

CONFESSION, REPENTANCE, AND FORGIVENESS IN PSALMS

Psalms 32

Over the centuries, many believers, overcome by an awareness of their own sins, have found in the words of the penitential (repentance) psalms a ray of hope. The psalmists shared with God the depth of their sorrow and repentance, as well as the height of joy at being forgiven. They rejoiced in the knowledge that God would respond to confession and repentance with complete forgiveness. We who live on the other side of the cross of Christ can rejoice even more because we understand more. God has shown us that he is willing to forgive because his judgment on sin was satisfied by Christ's death on the cross.

As you read these psalms, note the pattern followed by the psalmists in responding to God: (1) They recognized their sinfulness and tendency to do wrong; (2) they realized that sin was rebellion against God himself; (3) they admitted their sins to God; (4) they trusted in God's willingness to forgive; and (5) they accepted his forgiveness. Use these psalms as a reminder of how easy it is to drift away from God and fall into sin, and what is needed to reestablish that fellowship.

Selected psalms that emphasize these themes are Psalms 6; 14; 31; 32; 38; 41; 51; 102; 130; 143.