii)** It creates a division between us and God.
 - iii)** Despite the divide, God still wants us to be near Him.
 - iv)** He loves us so deeply that He has provided a way back to Him.
 - v)** This shows the great love He has for us.
 - vi)** If God didn't love us, He wouldn't have made the provision of repentance and confession of our sin that leads to restoration and forgiveness.
 - vii)** The love is seen in that the restoration and forgiveness is only available because of the blood that Jesus shed for us.
- i)** Notice that I began each of these ideas with "we can learn".
 - i)** That's a conditional statement isn't it?
 - ii)** We can learn means we also may not learn.
 - iii)** The learning is up to us.
 - iv)** God has provided His word to us to grow our faith (Romans 10:17).
 - v)** If we have faith in God to forgive us of our sins, as He has so plainly stated He will, we can learn these lessons.
 - vi)** All of this stems from this faith in God.
 - vii)** If we don't allow our faith to grow, we are going to get caught up in sin all the time.
 - viii)** Our faith allows us to understand what sin is, what it does to God, and what it does to us and those around us.
 - ix)** Only through the exercise of our knowledge of God's word is this possible (Hebrews 5:14).