

Limits to Perspective [Psalm 32]
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INTRODUCTION

1. Often times, our creativity has absolutely no artistic benefit, but is extremely useful
 - a. The CIA created Area 51 in 1955 to develop top secret military projects in Nevada desert.
 - b. During the Cold War, Soviets had satellites honed in on the area to steal secrets
 - c. One issue they knew, because of desert, was infrared picked up planes there
 - 1) The heat of the desert left coolness of shadows that exposed the planes
 - d. So to throw them off, they made cardboard cutouts: fake planes to fool them.
 - 1) They would cast misleading shadows for the Soviets to get confused.
2. Psalm 32, our focus today, will help us to expand the limited perspective of our lives today.
2. This psalm holds a specific place within in the history of the church.
 - a. The apostle Paul quotes it in Romans 4
 - b. Augustine, church's greatest theologian, is said to have had it engraved on his bedroom wall so he could see it first thing when he wrote
 - c. Finally, it's regarded as one of the 7 *penitential psalms* used during the season of Lent.
3. Understand that this was a SONG of worship, led by this worship leader

VERSES 1,2

¹ *Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.*

² *Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.*

1. The text starts with beatitudes.
 - a. Most famous of these in Scriptures were delivered by Jesus on the Sermon of the Mount
 - b. But this is a unique one.
2. But usually these "blessed" are limited to two scopes.
 - a. First, is a blessing ascribed to the Lord, akin to praise.
 - 1) EX: **Psalm 103:2** "Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits;"
 - b. Second is a blessing based upon an action or omission that one performs.
 - 2) EX: **Psalm 40:4** Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord
 - c. But here's what makes Psalm 32 peculiar: it doesn't involve either of these
 - 1) It involves God and an action, but one that the Lord commits actions
 - 2) HE forgives, HE covers, HE does not count
 - 3) Our limited involvement is having a spirit without deceit
3. THERE ARE LIMITS TO OUR PERSPECTIVE: WE DEFINE SPIRITUALITY BY WHAT WE DO.
 - a. Our Christian faith isn't the sum parts of things that we commit.
 - 1) This is how we WANT our faith to be.
 - 2) These opening of this verse show us that it's the Lord who removes

VERSES 3,4

³ *When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.*

⁴ *For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.*

1. A couple of things are at work here that we need to note. First, THE SILENCE
 - a. That's usually the response when we're caught doing wrong. We want to avoid it.
 - 1) Not many of us are good liars and, thus we prefer not to speak in our guilt
 - b. But this move does not silence the inward groaning that guilt brings our way.
 - c. **BIG CONTEXTUAL NOTE:** A singer (presenting this) going silent is a bird without flight
2. The weight of our sin = guilt, and is as oppressive as the hand of God/hear of summer.
 - a. Macbeth, the Shakespearean play about the Scottish lord trying to gain power.

- b. Upon hearing a prophecy where he would become king, his ambition consumes him
 - 1) Spurred on by his wife, he begins a murdering spree to consolidate power.
 - 2) After killing King Duncan, he forgets to leave the knife there, and his wife implores him to go take it back.
 - 3) He refuses, stating, "I'll go no more: I am afraid to think what I have done; Look on it again I dare not."
- c. Do not underestimate the power of guilt within you
- 3. THERE ARE LIMITS TO OUR PERSPECTIVE: WE DISMISS THE POWER OF GUILT
 - a. In much of today's secular counseling, the focus is on removing the guilt we feel.
 - b. We assume that GUILT is the enemy and needs to be dealt with as an illness
 - c. Do not be deceived: there is a healthy guilt that is very good
 - 1) It us god when it exposes our sin.
- 4. There's a "Selah" at the end of verse 4 (there are actually two more).
 - a. Signifies a change in the song

VERSES 5-7

⁵Then 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. ⁶Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. ⁷You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

- 1. Verse five presents a chiasm: it brings out a rounded concept
 - a. From sin to iniquity/guilt to transgressions and back again
 - b. The point of this: the singer has now come to grips with the way he's wronged God.
 - c. As O.T. Scholar Walter Brueggemann notes, "Long before Freud, the psalmist understood...the need for spoken release and admission, the liberation that comes with actual articulation to the one who listens and can respond."
- 2. This is the moment where the limits of perspective are removed.
 - a. But people don't submit because they don't understand the freedom awarded to us.
 - 1) There's a metaphor in verse 6 that summarizes this: even the rising waters won't reach
 - 2) This is a geographic illustration those familiar with the land of Israel would understand
 - b. Wadis are there, usually dried out paths until the rain comes & they become dangerous
 - c. When they flood, they can easily kill people
 - d. But this is the point of verse seven: he protect us from trouble
- 3. THERE ARE LIMITS TO OUR PERSPECTIVE: WE DISLIKE THE CONCEPT OF CONFESSION
 - a. When I actually name out my sin, I expose myself and it's incredibly humbling
 - b. One of the amazing things about this psalm: the worship leader exposes HIS OWN sin
 - c. Again, we don't want this because we can come off as weak as a result.
 - d. In the end, it doesn't matter. We must confess our sins to others and to God.

VERSES 8-11

⁸I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. ⁹Do 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. ¹⁰Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him. ¹¹Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!

- 1 Friends, the issues raised in Psalm 32 all come down to perspective
- 2. THERE ARE LIMITS TO OUR PERSPECTIVE: VANTAGE POINT CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.
 - a. One of my greatest web obsessions: Google maps.
 - 1) Before I travel someplace, I take a look so I can get a better Idea of an area
 - 2) But just because you have this bird's eye view, it doesn't mean you can see all
 - b. In 1959, Lionel Penrose and his son Roger created the Penrose stairs, an impossible, unsolvable object.

- 1) It can exist in a removed drawing that doesn't exist within the real world.
- 2) But you couldn't see this unless you were right there.
2. This friends, it the power of perspective.
 - a. You need to be able to see things many different views to get the full picture
 - b. For us: sin – guilt – grace
3. Conclude with Communion and Read Psalm 1:2