

## MIDWEEK OF LENT 1: STUDENT

## THE PENITENTIAL PSALMS: PSALM 32

## THEME VERSE

“You are a hiding place for me; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with shouts of deliverance.” (Psalm 32:7)

## TEXTS

Psalm

32

Small Catechism, Confession: *What is the Office of the Keys? Where is this written?*

## INTRODUCTION

We, according to our fallen nature, want to hide *from God*. Since Adam and Eve in the garden, we have sought to cover up our sins, not by having them forgiven, but by trying to ignore them or keep them away. But the light of God's Law shines upon our sinful behavior and shows us who we truly are, namely, sinners in need of forgiveness. Rather than hide *from God* in sin, by Holy Baptism we hide *in God* and His gracious forgiveness.

## QUESTIONS

Q1. Read Psalm 32:1–2. What does it mean to be blessed? What is the relationship between “transgression forgiven” and “sin covered”? What does the Lord not counting iniquity (v. 2) have to do with not having any deceit? Who do we deceive first and foremost (See 1 John 1:8; Genesis 3:8)?

Q2. Read Psalm 32:3–4. Why would keeping silent over one's sins have physical consequences? What is the opposite of keeping silent? Have you ever had to keep a secret that troubled you? What was your reaction to keeping that secret?

Q3. Read Psalm 32:5–6. Why are these words so familiar? (Hint: think of our confession of sins in the liturgy.) What does the word *confess* mean in this context? What are some of the things we confess in Church?

Q4. Read Psalm 32:7. What does it mean to hide in God? How does this hiding preserve you from trouble and surround you with shouts of deliverance?

Q5. Read Colossians 3:1–4. How does this baptismal language from Paul relate to the forgiveness of sins and hiding in God?

Q6. Read Psalm 32:8. The language here seems to switch from the psalmist (David) praying to God, to God speaking to David. What is the message God gives to David here?

Q7. Read Psalm 32:9. Why does God compare refusing to confess our sins to being like a horse or a mule?

Q8. Read *What is the Office of the Keys?* in the Small Catechism, Confession. Where do we receive the forgiveness of sins according to the catechism? How might this forgiveness and withholding forgiveness relate to what David teaches us about confession and forgiveness?

Q9. Read John 20:22–23. Why is the fact that forgiveness (and withholding of forgiveness) done by the apostles important? Why not simply have the people read about it in the Bible?

Q10. Read Psalm 32:10. How do we reconcile this verse with the simple fact that God's people suffer many sorrows as well? Is David saying that if we *really* trust in God, we won't have sorrows? Why is it important for us to be surrounded by God's steadfast love?

## CATECHISM

*What is the Office of the Keys?*

The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

*Where is this written?*

This is what St. John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty: The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone

his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” (John 20:22–23)

### CONCLUSION

God longs to cover our sins in forgiveness. By hiding in Him, we are freed from our own false attempts at self-justification, and we are freed to serve our neighbor in love, because God has first served us in Jesus Christ. God surrounds us with forgiveness, so that the accusations of Satan have no power over us.

## Psalm 32 ESV

Blessed Are the Forgiven A Maskil<sup>1a</sup> of David.

- 32** Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.
- <sup>2</sup> Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- <sup>3</sup> For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.
- <sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was dried up<sup>1b</sup> as by the heat of summer. *Selah*
- <sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not cover my iniquity;  
I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,”  
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Selah*
- <sup>6</sup> Therefore let everyone who is godly  
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;  
surely in the rush of great waters,  
they shall not reach him.
- <sup>7</sup> You are a hiding place for me;  
you preserve me from trouble;  
you surround me with shouts of deliverance. *Selah*
- <sup>8</sup> I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
- <sup>9</sup> Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,  
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,  
or it will not stay near you.
- <sup>10</sup> Many are the sorrows of the wicked,  
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.

**11** Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,  
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

## 1 John 1:8 ESV

**8** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Genesis 3:8

English Standard Version

**8** And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool[a] of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

John 20:22-23

English Standard Version

**22** And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."