

Psalm 130 "A Prayer for 4:00 AM"

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[0:00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Amen. Just bow our heads in prayer. Father, we give you thanks and praise that you know each one of us so deeply and fully and completely. And we give you thanks and praise that knowing us so deeply and completely and fully that still you love us and that you forgive our sins. We ask, Father, that you would open our hearts that we might have such a great trust in your Son and the forgiveness that comes through faith in him, that we might be able to look at those things in our lives that are quite wrong and deal with them. And so, Father, we ask that you would do this wonderful work in our lives.

And we ask this in Jesus' name, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, every human being, I think, has those 4 a.m. or 3 a.m. in the moment, night times, where you wake up, or maybe it's 4 a.m. and you've lain down and gotten up and lain down, but you've never been able to fall asleep, or you wake up at 3 or 4 in the morning and once you wake up, there's just things so troubling you that you can't fall back asleep.

[2:33] And everybody has them. And some of us, as we know, when we have those 4 o'clock in the morning evenings, it doesn't just stay contained to the evening. It would be sort of nice if it did.

It was just in the evening, and then you could get on with your life. But those 4 a.m. evenings, often we have 4 a.m. days, 4 a.m. weeks, 4 a.m. months, and some of us even 4 a.m. years, where things that trouble us so deeply make it hard for us to walk or be confident. We just walk as if we're really crushed and burdened. We're quiet. We're depressed. And everybody has it.

The psalm that we're going to look at this morning addresses one of those types of reasons why we have those 4 o'clock in the morning existences, nights, weeks, days, months, years. It doesn't look at all of them, but it's going to look at one of the ones, which is quite an important one, actually. And it's going to deal with it in a way which is at first a bit shocking. But once you get over the shock, you realize that it's profoundly realistic and hopeful and beautiful and wise.

So let's have a look. Jeremy read it. We're going in the Psalms this summer. So if you turn with me to Psalm 130, that would be very helpful. It's really helpful if you look at the Bible yourself. The scriptures will come off and on on the screen up above me. But there's something about looking at the Bible yourself, which is important. And I'm old. I mean, I do my devotions on my phone. But there's still a place for paper and looking at the Bible on paper. And by looking at it yourself, you can look around to see if I'm, you know, quoting things out of context or skipping something.

[4:21] So if you would turn to 130, that would be great. And here's how it begins. It begins like this. Out of the depths, I cry to you, O Lord. Out of the depths, I cry to you, O Lord. I'm going to read the second verse in a moment. But like right off the bat, you get this idea that there's a person, as soon as we see that, we have a sense that this isn't a good reason that they're in the depths, especially this language of crying out to the Lord. And in fact, it's just going to be intensified as

verse 2 comes out. So I'll read verse 1 again. Out of the depths, I cry to you, O Lord. O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy. And you can just see that even in the English, you can capture the shorter sentences and phrases. This, I, I, I, I am calling out, Lord, and will you actually please listen? And I really need mercy. And they're calling from their depths. And you get the sense of desperation.

Now, just before we go any further, like, I mean, this is part of going further. One of the things that's just really important for us to remember all the time when we read the Psalms is that we as Christians believe that ultimately, I mean, God used human beings, but ultimately God is the author of this Psalm. So, you know, the Bible never tells us the whole process that has happened. You know, so we don't know, in this particular case, we don't even know who wrote the Psalm. But however it is that the person came to write this Psalm, God is the one who ultimately, when it was finished, said, yes, those are exactly the words I want to have written. And then he, he was the one who made sure that it was recognized as being from him by originally the Jewish people, and then the Christians. And he was the one who not only had it recognized, but also preserved, so that we're able to read it today. So when we're reading this Psalm, we're reading something that God wrote for us. And in a very real sense, he wrote us a Psalm, he wrote for us a prayer to pray. And it's not just a prayer to pray, it could also be sung. When I've been in Africa a couple of times, Africans often pray by singing. They sing and they pray at the same time. It's, you know, we don't do it very much. Charismatics do it, by the way. The whole room will burst into tongues and sort of sing their prayers at the same time. But we don't, we're not as familiar with doing it. But it's something that God wrote. And so the reason that's really important to remember is it means that God recognizes that we have 4am moments. And not only 4am moments, but 4am days, weeks, months, years of deep distress. We, in the depths, and it leads us to deep distress and call out to God for mercy and wondering whether he's listening. So it's a prayer that we can pray for ourselves. It can be the basis of a prayer that if you sat down with a prayer journal and you took each line and then you added your own thoughts connected to that line. And it's at the same time, it's giving us permission to pray into those things. It's saying, it's not saying, George, if you have those 4am moments, you are an absolute horrible, despicable person that God hates. It's not saying that at all. [7:45] It's saying, God knows that I have those 4am moments and he wants me to call out to him in prayer. In a sense, the God has answered the psalmist by saying, I definitely heard you. And that's why I led you to pray this prayer and write it down and had it preserved so that, you know, who knows, 3,000 years later, there's a congregation, a place called Ottawa, and they're looking at it and being encouraged to pray it and to use it. And it teaches us about God at the same time.

So it's very beautiful. Now, what could the 4am moment be? Because there can be lots of them. So for instance, just this past week, when I came back from work, one of the things I had to do when I came back from work is have a difficult conversation where I had to confront somebody and point out, in a sense, it was both an exhortation, but it was a godly rebuke about what they'd been doing wrong, and not just a one-off wrong, but a pattern of wrong and a pattern of wrong that they weren't seeing.

And this is not something I'm good at. In fact, I'm bad at it. And so the night before I had to do this, I think I woke up like nine times. I'm just, you know, just be honest. It's not something I don't delight in doing this. It's hard for me to do it, but I had to do it. I had to step up. I had to step towards it and do it. So what's the 4am moment? Is it something like a difficult conversation?

Is it money troubles? Is it a job trouble? Is it a relationship trouble? What is the 4am moment in this particular case that's driving the prayer? Well, that's what it's going to be. By the way, just a geek moment. The psalm is eight verses, and every verse has two lines, at least in the Hebrew.

And it's structured in such a way that there are couplets. So the first couplet has an idea, the second couplet's an idea, the third couplet an idea, fourth couplet an idea. End of nerd moment back to the text. There's enough nerds here about language that you find that interesting, I know. So what is the 4am moment? Is it like me? I hadn't done anything wrong. I was just having to do something which really goes against my character. I'd much rather encourage you than to list all your sins to you. I wouldn't be sleepless if I said, I'm going to have a conversation with Jono, and I'm going to tell him 20 things that's just wonderful about him. I wouldn't be sleepless over that.

That's sort of more natural, something I would like to do. What's this 4am moment? Well, verses 3 and 4 tells you, if you, O Lord, if you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you, there is forgiveness that you may be feared. If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord,

who could stand? The implication there is that he's in his depths, or the psalmist, I shouldn't say he, because it could have been a woman who wrote it. The person, the writer, the psalmist is in their depths, and they see something deep within themselves. They become aware of something deep within themselves, and it causes them to almost like jump back from it and to call out to the Lord for mercy. And what they've seen, and they realize that not only are they calling out to the Lord for mercy, that what they've seen has been such a moral shock about themselves that they realize that it should be punished. And if they were punished for it, they would not withstand God's judgment or the judgment of other people. They would not stand. They would be unmade. And if you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But, I'm going to talk about this more in a moment. By the way, it's a big but. If I ever write a book, one of the books I might write is the big buts in the Bible.

[11:44] And because there's a lot of big buts in the Bible. And this is a big but, by the way. But with you, there is forgiveness that you may be feared. We'll return to that in a moment. So what they've gone down in their depths, they've seen there's a moral shock. And the moral shock is around iniquity. There's three main words about sin or wrongdoing in the Old Testament. There's more than three, but there's three principal ones. And this particular one, iniquity, which our version of the Bible preserves, a lot of the versions will just say the same word sin for all of them, but this one preserves the original word. And what it's revealing is that there's something inside of me which is a bit twisted, a bit perverse, a bit out of shape, out of alignment, but it's out of shape and perverse and twisted in a way that it's not just that I do wrong things out of that, but that there's a pattern of wrong thingness out of that, and a deep-seated wrong thingness in that.

And it's historic as well. It's been going on for a while. And so there's this moral shock of the psalmist. Now, by the way, this is... I'm going to talk in a moment about how this is very counter... On one hand, this goes really against how our culture thinks of the depths, but on the other hand, it's something that our culture is very deeply aware of. So one of the things I like to do on my holidays is read novels, and those of you who know me know it usually means there has to be a murder or robbery or something like that. Those are the type of novels I like to read. And the last two novels I've read, and the one that I'm... If I don't fall asleep this afternoon, I'll finish today, all three of them, and maybe more than that, the hero is caught with coming... Before the book begins, of them being aware of a moral... A thing about them that they did that was so wrong that it shocked them and made them unable to function. In fact, in this current one, I think there's been four times now where the fellows considered suicide. Just because of this moral shock, he's a highly competent person who does something and realizes that he's done something horrendous, and there's no forgiveness, there's just guilt, there's nowhere to go with it, and he realizes it's deeply connected to him.

It's even connected to his strengths, and there's nowhere to go to it, and this is not an unusual theme in fiction and movies. The shock about what they've done. And that's what this is talking about.

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? Now, here's where, on one hand, our culture knows this. On the other hand, our culture doesn't really know this. Because generally, when we say about in our culture, I'm going to go into my depths. Like, one of the ways to insult the Canadian is to say, you're just very shallow. Every Canadian, even the shallowest, we want to think we're deep. And if you want to flatter a shallow person, say you're very deep, you know?

But, and most of us, we think that when we go deep, that what we're going to find, like, well, in fact, most religious, like, in one whole religious, several religious traditions, to go deep is to discover, ultimately, that you're divine, that you're God, that the Atman, connected to the Brahmin, which connects with God. You go deep to discover your God self. You go deep to discover the divine spark. Jordan Peterson, you go deep to discover the divine spark. You go deep to discover, I said, your God self, your goodness, your fundamental identity, which is fundamentally good, which you have to get out of your depths into this, into your life and your existence. And in our culture, and there's whole books about this, how you go deep and discover your fundamental purity and goodness and truth and other types of disciplines about you go deep so you can just observe yourself from this neutral place and what's going on, and you can have this type of peace.

[15:57] And then when people go deep in our culture, they call out, look at me, or let me show you the way. Hey, I've gone deep, and this is my identity. This is my authority. This is my power. This is my God self. This is my, and on and on and on. And so our culture is caught between, on

one hand, we can read a book or watch a movie. Maybe we don't like those types of movies. Maybe we just want a rom-com or something like that. That's fine. Everybody has different tastes in movies, books, and stuff.

I make, you know, there's different tastes. But we also know that at one level in our bones, we know that that sense that if we go into our depths, we're just going to discover our God self can't be true. Do you know why we think that? It's a Canadian example. If Donald Trump said he did it, how many of us would believe him? How many people would roll their eyes? Oh, there we go. Trump again. His God self touching the divine, part of God. We'd mock it. It would be all over the internet. And if that's not a good example for you, pick the opposite, okay? Pick, if Mark Kearney said it, how many people in the Conservative Party, how many people, bloggers, would be rolling their eyes?

So why is it that we don't believe it? If we don't believe it for some people, there's other people who would say the same thing about you and me if we said that. You see, the Bible's not saying here, we're going to see in a moment that it's the only thing about me, iniquity. But it is saying it is a thing about me if I go into my depths. It's not the only thing, but it's a thing, and it's there.

And maybe we haven't gone deep enough to recognize it, but it's there. Now, where's the big but? Well, the big but, I'll read verse 3 again, if you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

[17 : 57] But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared. In the original language, that word forgiveness, in the original language, it comes up in such a way that it's obvious for the readers of the original language, that that's the most important word in the whole psalm. So in some ways, if we were to really translate this more literally, forgiveness should be bolded so that it jumps out at you.

That's the thing they want you to take away. Forgiveness. Bolded. And so there's this sense of the psalmist that God, and we're going to, he's going to get into it more in a moment, why there is something like forgiveness. But here's where we get to see where the text, on one hand, is saying if you go deep, so sometimes it's like nobody wants, generally speaking, we don't want to go deep to discover our iniquity. But sometimes just things happen, like it might be in a marriage, and around your 10th anniversary or something, you realize you were terrible those first few years. Maybe it's with your kids or something in the past, and you get struck, it hits you in the face, your iniquity. But so there's something there when you go deep, but it's not the only thing. Why? Well, because there is forgiveness. And the words forgiveness and the words fear are both relational words. There is a God who forgives at the most fundamental need. I mean, we need to be forgiven by other human beings, but most of all, most fundamentally, we need to be forgiven by God.

The forgiveness needs to be transcendent and divine, not just superficial and coming and going. And it needs to be rooted in truth, and it needs to be rooted in justice, and it needs to flow out of mercy and grace. It needs to be something which is out of time and in time, like eternal and transcendent. And that's what we desperately need. And it's relational, because it's ultimately against the God who is the creator of us, sustains us, is the finisher for all things, and sovereign over all things. And both forgiveness and fear are relational words. And I don't know, are you still familiar with spire graphs? You know, those things that draw different, you know, so if you had a spire graph that did circles, and you got a big piece of paper, and so maybe you did a whole pile of circles, maybe eight circles, but you do them in some way, you know, some of the circles are inside other circles, but if you did them in such a way that all of them maybe had just one little tiny thumbnail part that all of them intersected, and in that is the fear of God, that gives you a bit of sense, because the fear of God in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament, because it's a New Testament idea as well, it has all of these different fields and spheres that are connected to it. And in this particular time, what it's emphasizing is the, well, you know what it's like? There's a story in the Gospels about Jesus. And in the story in the Gospel about Jesus, the disciples are rowing across the Sea of

Galilee, and he's asleep in the stern, and they wake him up because they're afraid that they're going to sink, and he wakes him up, and there's all these waves, and there's all this storm, and he says one word of command, and the wind stops, the waves stop, and it's calm. And they go, I mean, that's not literally what they say, but what, what, the, sometimes translated literally doesn't catch it. What should really be translated is, whoa, who on earth is this, talking about Jesus? Like, whoa, whoa, where'd that come from? How'd this guy do that? Whoa, who do we actually have in the boat?

Whoa. And that's the sense of, of the fear of the Lord, which is being communicated here, is a sense of, whoa, he is going to see all my iniquity and forgive it? He can go deeper than my deepest depths and see everything iniquity, and it can be forgiven? Whoa. And it's a relational word, and it's also ultimately a word that, and it can see from that expression, that example in the New Testament, that the Jesus example, that it's connected to curiosity to know more, to realize that he's not like me. On one level, Jesus is so much like me. On another level, he is not like me. And it's connected to prayer, and it's connected to adoration and woe, and worship. It's like, whoa! That's what the fear of here. So if you listen to it again, if you, oh Lord, should mark iniquities, oh Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be, whoa, feared.

[23:07] Now, where are they going to go? What's going to be the next thing? Well, if we were normal North Americans, I'd say, well, here's the five techniques in the trips, the five things that you need to do in this order, so you will experience all of these types of things. And by the way, here's my 1-800 number.

Here's the QR code that takes you to my Wikipedia, you know, to my webpage, and we can process your money as you give them. That's come down the road, right? So, you know, maybe it's therapy, maybe it's counseling, maybe it's spiritual direction, maybe it's you join my church, maybe it's, you know, you buy my books. Like, what's going to be the next thing from that? Well, let's see what it says, verses five and six. And this will be a short time in the sermon, because it's talking about a virtue in the Bible, which I am not very good at. So I can't say much about it. You can pray for me. What is it in five and six? I wait for the Lord. Why is this bad?

I'm the type of guy, like, I was loading Google Maps the other day because I had to go somewhere, and it's like, like, seven seconds, it's not up. What's wrong with my phone? Seven seconds.

I'm the type of person, I want patience right now. Dang it. So I'm not very good at this virtue, but it's a biblical virtue. Let's finish the rest of it. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchman for the morning, more than watchman for the morning. So they're waiting for the Lord. If you go just, you know, notice here, I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope, my soul waits for the Lord.

So it's as if everything from the I that processes things to my soul, my very depths, and everything in between is waiting for the Lord. And it's waiting for a person. I'm waiting for a person. I'm waiting for a word from him, and I'm waiting for a word from him that's going to be a word of hope.

[25:09] At the end of the day, I'm waiting to hear forgiven, loved, forgiven. I wait for that. A word that comes from him. My soul waits for it. Four times it said, I'll wait, I'll wait. And, you know, our skeptical friends, God loved them, and even in our own flesh. I remember a couple of months ago, I think I shared it in a sermon. I had been praying for something, and God said yes, and it, like, catches me by surprise. Oh, wait. Like, he actually answered it with a yes.

I'm more used to him saying no, you know. I ask, obviously, for not things which are good. Either that or in heaven, I'll probably find out all these things I prayed for that God just said, no, no, that's not the right time for it. You need it 10 years later. And I forgot I prayed for it 10 years earlier, right? So we'll find out a whole pile of those things in heaven, probably. He just said, no, no, I'm going to say yes, just not yet. Not right for George right now. I was going to say not yet. And then in heaven, I'll say, well, why didn't you remind me? He said, well, why didn't you remember? Anyway, I wait for the Lord. My soul waits. And in his word, I hope, my soul waits for the Lord. And our skeptical friends would say, you know, George, if you're waiting for the Lord to do something, like, the Lord doesn't even exist. That's, like, the dumbest thing in the world to do.

You know, there's a famous play from the 50s written by the absurdist existentialist called Waiting for Godot, and it's bleak and empty, and that's you, George. But here's the thing which is so wonderful about poetry. Poetry works on us at a deeper level. Look how it works on us.

I wait for the Lord. My soul waits. And in his word, I hope, my soul waits for the Lord. More than watchman for the morning, more than watchman for the morning. So on one hand, this is just a very simple point. If for some reason I had to be on guard duty all night, or maybe, I don't know, maybe I'm waiting for, yeah, I'm on guard duty or something, and I'm waiting for the morning when my shift's over. But what's significant? The morning always comes.

It is rock-solid, dependable. I mean, I hope that unless Jesus comes first, that I have another 25 to 30 years of life, you know? And let's say God does grant me another 30 years of life, and my last day when I breathe my last, because, you know, Jesus hasn't returned, is 30 years from now. It's the year 2056.

[27:47] And you know what I can tell you right now will happen the very next day after I die? The sun will rise. Waiting for the sun to rise is not something foolish.

It's reasonable. The sun rises. And God is going to come with that. This is rock-solid about God. By the way, I've come up with a little prayer. Maybe I'll write it up, and if you're curious, I need some polishing. I had the idea last night, and so I haven't had a chance to polish it. But it's a variation that I thought, you know, this is a little bit like waiting upon the Lord. It's a little bit like the serenity prayer. And then I realized it's different, so I wrote my own version. And here's what it is.

Lord, give me the strength and motivation to get off my butt and do something. And give me the humility and patience to wait for you to direct and act.

[28:52] And, Lord, give me the wisdom to know the difference. I think there's a keeper in that, you know, because a lot of us, don't wait for the Lord anymore. Get off your butt and act, right?

And others, well, you know what? We should just be maybe praying about that and waiting for the Lord to act. And then we need to know the difference. Anyway, there you go. You know, I am North American. I am going to trademark this.

There's going to be a 1-800 number and a QR code. Colorful prints, greeting cards. And that will fund my retirement. No, seriously, folks.

So where do you go from this about waiting for the Lord? And why is it reasonable? Like, just like waiting for the morning, why is it reasonable to wait for the Lord?

And why is it reasonable? He gives testimony in verses 7 to 8 as to why it's reasonable. Let's look at verse 7 to 8. For Israel, hope in the Lord.

[29:47] For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. I think it's the old King James Version that says plenteous redemption, which is really cool, I think.

It's a neat expression. Plenteous redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities. And in this case, Israel stands for God's faithful people, God's people calling out to him.

O Israel, hope in the Lord, verse 7. For with the Lord there is steadfast love. It's better than unfailing love. It's better than unconditional love.

This is steadfast love. And within it, it can also be translated as loyal love. It's a relational love. It's not indifference. It's like a covenant, like a covenant between parents and children.

You enter into a relationship with them for life when you have a child. And marriage, which is supposed to be for life, not always tragically, but supposed to be. And it's this type of steadfast love.

[30:50] It's loyal. It's committed. And with him is plentiful redemption. I was, I almost, I just really struck me about this on Friday, Jono, so I didn't want to email you.

But there's this old hymn from the 1800s that has the line, Grace that is greater than all my sin. Are we singing it? No, but you know the hymn. But I didn't want to call you on Friday and say we should sing it.

Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all. Anyway, there you go. Don't have to hear me sing. But that's the idea behind this, is that there's this, you can wait and hope.

Why? Because we know who God is and who God is. God is the God of steadfast love, of loyal love. He is the one who is plentiful in redemption. And so the move that the psalmist makes, which is so important, is that it goes the opposite way from the way our culture forms us and our flesh forms us.

Is that it's of the nature of my flesh to minimize my sin. So one of the things I had to talk about with this person that I had to confront is I had to deal with the fact, and this, by the way, it's a whole other sermon topic.

[32:04] Virtually nobody ever apologizes anymore. I'm watching something right now as I'm exercising. I'm watching a British show. And, you know, the husband does something wrong.

And he says, I'm really sorry I did that wrong. But! And those aren't big buts. Those are just weaselly, weasel word buts that really say, I have an excuse, so I actually didn't really do anything wrong.

And so it's the way of the world and the flesh and the devil to minimize my sin. And when I minimize my sin, I minimize the wow about Christ and God and adoration.

And the Bible says, no, no, no, we're not going to take you on a journey of minimizing. We're going to take you on a journey of going deep. In a certain type of emotionally and beautifully secure way to go deep.

And actually see the iniquity within you. It's exactly like this, another Jesus story in the Gospels. So there's a story of Jesus in the Gospels. And he's sitting down with a whole pile of highfalutin, proper, righteous type of people.

[33:14] And into the room comes a woman. And they all know that she's lived a terrible, terrible life. And she comes up to Jesus. And not only does she touch his feet, she starts sobbing so much.

And the tears are so big that the tears come down her face and fall on the feet of Jesus. And she wipes the tears off his feet with her hair.

And the mucky mucks all look and say, if Jesus was a real prophet, he'd know the type of woman touching him. And Jesus knows what they're thinking.

And he says to one of them, he said, imagine there's two men, Andy and Bob. I mean, he doesn't say Andy and Bob. I'm retelling the story. And Andy owes Fred \$5,000.

And Bob owes Fred \$5 million. And Fred decides to forgive the debt of both Andy and Bob. Who's going to love Fred more?

[34:27] And the guy says, obviously, Bob. And then he says, this woman, her sins are many. And because her sins are many and she knows she's been forgiven, her love is vastly more.

And he tells her to go in peace. Her sins are forgiven. And the implication is, the mucky muck, his self-righteous, has just spent his whole life minimizing his sin, not even recognizing his hard heart. This woman sees the depth of her sin. And you see the depth of your sin, you go, whoa. Something even greater than having the storm stopped is to be forgiven of deep sin.

I want to wrap it up. One of the things which is so neat about this, read verse 7 and 8 again, is, O Israel, hope in the Lord. For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.

And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities. And the original language, this is actually looking forward to a time when there will be a once-for-all event in the future.

[35:41] Right? This psalm is written before Jesus. But this psalmist is looking forward. It's as if the psalmist has understood what a lot of the prophets have said, that obviously just having a bull or a goat sacrifice can't really put away all your sin, and you have to do it all the time.

And there must be ultimately God doing something that will be done once for all that really takes away all iniquity. And there's this prediction about it. And that's the thing which they're looking forward to.

They're looking forward to this time in the future when God will do this once-for-all thing that forgives all your sin. And we now are after the crucifixion of Jesus, the life and death and resurrection of Jesus, and we're looking at him knowing that he is God's once-for-all provision, that it's because of his sinless life, and when we put our faith into him so that we come into union with him, all of that iniquity, even if I have another moral moment of shock and I realize something that I might have done to my kids or my friends or in school or something or just even last week that was deeply wrong, and it's wrong in a level which just shocks me, no matter what I might discover between now and my point of my death, God saw all of them, and his grace is deeper than all my sin.

His forgiveness goes right to the very depths, everything from my surface to my depths. Christ dealt with it all, and when I put my faith and trust into him, my iniquity, my sin, my transgression are forgiven completely and utterly with nothing left out.

So you see what this psalm is telling us, which is this is one of the many reasons why it is so beautiful to be a Christian. What better place of emotional security and beautiful security could there be to deal with the things in your life that are morally wrong than from the position of having been forgiven by Christ?

[38:03] I will say nothing to him that shocks him. Only in the gospel is there a place of emotional security, of beautiful security, to deal with the things that are wrong, that I can look at what I've done, maybe, you know, to my wife or to my kids or to my co-workers or my congregation, and I can say, confident in the gospel, that that I did was wrong, and I don't say a but.

No excuse. And I can look at it. And I say, Lord, I wait for you. I hope in you. I'm in awe that you would forgive this.

And help me now know, Lord, how to move on and live, how to deal with it so I don't sin as much or as often or ever again, how I amend my life, how I ask for forgiveness, how I seek reconciliation, how I start to have mental health, is to know that Christ has forgiven this.

He knows it. I've been, and this whole thing, waiting for the word of hope, that's the gospel, the good news that Christ has done it, that believe the gospel, that that actually starts to form me, that I have a place of emotionally and beautiful security, that I can deal with things in my life.

And just in closing, the very final thing, if you haven't given your life to Christ, there's no better time than now. Jesus says, Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, heavy burdened, and I will give you rest.

[39:42] Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your soul, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

And there's no better time than to call out to him. And if you, and there's nothing in your life so bad that he will say no or turn you away, because he is the God of steadfast love.

I invite you to stand in closing. Please stand. Bow our heads in prayer. Father, we give you thanks and praise that you sent Jesus.

We give you thanks and praise, God, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, that you willingly came to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, that once for all sacrifice alone that deals with the iniquity and sin and transgression in our lives, that we might know your pardon and your peace in your presence.

We give you thanks and praise, Holy Spirit, that you moved and worked in lives to bring us to a faith in Christ and into union with Christ, that he now is in us and we are in him, you, Holy Spirit, in us and us in you.

[41:02] And we give you thanks and praise, Father, for this great work. We thank and praise you that you know us completely and utterly perfectly, and still you loved us and sent your Son, our Savior, to be our Savior.

Thank you for forgiveness. Father, may these truths so form us that we might not only wait upon you in general but and wait upon you in terms of dealing with amendment of life and waiting for you to act and to help us and to strengthen us and know your presence and your power.

But, Father, may you work on us and may the gospel so form us that it shapes all of our lives, all of our relationships, how we see ourselves, how we see our past. May the gospel form us and we ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.