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Reminiscere
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Hide From God or Hide In God

Psalm 32:1-11 Blessed *is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.* ² Blessed *is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.* ³ When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. ⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah ⁶ For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. ⁷ You *are* my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah ⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. ⁹ Do not be like the horse *or* like the mule, *Which* have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you. ¹⁰ Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked; But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him. ¹¹ Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all *you* upright in heart!

Shoe shopping, there is a joke in one TV show. Whenever a woman starts talking about, "Shoe shopping" all the men zone out. So the women use that to their advantage. Whenever they don't want to answer a question or talk about something they start talking about shoe shopping and the men zone out.

Not only shoes but also clothes were given in the beginning in order to hide our sin and our shame. We forget that don't we? We forget that and we spend endless hours and large amounts of money on clothing. Not only that but in our sinfulness we have also learned how to use our clothing to flaunt our sinfulness rather than to hide it.

This isn't to say we shouldn't dress nicely. We should. But we ought to remember why clothing was given to us, in order to cover our nakedness, our sinfulness, and our shame.

If you remember in the garden after the first sin, Adam and Eve attempted at first to make their own clothes in order to hide their shame from the Lord but that didn't work very well. Then the Lord killed an innocent animal and made clothes for man in order to cover our sin and our shame.

In this case what is true of the physical is even more true of the spiritual. Our psalm this morning points out how useless it is when people attempt to hide their own sin, and on the other hand how merciful God is when we acknowledge our sin and allow Him to take care of it.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. ² Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

It is difficult for any man to pretend to be good and righteous to other men. Indeed those who desire their fellow man to think well of them, often fall into great and mighty sin in their deceitfulness and their attempts to hide what they have done. They go to great lengths to pretend that they are good people. It is like attempting to cover a dead body. First you start with a little lye or another strong smell to cover the stench, but day by day the stench grows more and more, and more and more you need to cover the stench.

So also those whose desire is to cover their sin, more and more lies and greater and greater sin so that the stench is obvious to everybody but the fool thinks that he has covered his lies.

How much more impossible is it to ever come before God and pretend that there is any good within us. Indeed the psalmist tell us that the man is blessed whose sin is covered, but he also makes it very clear that man can not accomplish this. It is only God who can cover our sins

When we attempt to cover our sins, God uncovers them. When we uncover our sins God covers them and indeed does not count them against us. **“For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us.”**

David professes a truth here that we all know, but which at the same time we have none of us learned. We all know that if we confess our sins God will forgive them, and yet we still attempt to hide our sins from ourselves, from our neighbors and from God. We are like little kids who no matter how many times we burn our fingers still keep sticking them in the fire.

“Know thyself” was written above the oracle at Delphi. Yet who has ever known themselves?

Most people if they hear their own voice in a recording are horrified, “is that what I sound like?” That is but an inkling of the true horror we would feel if the Lord really opened our eyes to see the depth of our sin.

Look around you, think about someone whom you do not think highly of, think of someone whom you could easily name all their faults. Now consider that that person and probably many others think that way about you. They can probably name as many or more faults about you.

Blessed is the man in whose heart there is no deceit, who does not try to lie to himself, his neighbors, but most especially to God. Do not deceive yourself. Open your heart and do not try to conceal your sins from God. As long as you attempt to conceal you remain open to God, but when you open yourself to God he will conceal your sin.

³ When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. ⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.

There are two skills which every human since Adam has learned to an expert degree. The first is lying to ourselves so that we do not have to see the ugliness of our own heart. The second is excuses. There is nothing that humans excel at more than these two arts, lying and excuses.

So here too we are always making excuses. We know that we ought to confess. We ought to confess to our spouse. We ought to confess to our parents. We ought to confess to our pastor. But mostly we ought to confess to our God. We know that we ought to but we always have a good excuse why we really don't have to.

It's like when you wake up late at night and you have to use the restroom, but you are tired and your bed is so soft and comfortable and warm, so you keep putting it off. Eventually you will have to get out of bed, and once you do you know you will feel so much better. So too we often find excuses to avoiding confessing our sin and guilt, and instead we toss and turn unwilling to do what we know we should.

Our catechism this morning is the keys and confession

“[Jesus] breathed on [His disciples] and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained’”

This gift from Christ is the super power of the church. With this power we can level mountains, raise the sea bed, and crush mighty empires.

And yet we have largely disregarded it in one of its most potent forms, private confession.

We often use the simple excuses that I know God forgives my sin, I don't need to tell the pastor. Or well we do it in church that's good enough. Listen again to the words of the small catechism:

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we don't know we have done, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. However, before our pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

And not only the catechism but the word of God

James 5:16 Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

The general confession at the beginning of worship is a type of that first part of confession, that is confessing our sins before God. It is good and wonderful but it is not a replacement for the second part, that is private confession. When we know and feel guilty about a sin, we ought to confess it openly before our pastor and not make excuses why we don't really need to.

This is what David did. When David confessed his sin to the Lord at least in one instance he confessed to Nathan the prophet. Private confession is like a great and precious treasure which we Lutherans have largely left collecting dust in the attic.

As long as we make excuses for not using private confession, we are still attempting to hide our sin to some degree. Now granted you don't have to go around posting it on billboards, but scripture is clear that we ought to make a habit of confessing those sins which we know and feel to our pastor.

This is what happens when we attempt to hide our sins from God by lying to ourselves and to God or by making excuses. Now the psalmist goes on to describe how wonderful it is when we confess our sins to God and allow him to cover them, and we hide in Him rather than hiding from Him.

I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

The writer of the psalm was himself slow to confess his sin, but having learned what a great opportunity it is, he now must do it again right away. He interrupts the psalm to confess to the Lord again. And the response of the Lord is immediate. Our sins are forgiven by His grace because of Christ.

⁶ For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. ⁷ You *are* my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah

Now that he no longer needs to fear and run and hide from the Lord, now he can walk into the presence of the Lord and what does he find? A hiding place from all the troubles and evils of this world.

If in a flood of great waters, that is even in the greatest storm when the sea waves are pounding against the rocks, those who take refuge in the Lord are far above them. As you see on the front of the bulletin. Two birds safe in the rocks from the violent waves, so are those who learn to hide in the Lord. We are safely surrounded by his great might.

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. ⁹ Do not be like the horse *or* like the mule, *Which* have no understanding, *Which* must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.

That second phrase of verse 8 means, I will guide with my eye always upon you. He will never take His eye off us our whole lives. He will watch our every step and when we are about to step off His love, He will call us back. When we are about to step in a trap, He will turn us around. We can walk forward boldly into the future knowing that God's eye is always on every step we take.

**¹⁰ Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked; But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him. ¹¹
Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all *you* upright in heart!**

This safe place, this hiding place of the Lord, it is described here again as “surrounded by the Lord’s mercy.” That is the Chesed, the steadfast unfailing love of God. The wicked has many sorrows on every side, but the one who trusts the Lord is surrounded by His unending love.

Notice that you would expect as opposite the wicked, “the righteous.” But that is not the case. The opposite of the wicked are still sinners, but sinners who have opened their hearts to the Lord and confessed their sins, those who trust in Him.

The one who has learned to stop trying to hide from God, the one who opens his heart wide and confesses his sin, this one is hidden in God and surrounded by His love.

Consider again all the blessing which are ours when we confess our sins openly to the Lord and do not try to hide from Him:

1. Forgiveness for our sins
2. A refuge from all trouble
3. God is our personal guide and teacher
4. We are surrounded by His chesed, His unending love

Just like Adam and Eve when we attempt to make our own spiritual clothing, that is when we attempt to cover our sins, it does not work. When we attempt to hide from God, God sees right through us. But when we acknowledge our sin, God covers us with the righteousness which is from Christ. When we acknowledge our sin God becomes our safe and secure hiding place.

Amen