Weekly Study of Sunday's Message
November 8, 2026 ***"Clean Slate: The Journey Towards Renewal" Confession.***

I Intro.
We're moving into November, and this series pairs with our Advent series which will begin the Sunday after Thanksgiving. This will almost be a parallel two-part set of series. There's a lot going on at NCC and you'll want to keep up with everything that's happening. Stay connected through our social media to keep up with everything that's going on. This is our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey. We don't want you to miss out on anything. We consider you part of our community. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are fully committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family. If there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know.

II Recap.
We are on a four week journey towards Advent. Practicing four sacred ordinances that lead to renewal and restoration. Advent is a liturgical (work of the people) season, four Sundays before Christmas, to prepare for the coming of the Christ. And to wait well. This series: ***"Clean Slate: The Journey Towards Renewal"***, will prepare us for Advent.
Renewal is an intentional commitment to returning, to being restored. Doing the work to bring the original 'luster', newness, and purpose, out of something that has been worn down, accumulating unnecessary things through time and use. Renewal is the process of finding the inner real you…by removing all that's not you. Renewal restores; vision, strength, perspective, recharges your soul, reorients your heart, reconnects you to the pure source of life, and reinforces what we deep down know to be truth.
For November we are observing and practicing the four classic ordinances of many churches that prepare people seeking God to be with God. These are: **Examination. Confession. Absolution. Repentance.** These ordinances invite us to face something….in order to receive something. As always, we're talking about the process, and the work of transformation. I don't want you to just know about being renewed, restored. This isn't just informational. I want you to deeply feel, and experience the freedom and **Hope, Joy, Peace**, and **Love** that comes from practicing each of these ordinances. God wants you to live deeply into these gifts from him.
This will be important over the next several weeks. Renewal not only prepares us for the work of Advent seeking: Hope, Joy, Peace, and Love. But we're going to create a 'meeting place' to abide with God each Sunday. To restore and renew us like we were created to be. Not adding to our list of stuff and things to do. But by helping us strip away all of the buildup that clings to us as we go through life.
The first week in our service on Examination we asked: ***"What is hidden?"*** And it's out of this place we found **HOPE**. Today in Confession we proclaim: ***"I will stop hiding it."*** And it's out of this place we will find **PEACE**. The Hebrew word for peace is **shaloam**.

III Sunday.
As our people came into the sanctuary, they each received a stone. I want to encourage you to find your own stone and hold onto it until the meditation. Okay some questions to kick us off.
Have you ever experienced REAL peace after a season of…not peace?
What was that thing you went through that was so tough, brutal, exhausting, that when you came out the other side you felt just how tensed up you had been?
I'll give you a minute to think about what that 'not peace' was. Maybe the death of a loved one. Being let go from a job. The breakup of a meaningful relationship. A relationship struggle. A season of financial struggle. You may have been carrying some unnecessary guilt or shame of something you said or did. Maybe you're in that season now, and you're feeling a lack of peace.
Today's work: ***"Clean Slate: The Journey Towards Renewal"*** moves us towards that peace we desire. But you have to walk a tough path to get there. As we dive into the primary teaching for today, we want to reiterate that this ordinance isn't about shame or condemnation. This is about the freedom, and liberation our sins hold us in. Some things we need to know about this scripture. It begins with the end. It's giving you hope, your future, at the very beginning. What the other side looks like. So when you see this promise…you're more willing to do the hard things to get there.
You'll notice *"interludes"* in this psalm also. They are placed after specific work is done. Interludes in music are a pause, shift, often deepening of the theme of the story, so you can shift yourself to how you listen and participate in the song. So as you read it, pause at the interludes. And let the breadth and depth of each of these passages sink in.
Psalm 32 ***Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt,[b] whose lives are lived in complete honesty!***
When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. (Interlude)
Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. (Interlude) Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment. For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory. (Interlude) The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.
Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control." Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the LORD.
So rejoice in the LORD and be glad, all you who obey him! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!
We're going to dig into this scripture as it is written. It's the reverse of how I would normally present it. But it seems the author of this psalm thought this was a better order to write it in. And it highlights how we need to see the work of confession from God's point of view. And someone who did their own work of confession views confession.

The lightness from confession. (vs 1-2) The psalm begins with the benefits of honest confession.
Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt,[b] whose lives are lived in complete honesty!

There is this life we're supposed to live. This is the life we were created for. We are designed to live. That can ONLY come through this essential work of confession. This is the same life that Jesus offers us at the end of Matthew. To relieve us from a life of burden and heaviness. Not a life of difficulty and tedious and taxing work. But there is a life that is light and full of peace, born out of pursuing Jesus. That comes from honestly practicing and doing this work of confession.

The burdensome weight of sin. (vs 3-4) There's an intense somatic effect, holding onto, and carrying around unconfessed sin.

When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. (Interlude)

Confessing sins isn't to punish us. It's not to shame us, judge us for not being good enough. Honest confession frees us from the bondage our sins hold us in. The extra weight we're dragging around has real effects on our soul. Know this. All of scripture is the work of liberation. And there is a very strong physical element to this liberation. Liberation is more than just freedom to. Liberation is especially freedom from. The freedom from all the heartache and pain from unnecessary baggage. We all know the somatic, body, effects of stress, anxiety, worry, and other negative patterns we all battle with. Our bodies are affected by the mental, emotional, and spiritual struggles we have.

I'm sure you can think of moments in your life that your body was affected by whatever you were going through in life. The gift of confession, removing the chains of the things we've done, (sin), has a real-life effect on our physical health. It's in this relief of speaking/confessing our sins we experience the faithfulness of God.

The wisdom and liberation of confession. (vs 5-11)

"Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone."

David is saying, in his work of confession, the peace and joy we experience is discovering God isn't ashamed of us, or wanting to zap us. God's ultimate desire is for us to be in relationship with him. Now, let me talk about sin for a bit. Many of us recoil at the word sin. Because we grew up in some form of religion that beat us up about sin. We were told how horrible we were, how disappointed or even disgusted God is with us, because he can't see us through our sin. The Greek word for sin is: *"hamartia"*. Which means missing the life God has designed for us. Sin is anything we do that creates distance between our relationship with God. Or our relationship with others. So we focus on, give our attention to, those things in our life that are creating distance between us and God. And us and others.

The end of Psalm 32 is to remind us of all the real world benefits. Actual things we gain, when we do the work of confession honestly and sincerely. So, let's do that. But first we need to condition our hearts and all of who we are to be open to the voice and movement of the Holy Spirit.

It was here we sang a song, and then recited together a corporate confession. I want you to read the corporate confession that we read together, and then do your own confession.. I broke it up with forward slashes so you can pause after each saying. Go ahead and recite this confession. Out loud if you feel comfortable enough. But pausing at each one of the slashes to fully be in this confession.

Corporate confession.

"Most merciful God,/ we confess to you that we have sinned against you/ in thought, word, and deed,/ by what we have done,/ and by what we have left undone./ We have not loved you with our whole heart;/ we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves./ We have valued self-reliance over your guidance/ and kept silent in the face of injustice./ For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,/ have mercy on us./ Forgive us,/ renew us,/ and lead us,/ so that we may delight in your will/ and walk in your ways,/ to the glory of your holy name./ Amen."

Individual personal time of confession into the stone. Now, if you do have a stone, hold it in your hand. Feel its weight and its presence. Allow yourself to focus on the stone.
Read this first part of Psalm 32 again.
Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt,[b] whose lives are lived in complete honesty!
When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. (Interlude)
Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

Instructions about the stone. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the weight you've been carrying of unconfessed sin. Hold the stone tightly and confess those things you've been carrying for far too long. Take your time. There is no rush to do this. At this point you can play some music for yourself. Confess your sins to this stone. And then place it in an out of the way place in your home. Reminding you that your sin has been removed, and you have received God's forgiveness.

IV Challenge.
This work of Confession is the work towards **PEACE**. Of Shalom. Wholeness, completeness, the results of salvation. The lack of peace, our inner turmoil, an unsettledness, is found in carrying things we don't need to carry. And were never meant to carry. And in confessing these things, letting them go, the burden is lifted, and we are set free.
Trust that there is ALWAYS forgiveness waiting for us in honest confession.
***But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.* 1 John 1:9.**
This is a promise Jesus preached, and the followers of Jesus have always trusted in. After a thorough examination, comes the work of confession. Let this work of confession be a continual work for you. And you will live the light and liberated life you were created to live.
Next week we bathe in the grace of absolution.