

Lord - Have Mercy ...

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [0 : 00] We can sing now to God's praise, Psalm 130. Psalm 130, we'll sing the whole song.
- Lord, from the depths to thee I cried. My voice, Lord, do thou hear, and to my supplications voice give an attentive ear. Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, but yet with thee forgiveness is that feared thou mayest be.
- I wait for God, my soul doth wait, my hope is in his word. More than they that for morning watch, my soul waits for the Lord. I say, more than they that do watch, the morning light to see.
- Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with and mercy be, and plenteous redemption is ever found with him. And from all whose iniquities he Israel shall redeem.
- The whole of Psalm 130, to the praise of God. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried. My voice, Lord, do thou hear. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried.
- [1 : 23] My voice, Lord, do thou hear. Lord, do thou hear.
- I play the part of thy of God. Lord, the Bible which will gently both hospice in us. Lord, do thou speak about them, Spirit. God, hear." The incapable of ■■■■■ and sufficient in others.
- The award is 71's of July's of May. God have given me glory. On the right of the walk, heart of light is 51's grace. Amen. Forgufen■■ on widening with me.
- I wait for God, my soul of grace, my hope is His word.
- More than daylight, for more reward, my soul is for the Lord.
- [3 : 05] I sing for none, if I do watch, the morning light to see, let Israel open the Lord, for with Him let His be.
- Conplenteous redemption is ever done within, and from all the depths of the heaven, and from all the depths of the heaven.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

for I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me and so on a familiar psalm to many and I'm sure a psalm that strikes a chord in the heart of many of the Lord's people I want us to begin by just a few general remarks about the psalmist and the psalm that he composes and what is brought to our attention in the psalm and even out with the psalm and then look particularly at some of the things that are brought to our attention in these words that we have read we read the title that is given to the psalm and the comments that come there and you will appreciate that such comments and the title itself is not part of the original Hebrew text there are later additional remarks that came from the scribes and those who were responsible for transcribing the passage but they are helpful because they give us an insight into what they considered to be the historical background to the psalm and the second thing that we can say that is true about the psalm which has no bearing on the content of it in a sense but it is one of the psalms that is considered to be a penitential psalm there are seven identified under that umbrella the title penitential psalms and this is the middle psalm the first three psalm 6 psalm 32 and psalm 38 the final three psalm 102 psalm 130 which we have just sung and psalm 142 now that doesn't mean that other psalms do not have similar sentiments but they do appear in a lesser measure in these psalms that we have mentioned the focus of the psalmist generally is you could say as a rule of thumb if you come across one of these psalms that the composer is calling out to God out of a sense that they have of sin and they come in a spirit of humility and penitence to God and their composition is addressed to their own awareness of their sinfulness and the provision that God has made for them as sinners you've obviously

I'm sure heard the words of Calvin among others when he speaks about the psalms in particular he says the psalms are an anatomy of all the parts of the soul and this is because there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror words that are often quoted from the mouth of John Calvin so I'm sure you appreciate what he is saying that when we sing the psalms very often we find a release from our emotions in the psalms sometimes the the the the fact that the psalms that we sing are almost directly expressive of the feelings that we are experiencing at the time sometimes joy sometimes grief but the words of the psalmist you could say well he he just hit the nail on the head there sometimes you hear it said to a minister you were speaking to me in that sermon when the psalmist is composing verses that the spirit is responsible for and clearly he means what the psalmist is composing to have a relevance to the

[10:37] Lord's people and this psalm in particular just a quotation from Thomas Chambers says this is the most deeply affecting of the psalms and I am sure the most applicable to me that was his opinion the psalm most applicable to me and I'm sure he's not alone when he said that we find certainly at times words just flowing from our mouth as a quotation from the psalms but they just they marry into the experience that we may be going through at that particular time now looking at the picture generally as a psalm of the Lord the guidance that is given by the scribes is that it is a psalm that grew out of the experience of David when his sin was made known to him by Nathan the prophet it's not the sin itself that happened but the sin was highlighted the sin took place some time before and whether you could argue that David was oblivious to that sin which I doubt he was certainly oblivious to the to the extent at which that sin was heinous in the sight of

God and how much it affected his relationship with God that was something that God using the prophet brought home to him and as a consequence the experience of grief comes and just a lesson for us I suppose that sometimes we feel guilty of being aware of the sins of others and critical of them while at the same time oblivious to our own and lack the faculty of criticism or the faculty of critical analysis that brings our behaviour to a throne of judgement in our conscience and that's when God intervenes that's when

God comes and brings that home to us the apostle Paul reminds the church in his own day wherefore let him that standeth take heed lest he fall and how often have you come across perhaps people who are so openly critical of the sins of others as if they could not fall prey to these sins themselves as if they were immune from such sins and if we know anything about ourselves we know that there isn't a sin that we cannot be exposed to and sometimes succumb to and the words of John Newton I suppose come to mind there but for the grace of

God go I and that's true about every one of us and is there not a solemn reminder to us of how much we need the near presence of God to understand our sin not only do we need the way that's been explained to me is that if we cultivate an ongoing relationship with God as a companion as someone that we are aware of being in his presence constantly it is a deterrent to us so that we don't fall into sin as readily and I think there's wisdom to be said there if you are constantly engaged in prayer if you are constantly meditating on

God's word if you are constantly seeking to apply the truth to your life then the chances are that you will not be taken and aware by sin or by Satan but we're not like that that's the reality we're not like that I'm not suggesting to you that this is how I am and this is how you should be but what I'm saying is that if we were as sensitive to the word of God and living in the light of that word the pitfalls that we would fall into would not be as many but having said that once we have sinned and the scripture tells us that we do sin and that we will sin that we need

[16 : 46] God's grace to be able to understand the extent of that sin the nature of that sin the pervasiveness of that sin because we can live with it without being aware of it and clearly David is a case in point David went on without having these thoughts of grief for sin for some considerable time he lived even though he had done this wrong without being troubled by it we don't know how troubled he was maybe he did have thoughts about it maybe his conscience did burden him but not to the extent that we find expressed in the psalm and we can't question the part that David played in the cause of God he was a champion of the Lord he was someone who was prominent as a servant of the

Lord and yet he fell into sin that itself reminds us of the danger that exists prominence in God's service does not ensure that there is safety there it wasn't the case for David and God because of that prominence gives prominence to his sin he could have chosen to deal with David privately and if people round about him were unaware of the sin that he was guilty of there is no sense of it there is no historical record of it that David committed this sin with the knowledge of others that they were aware of what he had done but God gives an earring to it he gives prominence to it not just in the experience of

David but David himself with God's prompting confesses publicly not just to God but to those who listen to him and I suppose there's a lesson there for us as well that when we look back on David's life and when we think about how he lived his life we tend to be less concerned about it we probably are more ready to be forgiving to David he is a historical figure what he did he did centuries ago the impact upon us is therefore limited but move David into a contemporary context move

David into our setting and allow us to be aware of his sin how then do we judge him how then do we react to him it is very hard to be forgiving in that sense and yet we are expected to be and as opposed there's another dimension to that we can be forgiving to somebody who sins against somebody else but if that sin is directed at us or our person or somebody close to us the ability to forgive is not as pronounced and there again what does that do for us if we think on that if we reflect on that and present to it the case of

David's situation where he confesses his sin to God a God who knows about the sin a God who knows the extent of the sin a God who knows the heart of David and yet that God whose eye is upon him is a God who is able to show him mercy and the two things that we need to remember is that God looked upon David in mercy and that is sure God looked upon David in mercy even though he exposed his sin and taught David about his sin and it was with the leading of the spirit of God that David came to understand the nature of his sin and that again even with that knowledge it because of the relationship that existed and because of the presence of the spirit rather than go away from

[22 : 08] God David came to God and that's what makes the difference as far as genuine repentance is concerned we can't be remorseful without being penitent we can express a degree of sorrow without that sorrow being genuine repentance genuine repentance requires a sense of the sin a grief for that sin a turning from that sin but it doesn't stop there there is a turning to God and without all of these elements being united it is not genuine repentance you could perhaps the most obvious example of remorse is seen in the life of Judas Iscariot there is no question but that

Judas was made to feel a sense of wrongdoing over his betrayal of innocent blood but that didn't take him to God that didn't take him to experience the sense of guilt that was necessary for him to genuinely repent he went out into the night and took his own life but what then do we find out from the words of the psalm just a few thoughts about that these are just general comments but more particularly looking at the words that David confesses we can say quite plainly that David is aware of his guilt his confession of guilt before God is not just a confession that we may have when we pray to

God we confess sin which we do and we write to do it but David's confession of sin is one where he recognises that he is guilty of transgressions he is guilty of iniquity and sin different words that I suppose could come under the umbrella of sin but the fact that he uses different words suggests to us that his experience of sin was deepened by reason of God's dealing with him it was an understanding that the many nuanced meaning of these words should allow us to appreciate that by reason of

God's intervention and the enlightening of the Holy Spirit that he saw the genuine odiousness of his sin the offence that was caused to God and it was the role of the Holy Spirit to convince him of that to bring to light what was there and which apparently he seemed to have been oblivious to or at least heedless of it but now he confesses these sins before God and man and not only does he identify particular sin which is what he was guilty of the sin of adultery the sin of murder perhaps coming into the orbit of his confession but he understood the pervasive nature of sin as far as he was concerned that there was not a faculty of his soul that was not polluted by sin so he takes you right back to what he was by nature behold he says

I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me now you could say oh well this is David covering himself by identifying himself with the descendants of Adam who are fallen and it's just an excuse on his part to say well I'm just what I am by nature well have you ever come up with that excuse yourself have you ever excused yourself of sin by saying well what else could I do this is this is what man is like he's fallen he's depraved he's someone who is in the grip of sin constantly what seems to be true of the knowledge that

[27 : 34] David has is that he understands the extent of it in the way that he describes it and he it's as if he is saying for the first time he is understanding how he is in the sight of God rather than how he is in the sight of David it's a big big difference if you look at yourself with your limited understanding of the sinfulness of sin and you look at yourself with the knowledge that God has of sin which is a knowledge that the holy has of sin the difference is incredible the difference is

I was listening to a sermon recently preached by Sinclair Ferguson and it was simply on the words holy father holy father and he was trying to well he was succeeding this demonstrating to us or to the hearers the awesomeness of that expression uttered by his son who himself was the holy harmless and defiled son of God who had ever lived in the bosom of the father since before the world was and yet his experience of God was an experience of a God who was holy and if the second person of the trinity is speaking of the holiness of his heavenly father as something that is unique and without equal how can we not who have so much sin in our own heart not be offered and in a sense this is what

David is coming to he is not excusing himself he is not making excuses for his sin he is recognizing that with original sin comes the knowledge that sin is always there and with that knowledge comes if that person is educated by God informed by God that knowledge of sin should be a forewarning that knowledge of sin should be a hindrance to further sin that understanding that sin is ever with us from the womb then we should be in a position to understand how truly dangerous it is so instead of excusing himself David in a sense is saying well this is what I am and this is how

I have come to be where I am but not to excuse himself but he recognizes God as a merciful God does he not he recognizes God as a God of mercy his sin is great but God is greater than his sin there are many but God is greater still he needs mercy but not just mercy he needs the mercy of God and I don't know which one of the commentators I think it was a Puritan who says of the insatiable appetite man has for God's mercy it is the person who grasps the character of God and understands something of that character who is able to ground his hope on the fact that

God is merciful how would you be how would you feel where would you go if you did not understand that the God of heaven is a God of mercy if mercy is not in God then it's misery I think that is something that is true about the God of the Muslim that the God of the Muslim is a God who is not necessarily able or willing to bestow mercy on those who would come to them they cannot trust in their God that he will deal with them in a merciful way because he is unpredictable God is predictable

[33 : 12] God is the one that you can predict about a concerning the willingness that he has to show mercy to the needy you go to Psalm 103 and the description that is there of God's willingness and repetitive exposure to the sins of his people and yet the capacity to come to them and show them mercy again and again in verse 4 he sees how personal his sin is to God against thee thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and not be cleared when thou judgest what David is saying there is he's not saying that he hasn't offended others that's not the point that he's making but the sin that he is guilty of is gross because it is an offence against

God because he is the one above all else that he has wronged if you remember when Moses was in the wilderness he had this experience with God he was identified as somebody who spoke to God face to face as God as he would speak with a friend and he asked to see God he asked particularly for God to show him his glory and you remember what happened and he said I will let all my goodness pass before thee I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee and will be gracious to whom

I will be gracious and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy Moses was being taught a lesson there that this was the glory of God and this is where it is to be seen in his capacity to show grace and to be merciful those who are divines will tell you that grace is God giving to us what we do not deserve and mercy is keeping from us what we do mercy is not giving to us what we do deserve it seems like a fine distinction but it is we are recipients of his grace we are recipients of his mercy and

Moses' desire to see the glory of God is akin to the desire that David has for the mercy of God because it's in the mercy of God that his glory radiates most perhaps behold I was shaped in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me what he needed because of that was something you know it was true of him the day he was born that he needed the same mercy that he needed the day that the spirit of God directed his attention to his sinfulness in the experience he had with Bathsheba oh yes there's degrees of sin and there's heinousness with regard to sin but it was no less than the mercy of

God that David who was conceived in guiltiness required the day he drew breath the same mercy that he required when he was made aware of his sin by the hand of the Holy Spirit that's why the prayer is so necessary for us all wash me thoroughly from my iniquity cleanse me from my sin purge away the sin blot out all mine iniquity is that not what you need what I need what we want not just that God would overlook our sin some people are happy to have that God as their God the God who will overlook sin turn a blind eye to it pretend that it's not there well that's not your

[38 : 44] God that's not the God you need you need a God a God who is merciful and kind a God who in his mercy has decreed that he will blot out the sins of his people how does he do that well you know how he does it he cleanses us and bathes us in the blood of the sacrifice of his only begotten son that is what purges the sin of me we've heard it quoted in prayer tonight how the the stain crimson stain of sin is blotted out through the blood of sacrifice and that's what David wants that's where David takes us and his desire is for restoration and for communion to be restored and all that has taken away that from him to be taken away so that he can get back to where he wishes to be well may

God give us grace to help us understand how we need to take our sins to God and confess them and repent of them and embrace this way of salvation in Christ let us pray Lord our God we give thanks that as we have sung already yet with the forgiveness is that feared there mayest be we give thanks for the precious preciousness of the blood of sacrifice and that the people of God apply to it more and more as they live their lives in this world we pray for your blessing to be upon your people with all their needs we remember especially as sorrowful this evening we see around us those who have experienced sadness and grief and the pain of loss through death we give thanks for those who have hope even as they go through the valley of the shadow we are saddened to hear even today of the death of one that we knew well and who was so often a supporter here of this congregation and many others and he has now gone to be with his Lord which is far better and we give thanks for that and we pray for all whose sorrows this evening are of that sort but that the eye of the believer may turn to Christ always cleanse us in his name

Amen Our closing song is the opening verses of this singing psalm 51 with first two verses ■ chant Allah intended to ancestors of ■ bløbbelg

Oh, my dear, dear, dear, dear, dear, dear, dear, dear.

Thank you.

[43 : 42] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.