***David's Justification by Faith
RO35-02***

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We are continuing in Romans 4:1-8 on the subject of "Old Testament Salvation." This is the fourth increment in that series.

In the last session, we looked at Romans 4:4-5. In Romans 4:4, we read, "Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." This verse laid down the divine viewpoint principle that the wages a person receives for his own achievements (for his own labors) is not a gift, and cannot be viewed as a gift, but is something which is due him. For something to be a favor, or to be a gift, it cannot be earned. It must not be earned.

**Salvation by Faith Alone**

So verse 4 states the general axiom that a benefit cannot be received as both a gift and a wage which is due to the person. It has to be one or the other. Either it's a gift, or it's wages that are due to the individual.

Then, in Romans 4:5, Paul takes this general principle (this general axiom), and he applies it to the issue of salvation. Verse 5 says, "But to him that does not work, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Salvation, by God's design, can never be worked for, but only received as a gift from a loving God. Therefore, God does not justify the person who tries to work for salvation. He only justifies the one who believes His promise to save.

Furthermore, this by-faith-alone-salvation we see is applied, Paul said, to the scum of humanity –, the irreligious. So, it's the worst kind of people that God justifies – not self-improved people, but the worst, as they are.

So, salvation by works and salvation by faith are mutually exclusive. That's the point. God does not accept part works and part faith for salvation. Human viewpoint thinks that He does. God only justifies the sinner on the basis of faith. That's divine viewpoint. God says, "Either you come to Me helpless, and let Me save you by grace as a gift to you, or you're out. You're not saved. God says, "I'll accept no human work; no human ritual; and, no human action.

So, I don't care what you add to it: your church membership; your good life; your morality; water baptism; the Lord's Supper; or, the confession of sins or whatever. It's a dangerous game to play. God says, "Salvation is all of grace, and none of works." If you get that, there's hope for you.

Millions of people fail to understand this principle of divine justification, and eventually they die in their sins. Eventually they die in their halfway measures: their half-grace and half-works. And when they do die in that condition, they go to the lake of fire forever.

So, Paul we have seen, has illustrated this principle (salvation by grace as a gift of God apart from human works), first of all, from the Old Testament, by this man Abraham. And we've looked at him. Now he is going to go to the person that the Jews consider only second to Abraham, and that is King David. He quotes from King David to confirm what he has already demonstrated to be true about Abraham – salvation, apart from works.

So, we pick up the study at verse 6, where we read, "Even as David also described the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness apart from works." This is the second historical example from the Old Testament of how people were saved (how people were justified) in the Old Testament. This second historical example, like the first (Abraham) demonstrates that it's all of faith, and none of works.

David was very important to the Jews because he, of course, was in the royal line of the Messiah. We find that the Bible says that David was a man that God was particularly fond of: "A man after God's own heart." 1 Samuel 13:14 says this. This is referred to in Acts 13:22. David, therefore, is second in the Jews' esteem only to the founding father Abraham. David was saved under the Mosaic Law system. That's why his words are an added importance to what Abraham has said, and what we have learned about Abraham. Abraham didn't live under the Law, Abraham was saved before circumcision, and before any rituals of the Law.

However, now you come to David, and here you have a man who was born and bred, and lived and died under the Mosaic Law. How was he saved, once that law was in operation? Well, you remember that David wrote part of the Old Testament Scriptures, because he wrote many of the Psalms, the songbook of the Jewish People. Therefore, David speaks with divine viewpoint when he speaks about justification in the Old Testament. And what we are going to study here in the New Testament is a quotation written in the 32nd Psalm, which David wrote. Here is David writing under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, what David says here in Psalm 32 is absolute truth. It is true truth.

I just want to read Psalm 32:1-2: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Paul, here writing in the New Testament, to prove his point about Abraham's salvation by faith without works, comes here, and quotes something from the famous King David, written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God in Psalm 32. That's the background.

So, let's get back here to Romans 4:6. It begins with the words, "Even as." In the Greek, it looks like this: "kathaper." This word means "just as." It is a word to introduce the confirmation of King David of the principle of justification by faith for Old Testament saints. The idea is that this principle, stated in verses 4-5, is exactly according to the very things. And that's what this word means – exactly, according to the very things that David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declared in Psalm 32.

David was Israel's greatest king, and the ancestor of the Messiah, Jesus Christ: "Just as (according to the very thing) David also (in addition to the proof he's already presented on Abraham) described." The word "described" is actually the word "lego," which means "to say" or "to pronounce" – just as David makes a pronouncement. Here is that word "lego," which (we have learned) stresses content – not actual words. He's not stressing so much, just as David said these words, and he quotes the words. Well, he does that, but that isn't what this word "lego" stresses. There's a different word in the Greek that would stress the actual words. This is content. He's stressing the principle. He's stressing the information itself that David gave.

**Blessedness**

It is present tense. It's a standing fact in Scripture. It is active. It was made by David himself. It's indicative – a statement of fact. What did David say? He is describing, or he is pronouncing, the "blessedness." The word "blessedness" is "makarismos." Actually, this word is not "blessedness." It is a declaration of blessedness. It is calling someone blessed. So, we should translate this in this way: Just exactly as David also pronounces blessed." David is calling a certain type of person a blessed person.

This word "makarismos" indicates a state of spiritual well-being. This condition is the result of something that God does for the believer. It is not a result of something that the individual does for himself. This work of God that puts you and me into a state of blessedness is not something that we have merited. That's inherent in this word. When David pronounces a person blessed, he is talking about a person who does not deserve it. As a matter of fact, he's talking about a person who deserves just the opposite of being in a status of blessedness with God.

Furthermore, you must be careful that you do not push too hard on this word "blessed" as meaning happy. You have the Beatitudes that list a series of "blesseds:" "Blessed is the man who does this. Blessed is the man who is in this state." Some translations of the Bible move all the way over to use the word "'happy' is the man." Well, there is a certain satisfaction in being in the state of blessedness. Consequently, there is a happiness in the spiritual well-being situation. But I must point out to you that this word "makarismos" overrides what you may be at any moment relative to your happiness. You may be the most unhappy Christian in the world. Yet, it could be said of you that you are blessed. We could still pronounce upon you the status of blessedness, even though, at some particular point in life, you're not very happy. And, in fact, you could be most unhappy.

**Happiness**

So, a Christian, obviously, does not find sorrows or crises happy, but he can be under divine blessing at the time that he's going through some unhappy situation. Happiness depends on just the way the word sounds: on happenstance. Happiness depends on what happens to you. Therefore, it depends upon external things. But spiritual prosperity (that's what this word is talking about) depends on who and what God is, and what He has done for us.

So, when David is talking about a human being being in the status of spiritual well-being or blessedness, he's talking about a person who, though he is destitute of all merit before God, yet is rewarded by God with absolute righteousness. That is what makes a person blessed. In other words, I don't care what your problem in life is. I don't care what tragedy may come upon you. I don't care what grief you may bear. I don't care what disappointments you may bear. After all is said and done, you are going to heaven. After all is said and done, you possess absolute righteousness. And the moment you get your eyes off of God and off of that fact, you're going to get yourself into unhappiness. You're blessedness is there. After the worst has happened to you, you're going to go right into God's presence in heaven.

Therefore, you are always in the status of blessedness. The problem is that you forget that, and you don't act and live under that principle. Instead, you act like a five-and-dime-store Christian who hasn't grown up enough to recognize that God has pronounced you "makarismos." God has pronounced you blessed. Is it because there is something wonderful about you? No. It is because there is something wonderful about the God who lives within you, and who has transformed you, and who has imputed His righteousness to you.

The word "man" is the Greek word "anthropos," which means human being – not a male person. It means just a human being. It's the generic term for humanity. So, blessed is anybody: man or woman; boy or girl; or, child or adult – anyone who has entered a certain relationship to God by faith is in a status of blessedness. God, therefore, because you are in this status, does not reckon something to your account – the person unto whom God imputes righteousness. And the word "imputes: is a word we've had several times: "logizomai" again. It means to set to one's account.

In the papyri records, where the New Testament Greek was uses – these remains of various writings that we have from New Testament times, this word "logizomai" repeatedly showed up, and it was used in business. It was a business term. You can see it's a business term – to set to one's account. And that's exactly the way it was used. And that's exactly what it means here. But it does not mean, of course, that a person who is under this state of blessedness, in having imputed to him God's righteousness – this does not mean that this person is in himself righteous. That's sanctification; and, ultimate sanctification awaits our coming into the Lord's presence. The Bible says that when we see Jesus, then we shall be like Him. We shall be absolutely perfect in experience, as we are now in our standing with Him.

So, a person is not actually righteous. Justification does not make a person inherently righteous, and it does not make you morally pure. Did you get that? Justification does not make you morally pure. I want you to notice the person sitting next to you, whoever he may be, or whoever she may be. That person, as a believer, has not been made morally pure. We like to move around in life, as believers, pretending that we have been made morally pure. We can be so indignant over the failures of other people, like we were some paragons of virtue ourselves. Well just start reviewing your own case history, and you won't have to go very far before you will say, "I better not be too hard on other people. I'm not all that hot myself." And you never are going to be. Justification, while God imputes it to your account, does not make you or me or anybody else perfect in our experience. So, don't get pushy and demanding something of other people that God has already clarified to you, if your ears are open to doctrine, that you will never find this side of heaven shores. You're only going to find imperfect believers who are perfect only in God's eyes. So, we act accordingly.

God does not justify us on the basis of our personal character, or on our works. He justifies us on the ground of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which has been imputed (credit) to our account ("logizomai" to us). That's why He says we're just – not because we actually are in experience.

Imputation does not suggest either that faith in God is viewed by Him as a good work which is deserving of the bestowal of righteousness. You believed God, but that's not a work. You might fall into that mistake. It's just saying that you recognize that God is not a liar.

The result of what He credits to you is "dikaiosune," which is righteousness, and in this case, of course, it is absolute righteousness. A person is treated by God as if he were perfect (as perfect as His Son Jesus Christ), because someday God is (when you are in His presence) going to make you in truth (in reality) just that perfect. And he does this, He says apart from works.

"Even as David also pronounces the status of blessedness of the human being unto whom God credits absolute righteousness apart from works." "Apart from" is "choris," and it means "absolutely separated from" works. The word "works" is "ergon," and it means the old sin nature production. This represents the epitome of God's graciousness to a sinner. What David is saying is that we have been graced-out by God. And that's a pretty good way to put it: "graced by the living God." He has graced us out, and He can't go any further than that. That's the finest; that's the highest; and, that's the end. And it was done without "choris ergon" (absolutely without our works). If it were not without our works, God could not grace us. We have been graced-out because He said, "Take your crummy hands off of the issue of salvation, and turn yourself over to Me, and let Me do the job right." And only He can do it right.

If you try to be judged on your character, what is God going to do? He's going to give you a fair trial. If you want to face God on your character and on your production, God says, "All right, I'll judge you on that, and I'll give you a fair trial." So, He examines your character, and He examines your production (your human good from the old sin nature). And do you see what has happened? If you have this high of a mound of human good and character, then God will judge you on that level. God says, "Everything you produce in human good is evil. Your character is evil, and this is the production you have made. Therefore, I judge you on that basis." But suppose that you're a real hustler for human good, and you produce a great mound of human good. Now you are facing the judgment of God someday. On what basis are you going to be judged? You're going to be judged on the basis of that even larger mound of evil – a monumental, greater amount of evil for which you are to be judged.

Do you see the principle? The more human good you produce, the more judgment of God there will be upon you. It's a vicious circle, isn't it? There is just no way out.

That's what Paul is trying to say to us here. He's quoting the general principle of David. David says, "Wow, I can pronounce a person blessed who has actually been relieved of all this human attempt and all this human demand to accomplish something for God, and whom God simply has credited with His absolute righteousness apart from that. David recognized that if he were to ask God to judge him on his production, the more he produced, the greater the judgment. So, it's a very foolish thing to say, "I want to face God on the basis of my works." That will destroy you.

Now, Psalm 32, where David is pronouncing this principle of the blessedness of a man that God has graced out, has been written at a certain point in David's history, and it is very instructive if you know where to pin this psalm in David's history. Do you know where it belongs? Right after David put himself in the position of facing two counts of capital crimes: the sin of adultery, the penalty for which was death; and, the sin of murder, the penalty for which was also death. It came when he had violated the moral code with Bathsheba, and had murdered her husband, Uriah. So, he's under the death penalty on two counts under the Mosaic Law, and there is no hope for him.

You might say, "Well, why didn't he bring the sacrifice? Why don't he rush right down there to the priest and say, "I have to make a sacrifice?" It's because there was no sacrifice. When you sinned willfully, there was no sacrifice. The sacrifices were only a confessional system for non-deliberate, willful sin. He had willfully committed adultery. There was no sacrifice to cover that. He had willfully taken a man's life (murder-one). There was no sacrifice for that. Therefore, David, in this condition, simply reaches out and does the only thing he can do, and he cries out to God for mercy – the same kind of mercy that you and I have to cry out to God for when we recognize that the more human good we produce, the greater judgment there's going to be upon us in eternity, and the greater will be the degree of our punishment. So, the more effort you make, the worse you make it for yourself.

David understood that. And finally, after fighting God for about a year, and not being willing to make confession of the sin, and get things squared away with the Lord, he comes and he writes Psalm 51. I just want to read a little of it. David is in his desperation now. He's about ready to go berserk. He has had all this strain upon him mentally; emotionally; physically; and, in every way. Finally, he comes and he says, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness. According unto the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly for my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, and You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge."

Here he comes to God, and he makes his confession. And he also points to the fact that his confession is to God alone because the sin is against God alone. You might say that it was against the whole nation. Why didn't he stand up and confess it to the nation? Well, the nation was involved, and the nation was hurt. Everybody around him was hurt. But they weren't the people that he should confess to. The sin involved confession to God. And only the arrogant, and only the sinners of the lowest caliber themselves, would have demanded that David get up and make confession to them: "Against You, and You only have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight.

Verse 5: "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity and in sin my mother did conceive me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts; and, in the hidden part, You shall make me know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I should be whiter than snow." This is referring to one of the ritual practices of the temple: "Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out my iniquities. Created in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."

Every now and then, there's some uninformed Christians, who don't know their Bible doctrine very straight, who like to pray this prayer when they've sinned. They make confession, and they say, "O, do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." I've been in church services where they close the service every Sunday with the preacher getting up and saying, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit away from me." That's a bunch of rot. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit sovereignly came and sovereignly left, but in the New Testament he indwells you forever. That's the distinction of being in the body of Christ. So, don't ever pray this prayer, because, no matter how much scum you and I can become in sin, the Holy Spirit can never, never leave us. He can only deal with us. He can only convict us. He can only make us miserable as he did David. And He can only lead us ultimately out of this life through the sin unto death, if we persist.

"Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit, then I will teach transgressors Your way, and sinners shall be converted unto You. Delivered me from blood guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness." He had murdered a man (blood guiltiness). This has burdened him down with a sense of oppression.

"O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, else I would give it. You do not delight is burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart. O God, You will not despise." David obviously understood the hopelessness of his position. And this is the background of the 32nd Psalm. This is why he begins the 32 Psalm with "O, O, O my, the blessedness." And that's about the way the Hebrew is: "O, the permissiveness of a human being to whom God will not impute what he's got coming, but instead imputes to him the absolute righteousness of God.

David could say that with deep emotion. He could say that with deep significance because of what he'd just been through. He's on the verge of experiencing nothing but execution for two capital crimes. He was guilty twice of capital punishment. He just casts himself upon God.

The climax of it all (after he declared what we have heard him say in Psalm 51) is given to us in 2nd Samuel 12:13, where the prophet comes to him and says, "And David said unto Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' And Nathan said unto David, 'The Lord also has put away you sin. You shall not die.'" For 23, 24, or 25 more years, David lived, and they were the finest years of his life in God's service. He rose to heights of spiritual development that he never dreamed of before, after being down this low.

Now, that is what makes David, in Psalm 32, say, "O, the blessedness. O, the blessedness of a God who will not impute my sin to me, but imputes it to a Savior down the line, and gives me, instead, His absolute righteousness. David is in awe of the fact that God has so graced him out, in spite of what he has done.

Well, all of this is quoted by Paul in order to make it clear to us that David was really born-again. This man was saved, and he knew it, and he knew how he was saved. He had no doubt about the fact that this was something that God had done for him on the basis of faith, apart from his own deserving.

**Blessed**

In Romans 4:7-8, Paul now proceeds to quote Psalm 32:1-2 that we have just read. Verse 7 begins: "Saying, 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.'" We have the word "blessed" again, but it's a little different world than we had before. This is not to pronounce blessing this time. This is the adjective. Before it was a noun. This time it's an adjective. This is "makarios." This word was used in classical Greek to describe the pagan gods – to describe the fact that the pagan gods had a position of exaltation above earthly suffering, and above earthly limitations. The gods were above suffering, and the gods were above the limitations that human beings experience: the poverty; the hunger; the pain; and, the disease. So, as the ancient Greeks would look at their gods, they would describe them with this word "makarios," which means that the status of well-being of the gods was something to be envied by these poor human beings who did not enjoy such a privileged position. It is used of men also in classical Greek to describe prosperity. So, it has this connotation of prosperity and spiritual wellbeing. In the New Testament, that's what it connotes: spiritual wellbeing.

However, this is apart from your circumstances at the moment. This is just like the other word, this has nothing to do with your circumstances. You are blessed apart from any situation that you may be going through at the moment. Why? Because this blessedness is based upon a relationship to God. It is based upon the fact that He has graced you. There is a satisfaction, obviously, and a joy, in being spiritually healthy. But that is not the basic idea of blessed. So, you can't again simply translate this as "happy." It's not that. It's something far more than just happy.

For example, let's go back to Matthew 5 for just a minute, where you have these beatitude, where people try to impose the idea of "happy" as the basic idea here. Notice, for example: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Now, can you say, "Happy are they that mourn? They shall be comforted." There could be a parent who says, "My infant baby daughter just died. I'm in grief over it, but I'm happy, happy, happy." That's crazy. It's irrational. It's illogical. No, this is something more. Yes, my loved one has died, but because I am in a state of being graced-out by God, I'm still in a state of blessedness. Because I'm in a position of being graced, I am blessed, but at the moment, I'm in tears. At the moment, I'm in a lot of grief. At the moment, I can't say that my circumstances are such that I'm happy.

Notice verse 10: "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This is persecution because you want to do what is right. You are persecuted for wanting to be obedient to God. You are persecuted because you happen to be a Chinese Christian who lives in a hellhole of communism. Are you going to find that your circumstances are happy, happy, happy? No. But blessed? Yes, but not necessarily pleasant and happy and joyous under the condition of persecution. What you have is blessedness.

Notice verse 11: "Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake." You have been evil-spoken of. That's not pleasant. But if you understand what God has done for you (that He has graced you), therefore, you're in a place where you are blessed. Therefore, though people may speak against you falsely otherwise, that is irrelevant.

I'm amazed at how many Christians have not yet learned that what other people say about them is absolutely none of their business. What other people say about you is absolutely none of your business. And that's what the Word of God says. If your eyes are on the Lord, you couldn't care less what somebody else is doing. If your ears are attuned to the Lord. You couldn't care less what they're saying. But if you're a five-and-dime-store Christian, you haven't developed the maturity, then it's going to be very important to you what Mr. So-and-so says, and little Sally Susie So-and-so says. Instead, when they say it, and you hear it, you should just yawn in their face, hopefully with a good case of halitosis to knock them over. You couldn't care less. What other people say about you is none of your business.

My business, as a believer, is not what people say about me, but how to get that utility building built – that's my business. How to get more students in Berean Christian Academy – that's my business. How to teach my kids in the band to be fine musicians for the Lord's glory – that's my business. How to see a congregation informed by Bible doctrine – that's my business. How to alert parents to getting their children in Sunday school – that's my business. How to have a ministry In Berean Youth Clubs, and that achievement program that ties in with their social life – that's my business. How to see that tapes and Bible study notes go throughout this nation – that's my business. And every one of those things that I've mentioned also happens to be your business as well. And what other people say, and what other people think about you, is absolutely not your business.

Joseph suffered a great deal at the hands of his brothers, and his brothers feared him. He could have taken great vengeance. But instead, Joseph was blessed because he knew that God turns evil to good. In Genesis 50:20, he says, "But as for you, you thought evil against me. But God meant it unto good to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save many people alive."

That is compatible with Romans 8:28. If you get your eyes on the Lord, and you get your ears open, you'll be able to be just like these people. The apostles turn to the Lord when they were being persecuted, and they said, "O God, look how these rage against us." But they were in a state of grace to the ends of their brain cells. They had courage; they had conviction; and, and they kept on in the Lord's work. While they were saying, "Lord, behold how they rage against us," they were simply talking to the Lord about taking care of these people, in order to get them out from under their feet, so that they could go on with proclaiming the Word of God. Check back in Acts, and see how great that passage is. That's all they were doing. They weren't going to the Lord, and saying, "O, Lord, they're saying such terrible things about me, and you know how it is, and it just crushes me."

You're not going to be around here very much longer, Christian. Every now and then, people are shocked by the fact that somebody they worked with checks out of this life. And at the rapture, a few years down the road, you're all going to be on your way. And you're all going to be standing up there for your report card. And boy, then what Susie Finkelstein has said about you isn't going to mean anything. It's going to be very clear to you where your business should have been; and, what was your business, and what was not. So, let's get it straight.

**Iniquities**

Paul says, "Oh, the blessedness of a human being that God has graced-out so that he could be stable and firm and immovable in the winds of evil." There's no verb in our passage in Romans: "Blessed they, whose iniquities." The word "iniquities" is the word "anomia." It says, "Whose iniquities ('anomia')." Actually, the word "anomia" is the word for "no law." The prefix "a" means the negative, and the word "nomos" is "law." So, this means "lawless" or "the lawless deeds." The Bible defines sin as lawlessness in 1 John 3:4.

So, we translate this rather as: "Blessed are they whose lawless deeds are forgiven." "Lawless deeds" refers to people who know God's rules, but rebelled against them. That's what David did. David said, "Oh, boy, I knew the commandment against adultery. I knew the commandment against murder. I knew it as well as anybody in Israel. But I was a lawless one. And what I did was not just sin – it was worse. It was sin in the aspect of a lawless deed. It wasn't that I'm some ignorant idiot who didn't know what I should do. And O, the blessedness of a God forgives me in my lawless deeds. I deliberately contrived this. I deliberately planned it. I was involved up to my neck all the way, and I knew it."

**Forgiven**

The result is that these are forgiven. The word "forgiven" is "aphiemi." "Aphiemi" does not mean "to forgive." It means more than that. It means "to send away." In Matthew 13:36, we have the expression "sent away" in connection with the ministry of Jesus. You can read it there. The Hebrew, in Psalm 32, means exactly the same thing. This Greek word is an exact conversion from the Hebrew. It means "to send away," My lawless deeds are sent away. The idea here is to pardon my sins rather than to lay it to the sinner's account.

**Sent Away**

This sending away, perhaps in David's mind, was illustrating to him the two-goat ritual on the day of atonement. You remember that on the great day of Atonement, they took two goats. One of them they killed, and they took his blood, and they went in, and they sprinkled it on the mercy seat to cover. The other goat, after the high priest laid his hands on the head of the goat, and confessed the sins, was then led out into the wilderness, into a wild place where he was set loose, and the goat could never find his way back again. It was one act, but it was showing two sides. The blood of Jesus Christ has covered our sins, and that sin is taken away forever, so that we never see it again.

**Dismissed**

That is what is behind this idea here in "aphiemi" – to send away. It's the goat who's going out into the wilderness on the great day of atonement. You can read about this in Leviticus 16:20-22. God's forgiveness means permanent removal of the whole, loathsome mass of our sins. Psalm 103:12 and Micah 7:19 tell us how it's buried in the deepest sea. It's taken as far as the East is from the West. We never can see it again. This is at the point of our trusting in God to save us. We night say it better by saying, "It is dismissed." Our sins (our lawless deeds) are dismissed. "O, the blessedness of they whose lawless deeds are dismissed.

In our society today, when a criminal comes along and does something wrong, we send away the criminal. We had a lot of excitement here Friday at Berean Academy. A man robbed a bank down the street from us, and he came tearing across our campus here. We were engulfed by helicopters, and police, and motorcycles, and whatnot. Well, they finally caught the man, and instead of removing his sin of thievery from him, they removed him. And they'll send him off to jail for what he has done. That's how human society has to work. God comes along and says, "I going do that. I'm going to remove your sin instead of removing you. Instead of removing you from the place of blessing and freedom, I'm going to remove your sin, and leave you in blessing and freedom.

David should have been removed. His life would have been taken for what he had done. Yet, he says, "O God, You've graced me out – the blessedness of the man whose lawless deeds You remove from him, instead of removing the man." That's exactly what he has done for us.

"And whose sins are covered." This time, we have "hamartia." "Hamartia" means "to miss the mark." The word "covered" is "epikalupto." That means "to cover over," and it means "to cover over completely." This connotes removal from God's sight and from His reckoning forever. This is done by the propitiation of Jesus Christ with His shed blood. Again, we come back to the ritual of the two goats. In David mind, he's thinking now of the goat who was sacrificed, and whose blood was then taken and sprinkled on the mercy seat in Leviticus 16:15. David thinks about how his sin is not only taken out into the wilderness (gone forever), but God covers it, and He never looks at it again.

**Forgotten**

When God forgives, He forgets. On the human level, this is not so. David could have gone to the Lord, after he made his confession and had been forgiven, and said, "Lord, I've had a great time with you today, and I just want to tell you again, I am really, really sorry for those sins of adultery and murder." If he had, do you know what God would have said to him? The Lord would have said, "What sin was that? What adultery and what murder was that?" That is because it was covered. It was "epikalupto" completely. You never thought that God can't remember things, did you? No matter how hard He tries, He can't remember your sin. That's how much it's been removed.

So, David rejoices as he thinks of this ritual in the state of a sinner, who by God's grace, has had his sins both dismissed from his record and forgotten forever.

Let's finish this up in verse 8. Again it says, "Makarios" ("blessed"). This time it's singular. Last time it was plural. David adds a second blessing, which awes him again/ He says, "Oh, the blessedness." There is no verb. This time it is of the "aner." This usually means a male person. This time, however, it's not stressing that. It is simply personalizing it. He's been talking in plurality up to now: "O, the kinds of people – anyone that God does this for" (the people that God does this for). Now he's personalizing: "O, the person himself." That's why he uses "aner" here. This is the individual.

In the first two lines of Psalm 32, (he) uses plurals because many are justified. Now he makes it personal: "To whom the Lord (the 'kurios' – this is Jehovah) will not impute." The word "impute" is again "logizomai," and this means "to put to the account." This time, he has the strongest Greek negative "ou me." "Ou is a negative; and, "me" is a negative. And in Greek, you can put two negatives together and get "ou me," which makes it very strong. You can't put two negatives together in English, because if you put two negatives together, it comes out positive. But in Greek, you can keep adding negatives. This is a very strong negative. He is saying, "Absolutely, the Lord will no way credit to my account sin."

This is subjunctive mood. It's a potential thing that God will absolutely not do. And what he says He will not impute is "hamartia" again (missing the mark) – imputing in any way anything but absolute righteousness.

"Verse 8 says, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." And if he will not impute sin, that's the negative. The positive is what He will do, and He will impute absolute righteousness. That's the logic there.

I want to tie this up by showing you something. David has used a series of words. First of all, concerning sin, he called it "lawless deeds." Number two, he called it "sins" (plural). These are acts. Number 3, he called it "sin." Sin is the old sin nature. On the other hand, he also used three great words for God's solution for this. First of all, he used the word "sent away;" Secondly, he used the word "covered up;" and, thirdly, he used the word "not put to one's account."

**Old Testament Salvation**

Well, what are you going to say? Old Testament salvation – what was it like? A man was guilty of lawless deeds. A man was guilty of sinful acts. A man was guilty of functioning on the old sin nature. A God of grace came along and He grace-out that people like that by sending away their sin, and thus they were free of all the guilt. Then He covered it up so that He never saw it or remembered it again. And then He did not put it to their account, which means that He gave them something else to their account, and that was absolute righteousness, which is justification.

So, what can you say? "Wow!" That's about all you can say, and that's what David is trying to say when he says, "O, the blessedness. He's reaching desperately for words, and trying to say something he can't describe.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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