

Psalms 32:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

Analysis

This pivotal verse records the turning point from misery to blessing—the moment of confession and forgiveness. The emphatic **'I acknowledged my sin unto thee'** uses yada (acknowledge, know, confess) indicating transparent admission. After months of silence (v.3), concealment, and internal torment, David finally speaks honestly to God. The personal pronouns emphasize direct divine-human encounter: 'I... unto thee'—no intermediary, no ritual substitute, just naked soul before God.

The parallel intensifies: **'and mine iniquity have I not hid'**. Double negative emphasizes completeness—David stopped hiding, justifying, minimizing. He faced his guilt squarely and confessed comprehensively. The resolution follows: **'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD'**. The deliberate decision ('I will') demonstrates repentance's volitional nature. The verb yadah (confess) means 'to throw down' or 'cast away'—David threw down his burden at God's feet, abandoning defensive posturing.

The divine response is immediate and complete: **'and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin'**. The Hebrew nasa (forgave) means 'lifted,' 'carried away,' 'removed'—identical word from verse 1. The moment confession left David's lips, forgiveness came. No penance period, no probation, no extended groveling—instantaneous grace. First John 1:9 promises the same: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all

unrighteousness.' Confession unlocks divine forgiveness already purchased by Christ's blood.

Historical Context

This verse captures the moment Nathan confronted David with 'Thou art the man!' (2 Samuel 12:7) and David immediately responded, 'I have sinned against the LORD' (2 Samuel 12:13). No excuses about temptation, Bathsheba's beauty, or royal privilege—just naked admission of guilt. Nathan's instant reply ('The LORD also hath put away thy sin') demonstrates forgiveness's immediacy when confession is genuine.

The verse's structure—confession followed immediately by forgiveness—revolutionized Protestant Reformation theology. Medieval Catholicism's elaborate penance system required works following confession to earn forgiveness. Luther's rediscovery that forgiveness is immediate upon genuine confession (based on verses like this and 1 John 1:9) sparked theological revolution. Salvation is by grace through faith, not works. Confession doesn't earn forgiveness but receives what Christ already secured.

Ancient Near Eastern cultures lacked this concept of immediate divine forgiveness through confession. Pagan religions required elaborate rituals, sacrifices, and ceremonies but offered no assurance. The priestly system provided temporary covering through animal sacrifice, pointing forward to Christ's perfect, final sacrifice (Hebrews 10:1-14). What David experienced typologically—immediate forgiveness through confession based on coming sacrifice—believers now experience fully through Christ's completed atonement.

The early church emphasized confession's importance but debated its form. Some required public confession of serious sins; others practiced private confession to priests; still others emphasized direct confession to God. Protestant theology emphasized 1 John 1:9 and verses like this—believers confess directly to God, needing no human intermediary except Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). James 5:16 encourages confessing 'faults one to another' for mutual prayer and healing but distinguishes this from confessing sin to God for forgiveness.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What is the relationship between confession (human action) and forgiveness (divine response), and how does grace operate in this dynamic?
2. How does the immediacy of forgiveness in this verse challenge religious systems that require penance or works following confession?
3. What does it mean to 'acknowledge' sin without hiding iniquity—what characterizes genuine versus superficial confession?
4. How does David's experience of immediate forgiveness upon confession point forward to the gospel of grace?
5. In what ways might believers today practice incomplete confession—admitting some sins while hiding others—and how does this hinder spiritual freedom?

Interlinear Text

אָמַרְתִּי כִּסֹּי יָדִי לֹא עָוֹן אֲדַבֵּר חַטָּאתִי
I said have I not hid H3808 the iniquity I acknowledged my sin
H559 H3680 H5771 H3045 H2403

וְאָתָּה לַיהוָה פֶּשַׁעִי עָלַי אֲדַבֵּר ה
unto the LORD my transgressions H5921 I will confess H859
H3068 H6588 H3034 H3034

סֵלָה: חַטָּאתִי עָוֹן וְשָׁאֲתָ ה
Selah my sin the iniquity and thou forgavest H5375
H5542 H2403 H5771 H5375

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 28:13 (Sin): He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

2 Samuel 12:13 (Sin): And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

Isaiah 65:24 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Psalms 38:18 (Sin): For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

Hosea 6:1 (References Lord): Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

Job 33:27 (Sin): He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;

2 Samuel 24:10 (Sin): And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

Psalms 103:12 (Sin): As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Psalms 30:5 (Parallel theme): For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

Ephesians 4:32 (Parallel theme): And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.