

Book	Psalms – Study 9
Topic	Praying Our Guilt
Reference	Psalms 27
Date	28 October 2018
Speaker	Dr. Peter Ng

Psalms 130 (ESV) 1 **Out of the depths** I cry to you, O Lord! 2 O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! 3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.

The first thing that we need to notice is out of the depths I cry to you O Lord. The rest of the psalm give us some clue about what he is crying about, whether people are trying to attack him and destroy him or sabotage him. This is a plea out of the depths and so therefore it is basically either the pit or in underwater you are drowning. It is a metaphorical way of describing the terrible situation which he is in, which means he is wallowing in guilt and shame and in this situation, he is not asking for deliverance. For David, if he is in trouble he would ask for deliverance, but here he is in a pit, he is going to die already, he is just asking for mercy. He is not talking about deliverance, he is talking about mercy. So here the issue is guilt. Dr Willard Gaylin, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, defines guilt

"Guilt, the sense of anguish that we have fallen short of our own standards, is the guardian of our goodness," "Guilt results when we betray an internalized model of behaviour,"

That means according to psychiatrist, there is a model of behavior within us and that if we betray that guilt results. So therefore, there is a moral standard. If you break that moral standard, you have guilt. The question is that, is this moral standard objective or subjective. There is where Christians and non-Christians will disagree.

When you talk about guilt, we talk about moral standards. We talk about two things. One is values and one is duties. Values are whether something good or bad or worth an action. Duties is whether something is right or wrong, an obligation to act. So, value is good or bad, obligation and duty is right and wrong.

Colonoscopy is good from medical point of view because it can detect cancers earlier. I think it is bad because nobody likes things going in from their backside.

The difference between value and duty. Colonoscopy is not mandatory. So, you can have a difference. You can have a value and you can have a duty. So, something

can be good, seeing a doctor is good, but is not compulsory, because if you don't see a doctor, nobody will fine you. It is not necessarily a wrong thing.

When we are talking about moral standards, they vary. We have some objective moral standards that actually traverse all sorts of culture. For example, in Indian culture the wife has to be burned, which is considered good in one society, but in other societies it is a criminal act. Some people like to eat dog, but for some it is wrong.

James Allen Charles, a missionary from Oral Roberts University went to the Sentinelese Islands where a group of people were very backward tribes and he tried to share the gospel with them and they tried to spear him. One time his Bible is pierced. Second time, he went in they killed him. For some, this is horrible, but for the Island people it is their right. I think in most societies we will believe that the crime, the punishment doesn't fit the crime, so therefore there must be an objective right and wrong. Most people believe that the punishment must fit the crime. So, there is an objective moral value that actually transcends culture.

Where did we get this moral value?

We got this from God or Man. If you are a man, either it is naturalism or moral Platonism and basically what they say is that. Man says, we have moral values because of evolution. So, it evolved in such a way that nowadays we look after our gays, we have same sex marriage. All the values that you actually have now are all evolved over the years that makes for flourishing of human kind, but is that right, because Charles Darwin actually said these words

If ... men were reared under precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters; and no one would think of interfering.

The beast kill each other and they survive, if the bottom-line of moral standards is due to flourishing and survival species then we should be like bees, because the bees have survived for many-many years. When a man kills another man, it is called a murder. When a lion kills another animal, it is okay.

Moral standards come from God, outside of human beings. God gives us that and it is in the terms of our conscience.

Romans 2:14-16 (ESV) For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse

them 16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

So there is an objective outside standard which then explains why different cultures all have the same similar moral code, that's the only way you can explain it. Otherwise, you cannot explain how do you get this moral code.

William Shakespeare says,

Guilt is life's fitful fever. Guilt is awareness of having done something wrong. It arises from our action. Shame is a painful feeling about how we appear to others (and to ourselves) I also felt ashamed that I was the sort of person who would behave that way.

So, guilt is private, I did something. Shame is public, I am bad. Guilt is breaking the law, shame is feeling that your action contributes to who you are. When we feel guilt, we feel terrible.

Psalms 32:3 (ESV) For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. **4** For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. **5** 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.

When you cry for mercy means, you actually acknowledge, you deserve every punishment that is coming from God. There are a whole bunch of emotions that come together with guilt. Shame, remorse, regret, embarrassment.

- Shyness is shame in the presence of a stranger
- Discouragement is shame about temporary defeat
- Embarrassment is shame in front of others
- Self-consciousness is shame about performance
- Inferiority is all-encompassing shame about the self

These are all the whole family of negative emotions that you actually get. The whole trouble is that, guilt causes an assault upon your self-worth and you feel terrible. That's why you actually have shame. Woman and man have different levels of response psychologically. Women have:

- Greater levels of shame (specifically: behavioural and bodily shame),
- Lower levels of self-esteem, Greater levels of psychopathological distress,
- Higher cognitive reappraisal,
- Hostility

Men have:

- Greater emotional suppression

- Physical aggression

So, the moment you hit the spot, aggression comes. That's a sign of shame and guilt basically. So, there are subtle signs, you are distracted, hypersensitive, paranoid, self-defeating. The classical response is in Genesis, when Adam and Eve sinned

Genesis 3:7-8 (ESV) Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. 8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden

There is a study of 550 eight graders who were looked at. They were followed from Form 2 to Form 6. They found that there are two sets of people, ones who were prone to guilt and the ones who are prone to shame but less prone to guilt. They found that those who are prone to shame, majority of them had unsafe sex, drank at a younger age, less likely to apply for college. Because that's how they compensate for their shame, because they are shameful, so they drink to drown out the shame and they have maladaptive behavior.

Shame causes eating disorders. A lot of psychiatric disorders come because of guilt and shame. They did a study and found out that the shooter's likelihood of committing suicide appears to be 1.16 times higher for each additional victim that is killed. Which means the more people you kill, the more likely you are to commit suicide because of shame and guilt.

Shame and guilt are very powerful emotions that we have to learn to deal with, because it effects our self-worth and what we try to do is we try to suppress. In psychological terms, if you suppress the guilt then you actually have no shame, no loss of self-esteem or we compensate for our self-worth, because guilt attacks our self-worth.

Some of us compensate our guilt by living, some of us compensate our guilt by being a very good teacher, sometimes being very good parent. We do something psychologically in order to compensate for the areas of which we are guilty for. A lot of times guilt will drive you in your life. Guilt affects us very-very deeply. A lot of things that we do is because of guilt and shame. We can change guilt by argument and rationalization, but we cannot change the way we feel about ourselves.

How do we deal with guilt?

We can bring shame into the light. We can untangle what we are feeling. We can unhitch what you do from what you are or you recognize your triggers and make connection. This is how psychologist deal with guilt. Someone said that *Guilt is like radioactive waste of psyche.*

If you have guilt and you don't share it, it will be radioactive and it will be burying your waste and one day it will explode and come out. In fact, the psychiatrist, Brene Brown said

"not discussing a shaming event can be more damaging than the actual event itself".

So group therapy they suggest that you come and everybody share all their painful sins, so that you could actually help each other.

"When we bury the story, we forever stay the subject of the story, if we own the story we get to narrate the ending

What she is saying is that, we share it then you got to control how your life actually goes.

REAPPRAISAL

What you are feeling, is it really shame because of what you did or is it just embarrassment.

BLAME PIE.

Martin Hsia in California says, he was actually counseling a gentleman who actually threw a baseball ball and hit a little baby who fell accidentally into the pool and then died. For all his entire life he lived wrapped with guilt over that particular event. What they did was sit him down and try to replay the event. They replayed the event and said how come you were at the party. He said, I don't know, I think my mother dropped me there. She was too busy, she had nothing to do and she dropped me to the party. Then the psychiatrist said, your mother is partly to blame. So let's assign your mother 20% of the blame. Then they asked him, do you started playing the ball. He said, no the people started it. So they said, the gang should get 30% of the blame. Then the asked, what was the baby doing. He said, the baby was walking around the pool totally unsupervised. So the psychiatrist said, the mother should accept some degree of blame, and he gave the mother 50%. So it resulted out that he got only a little blame.

So by re-rationalizing your portion blame you feel better about yourself. So that's how psychiatrist deal with guilt. They try to rethink it, in order to deal with that guilt.

You are unhitched what you do from who you are.

The trouble is we put the power of our happiness in the hands of other people. What they say about us? Whether they smile at us or whether we gave a good

sermon or not, it means our happiness depend on them. So what psychiatrist is saying, you should unhitch what you are from what you do.

RECOGNIZE YOUR TRIGGERS FACTORS

What triggers you to have shame. You have to figure out the events that triggers. You choose events that don't trigger. These are the ways in which we avoid shame. This means you don't join the rich man club, you join the poor man's club.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

Make a lot of relationships and realize that everybody is a sinner. So therefore, we are all sinners, so we must feel good. That's what psychiatrist do. But the trouble is, that kind of idea is like patchwork, you can't stop the shame from coming out. No matter what you do, there are not enough fingers and holes to plug up all the holes in your life.

How do we deal with guilt?

We need to apply a new standard, which is his standard. It says here,

3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

So basically, there is a moral standard. There is a moral standard that is only marked by God. Now it doesn't mean that God is perfect and so therefore there is a moral standard and God measure up. When we say God determines the standard, we are actually saying that God is the standard. The standard of righteousness in the world, moral righteousness is based on that character and the nature of God. If God is loving as a character, therefore; we have to measure up to that character. If God is unselfish, so therefore that unselfish is the standard itself.

Goodness, love, all the values are not value separate from God. So, God has to measure up to them outside standard. Moral standards are based on the person and character of God himself. So, God's own nature. So we need a standard and that standard is God, so therefore we look in scripture. In fact Paul says,

1 Corinthians 4:3 (ESV) But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

Everybody will fail the standard of God, so therefore we must plea for mercy. Only his standard matters, nothing else, because sometimes we have a situation where God may forgive you of your sin. God can forgive you but sometimes you don't

forgive yourself, meaning your standard is higher than God's standard. So we need to apply a consistent standard. His standard, not your own.

FALSE GUILT

Your heart feel something than your brain, that's the problem and so therefore we need to learn to apply God's standard. So, God's standard is basically you taking a ladder to reach the sky, you cannot, we all fail God's standard as it were. The word of God is like a thermometer. It is functioned to tell you that you are a sinner, you need to cry for mercy.

RESTORE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

**Psalms 130 (ESV) 3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?
4 But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.**

That's a very important fact. There is a difference between two kinds of guilt. One kind of guilt is guilty fear, and the other kind of guilt is real guilt, because of acknowledgement of what went wrong.

For Christians we actually have to be motivated by guilt. The direction determines the kind of guilt. If God is perceived as a monster, you sin, and you go to hell, God is going to come and get you. Then you start running away from God. If you actually have proper guilt, you run towards a solution to your guilt, which is basically God. So therefore, on one hand, paradoxically if you have guilty fear your fear actually decreases when God forgives you. So basically, if God forgives you, you actually feel less guilt and less fear. On the other hand, if there is a godly fear and you are actually forgiven by God, your godly fear actually increases which is actually paradoxical.

Godly fear is increased by forgiveness. The more you are forgiven, the more you actually fear God and that fear is not fear in terms of trepidation, it is actually defined as the fear of the Lord is joyful awe and wonder at the transcendent greatness of who God is. I am so horrible, I am so sinful and every time I confront my sin, how bad it is and how God can forgive me, I feel overwhelmed and so therefore because God is so wonderful, I run towards God. If you are fearing God, you run away from God and not only you run away from God, you sin more as it were. So, there is a difference.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote about spiritual depression. He says, *"we must never look at any sin in our past life in any way except that which leads us to praise God and to magnify His grace in Christ Jesus."*

That means sin shows you how far you were and how much God loved you to bring you back and if you could look at sin that way, it no longer destroys your self-

esteem. It no longer determines what your worth and it shows you how great God is. So, you always look at sin, not at how terrible you are but how wonderful he is to have saved you then you transform the way you look at your sin. So therefore, would you be reluctant to confess, no. You know why, because the sin doesn't tell you what you are. The sin tells you how wonderful he is to save you. Now if you look at sin in that manner then your trash hole to confession and running back to God is completely transformed. So therefore, you understand that, they way you look at sin will never be the same again. When you look back at sin and all the things you do, you basically don't condemn you, instead of having that response my God how wonderful He is that he has saved me and so therefore that's why Paul says, we are more than conquerors, we turn the evil back and the evil makes Christ looks even greater because of what the cross has done. We need to understand this fact. This is a very-very important fact that most of us have never thought about. If you understand the gospel, this will transform the way you live. You don't have to live under the curse or guilt.

Shift your hope to the new redeemer

Psalms 130 (ESV) 5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; 6 my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. 7 O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. 8 And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

So therefore, we have to shift our hope in life not from our own works but towards him and it make sense. Christian hope is a different thing, Christian hope is a certainty based on a historical event that actually happened. That's difference. So, we need to shift our hope on the cross. So therefore, Jesus is the one who gives us hope for tomorrow.

The psychology of this is that, we are supposed to unhitch what you do from what you are. I did something bad, therefore I am bad. What Jesus does, so it is what the psychologist say, they uncouple. Now what we do is different. We apply Jesus's righteousness. We no longer depend on our CV; what Jesus is saying is that you take your CV and you throw it away and you put Jesus's CV and he becomes your righteousness and you no longer have to look at guilt anymore because your guilt is hidden in his righteousness.

If you are a non-Christian, all you have to do is to learn to uncouple what you do from what you are. This is not an easy thing to do. It is not easy because what you are cannot occur in a vacuum, what you are is based on what you do. We are what we do. So, it is very silly to say, we are not what we do. It is easier to say, I am what He did. That means something must be based on something. It cannot be based on air. So therefore, our righteousness, our confidence, our value is in the image of God and if you learn to do that then you don't hate yourself.

There is a process

Psalms 130 (ESV) 5 I **wait for the Lord**, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; 6 my **soul waits for the Lord** more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.

There is one thing to be forgiven of your sin by the death of Jesus on the cross, the other thing is to enter into God's presence because we actually still struggle with sin. We struggle with our inability to have that kind of faith. So therefore, we are blocked from actual true fellowship with God. So therefore, we are to wait for God like watchman in the morning. In the dark, sin clouds our experience and we can't feel God's love because it is night time, you are depressed, you are in a difficult situation, but because you are like a watchman you are waiting. So, you are waiting patiently because you know there is anticipation because one day the sun will rise and surely the sun will rise tomorrow, Christ will come again, your presence of God will be restored, and you will feel Him again.

You look for the signs are we are obedient while we are waiting. That's what it means to wait on God.

There is a process.

He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities. That means we wait together in community. Why, because in community we support each other, we share our sins in the group together, not because we are sinful, but we are saved by Jesus Christ.

There is difference in how humans and gospel handles the sin.