

Sermon Series: Growing Pains—Lord of Life Lutheran Church—8/13/2000

Title: “Growing through Mistakes”

Text: Psalm 32

Introduction: *Illus.:* “Bulletin Bloopers” and Mark Twain quote, “The Only Animal that Blushes”

Theme: As humans we have funny way of not dealing with and hiding our mistakes. It is only when we bring them out in the open and let God begin the healing that our mistakes and sins don’t grow into life long tragedies.

To grow through your mistakes--get honest with them (vss. 1-4)

C Listen to our words describing sin--~~mistake~~—~~oversight~~—~~white-lie~~—~~indiscretion~~—oops—difficulty—miscalculation

C Listen to God’s words describing sin—~~missing the mark~~—~~rebellion~~—~~law breaking~~—~~wickedness~~—~~iniquity~~—~~disobedience~~

–“The soul that sins, it shall die” Ezekiel 18: 20

C Honesty with our sins is the road to recovery and salvation

1. The tragedy of coverup

- a. David understood adultery with Bathsheba was rebellion and cover-up led to more tragic end of Uriah’s murder
- b. When we cover-up rather than “fess-up”—we waste away emotionally and physically and live in fear (vs. 3-4)

c. **ILLUS.: WELDER’S BLUES**

2. The joy of coming clean

- a. David on the other side of honest confession and forgiveness could say, “**How blessed is the man whose record the Lord has cleared of sin, whose life is lived in complete honesty!**” (Vs. 1)
- b. When you and I walk in the light, we don’t have to walk under the chains of fear that the darkness brings

To grow through your mistakes--take them back to the One who can deal with them (vss. 5-7)

Steps toward healing:

C **Lay down your weapons** (vs. 5—word for confess)

1. Sometimes God has to scream, “Throw down your weapons and come out with your hands up”
2. To confess means to throw down our sin-enabling weapons of : **pride**—**self-centeredness**—**selfishness**, **idolatry**
3. “**Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.**” Colossians 3: 5

C **Stop doing the cover-up** (vs. 5) and let God cover the debt—He does a better job of it because he pays for it

1. **Illus.:** Take out the Garbage

C **Trust his word and promise**, completely—if God says you are forgiven, you are forgiven

1. ***If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us.***”1 John 1: 9

2. God does two things with our sin: (vs.3)

- he removes them by “pulling the up roots and all” **Illus.:** Round-up commercials
- he covers over the sin with Jesus’ blood so nothing to be seen/nothing to have guilt over **ILL.:**Bribing God

C **Rest in God’s care during the aftermath (vs. 7)**

1. Covering/hiding place from the blunt force of sin’s consequence
2. Protection from the **floodwaters** of judgment and guilt (vs. 6)
3. Joy to know that even the worst, tangled mess is not bigger than God’s redeeming power and love can handle

To grow through your mistakes--learn from them and then leave them behind (vss. 8-11)

C Be wise not stubborn

1. David uses the analogy of horse/mule to help us visually picture how foolish it is to repeat a grave mistake
2. **ILLUS.:** 180 ° Turn

3. Wisdom comes not from trying harder, trusting your own instinct but in following God’s way that leads to life

C Ask God to bring back the joy after the fall

1. “**Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation. And sustain me with a willing spirit.**” Psalm 51: 10-12

Bulletin Bloopers

"Don't let worry kill you--let the church help."

"The Odor of Worship is as follows."

"This afternoon, there will be meetings in the south and north ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends."

"Thursday night: Potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow."

"Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community."

"This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar."

The Only Animal that Blushes

It was your great American wit, Mark Twain, who once said, Man is the only animal that blushes, and the only animal that needs to. We are ashamed, are we not, of things we've done in the past. Nobody is free who is unforgiven. Instead of being able to look God in the face or to look one another in the face, we want to run away and hide when our conscience troubles us.

Consequences of a Mistake

I was a junior in high school, and I loved metal shop. Metal shop was filled with points of caution. You were regularly working with metal that contained sharp edges, was blistering hot or heavy enough to crush a finger in an instant. You had to be careful not to get too close to the metal lathe. A loose article of clothing could cause the loss of a limb. Then there were the oxyacetylene torches. The torches, used incorrectly, caused numerous minor explosions during class. Finally, there were the welders. These power packed machines generated temperatures up to nearly 1,200 degrees through high amperage electricity being pumped between welding rod and metal framework. Safety--following guidelines--is paramount when working in metal shop. That's where I made my error. I was welding one day; I think I was working on an outdoor patio set. I clamped the pieces of metal together, made sure everything was lined up properly, and "struck an arc" (that's welding lingo for "got started"). I only recognized my error when the flash of blue flame reached my eyes. I had forgotten to put down the welding mask. (Welding masks contain special glass that filters out the intense ultraviolet light generated by the welder.) I stopped, rubbed my eyes for a moment, put the mask down, and started again. I didn't know anything had happened until the next morning. I woke up with my eyes burning as if they had been immersed in a salt bath. I could barely open them, and when I did, it felt as though someone was pouring sand directly on my eyeball. I knew what had happened. They call it welder's blues. When your eyes are not protected against the ultraviolet light emitted from welding, the outer portion of the eyeball gets the equivalent of a sunburn. And it smarts! I couldn't open my eyes, much less see, for the next day. It took about two days for my eyes to heal. I will never forget how my error caused a loss of sight.

Taking Out the Garbage

After I graduated from Dallas Seminary, waiting on my first ministry, I went home to live with my mother. My mom gave me chores. She said, "One of your jobs is to take out the trash, Son." So every week I put out the garbage.

One week I forgot to put out the garbage. Garbage has a way of making itself known. It began to smell. Every day we kept piling more garbage onto it. It even began to spill over, and it was right where you came into the back of the house. Every time we went into the house we would get a whiff of it.

The aroma began to seep into the house and infected the atmosphere. Then it started to infect my mom's relationship with me. Every time she looked at me, it was as if she were saying, "Why don't you take out the garbage?"

The next week, I took out the garbage. The atmosphere cleaned up. Our relationship was better. Everything was okay.

My brothers and sisters, if you don't take out the garbage on a daily basis, it piles up. It begins to stink. It can pollute your relationships and cause you to move further away from people. So if we want to be cleansed by God, we must confess to God and put out the garbage on a daily basis.

Bribing God

(cartoon)

"This is a most generous donation, Mr. Burgess. I thank you, the church thanks you, and if your unconfessed sin is still unbearable next week, feel free to give again."

180 Degree Turn

Wabush, a town in a remote portion of Labrador, Canada, was completely isolated for some time. But recently a road was cut through the wilderness to reach it. Wabush now has one road leading into it, and thus, only one road leading out. If someone would travel the unpaved road for six to eight hours to get into Wabush, there is only one way he or she could leave--by turning around.

Each of us, by birth, arrives in a town called Sin. As in Wabush, there is only one way out--a road built by God himself. But in order to take that road, one must first turn around. That complete about-face is what the bible calls repentance, and without it, there's no way out of town.

Psalm 32: 1-11

¹Oh, what joy for those whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! ²Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! ³When I refused to confess my sin, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long, ⁴ Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. ⁵Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. ⁶Therefore, let all the godly confess their rebellion to you while there is time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment and guilt. ⁷For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.

⁸The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. ⁹Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."

¹⁰Many sorrows come to the wicked, but mercy surrounds those who trust the Lord. ¹¹So rejoice in the Lord and be glad, all you who are declared righteous! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure! [NLT]