

Psalm 130

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[0:00] Amen. 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. Father, I pray may only your word be spoken and only your word heard.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated. Every now and then we come across a passage in Scripture which has significance behind it or around it, you could say.

I mean, it's like John 3.16 and so on. Today, today's psalm is one of those passages which has a very, very significant place in church history.

In your faith, in my faith. If it wasn't for this psalm right here, our faith may look very different.

[1:22] See, it was at St. Paul's Church, the big historic church in London, where they were conducting their normal daily service.

There sat in the pews a young man who wanted to serve God and was trying to serve God. He was doing everything he possibly could to proclaim the gospel.

Even wanting to go and start an orphanage and reach different peoples.

But it just wasn't working out. He was struggling. And in that service, what was the psalm that he heard?

Psalm 130. Psalm 130. So he heard it and he prayed it. He prayed it in his heart. Earnestly, he prayed it.

[2:28] 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. Hear my pleas for mercy.

He waited and he prayed and he waited and he prayed. And he prayed more and he waited more. He left the church.

Walking out. Still saying, well, you know, not sure did God hear his prayer. You know, he looked around and he saw all these successful people.

They were doing stuff for the Lord, but his just seemed empty. And so he claimed the promise of Psalm 130.

And he waited. As the psalm says, more than watchmen for the morning. More than watchmen for the morning. And nothing was happening.

[3:30] Have you ever felt like that? Or that reaction? Yeah, we all can feel we felt like that, haven't we? You know, we have the, you find that our greatest times of need.

Those remedies we're seeking to serve God. But nothing we do works. There are all those times, sometimes our prayers just sound like they're hitting a wall.

Nothing, are they? But you know, in this psalm, it reminds us that it is God who enables us to serve him.

It reminds us that a righteous person's prayer are wholly dependent upon God's divine mercy. A righteous person's prayers are wholly enabled and dependent upon God's mercy.

Now, Psalm 130, as we have here, is what they call a psalm of ascent. Those of a dozen or so psalms that we have between Psalm 120, 132, thereabouts.

[4:46] And they're very historic in the life of Israel. These are the psalms that people would sing or they would pray as they were going to Jerusalem for Passover or the Feast of Booz or something like that.

As they're traveling, these are the psalms that they would pray. Now, today, we just turn on the radio and we sing along to whatever they have, right?

And whoever's driving this car gets to determine. They're the ones that determine what you get to listen to. They didn't have the radios back then, no. They just prayed these psalms. And when you come to this psalm, it's wonderful.

Because it's so simple. And it's a reminder of our need for God. Its structure is very simple because it's as an A, B, B, A structure.

Eight verses in four groups of two verses each. But we have two verses that make up an A. Two verses which make up B. The next two verses make up another A.

[5:57] Next two verses make up another B. It's just a very, very simple prayer. A very simple psalm that we can pray. So when we have these words, when we begin, 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. It's something that we can remember. It's something that we can hold on to. It's a poetic way that we can pray that very simple five-word prayer.

Help, help, help, help, help, help, help. It is. In fact, Martin Luther wrote of this prayer. Wrote of this psalm.

He said, These are noble, passionate, and very profound words of a truly penitent heart that is most deeply moved and in its distress. In fact, this cannot be understood except by those who have felt it and experienced it.

And you know, we can take right away as we read, as we begin to read this, we can remember that this prayer is offered from a point of distress.

[7:07] And it's when those points of distress is when we really grow in the Lord. When we are in those spiritual deserts. When we are struggling.

When we are struggling. It's that is when the growth in us happens. You know, it's kind of ironic, isn't it?

That it's in those difficult times are when we really grow the most. But yeah, what is it that we're always praying for? The nice stuff, isn't it? We want it easy.

But you know, if we really thought about it, it's during these difficult times is when we recognize that we can come the closest to the Lord and we grow in the Lord.

In these times, we're like Jonah. We're like Jonah. And how it begins, Out of the depths I cry. You know, we have that image of just being surrounded as Jonah is in the belly of the whale.

[8:08] He can't get any much lower than where Jonah was at. But what does he pray there in chapter 2? What does he say? He says, I call out to the Lord out of my distress and he answered me out of the belly of Sheol.

I cried to you and you heard my voice. For you cast me into the deeps, into the heart of the sea and the floods surrounded me. All your waves and your billows passed over me.

You can't get much lower than that. Really, you can't. But you know, even David had his bad times too. Psalm 18, we're reminded, this wording also comes very, very close to the wording that we have in Psalm 18 when he was looking to God for deliverance from his enemies, from King Saul. He was being pushed beyond his discernment. And what did he pray? He said, The cords of death encompass me. The torrents of destruction assailed me. The cords of Sheol entangled me.

The snares of death confronted me. In my distress, I called on the Lord and to my God, I cried for help. That was a time when David really, really needed help from the Lord and he just cried out to him, Help me.

[9:28] Help, help, help, help, help, help, help. That's what he wanted. Okay, and it's that despair and acknowledging that being surrounded, being surrounded, that becomes our starting point.

It becomes that starting point of our walk and our starting point for our growth in the Lord. Now, it's Keith Miller who wrote a Bible study. It's called The Edge of Adventure.

And in it, he mentions, it's a very, very profound statement. And when I was with a small group, I don't really have no idea why this idea has stuck with me all these years.

But the fact that it's this type of situation of despair. Every Christian has been there. If you are a follower of Christ, when you said, I can't do this by myself, help me, Lord, you gave your life to Christ, you said, Holy Spirit, come in, take care of me.

Every Christian has had these moments, and that is the beginning of our walk. That is the beginning of our adventure with our Lord. Because we give up.

[10:41] We give up. We say, Lord, hear my voice. Hear my voice. It's the point of distress when God can do his best work in our lives.

But then we look on. In verses 3 and 4, what does he say? If you, O Lord, should mark my iniquity, O Lord, who could stand?

With you, there is forgiveness that you may be feared. Out of that, out of that distress, out of this cry for mercy, what do we see the psalm doing?

Turning us. Turning us. To the value. To the one who alone can take care of us. The faithfulness and the forgiveness of God.

You see, we've heard the term. We've heard the term when it says, God helps those who help themselves. Right? Right? What? Survey said, eh, nope, uh-uh, wrong.

[11:50] Not gonna work. God helps those who help themselves. We know that's not true. Why? Because, think about it. If we could help ourselves, why did Jesus even have to go to the cross?

Think about it. If we can do what we want to do, what we think is okay, what are we gonna do? We're gonna do what we want.

We don't need it. We don't need him. We don't need the cross. And as the psalmist says, you know, if you should mark our iniquities, who could stand?

This is a rhetorical question. But it marks Christians' forgiveness. It marks that point of which we need to remember. That it's in those of these times, when we go to the Lord, quite often we just have to go in, grab a hold of the foot of the cross, and hold on for dear life.

Just hold on and let God do the work. Let the shed blood of Jesus drip down upon us and heal us.

[13:06] When we just offer the things that we've done to him and say, Lord, you take them because I cannot take them. And it comes to the song that a songwriter, a Christian songwriter, Claire Cullinger, she wrote this song, Only by Grace.

She writes this, coming off of this verse. She says, Only by grace can we enter. Only by grace can we stand. Not by our human endeavors, but by the blood of the Lamb.

Into your presence, you call us to come. Lord, if you marked our transgressions, who would stand? Only by grace can we enter by the blood of the Lamb.

You see, thanks to the grace that God has given us, we can enter, we can get out of that point of despair, and we can have assurance that God hears our prayer, and we can live for him.

So right away, in these first two places in our psalm, we have this cry of despair, and then we come into this cry of despair, leads us to the forgiveness of God.

[14:27] And out of the forgiveness of God, we come to verse 5 and verse 6, which lead us to worship. They lead us into worship.

You see, what does it say? I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning.

More than watchmen for the morning. You see, it's when this idea, it's a picture we get and the Targum tells us that the Levitical priests who had the midshift in the temple, they would watch anxiously, looking over for the horizon, waiting for that first bit of sunlight to come up.

And when they would see it, the new day was dawning, and they could offer the morning sacrifices. The newness was there, and that was the anticipation. They were watching and waiting, and waiting, and waiting, and waiting.

We're ready to worship. They were ready to worship. Let me ask you for a moment real quick.

When we entered today, were you ready for worship?

[15:47] Were you coming in saying, I'm really, I'm really, I'm waiting to worship. I want to come in. I want to join with our praise band here. I want to get in here and we want to do some worship. Let's have some church.

Or, was it just, hey, sit down, do nothing. You see, the psalm reminds us it's when we come out of our despair and we get the forgiveness of our Lord.

His faithfulness leads us not right back to when the despair, but brings us into the worship, into worshipping Him.

in this simple prayer. And we're reminded what Paul wrote in Romans when he said, it is the, the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes to Jew first and also to the Greek.

it's God's faithfulness and His forgiveness that leads us into prayer as we wait for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning.

[16:55] More than watchmen for the morning. It's that excitement. It's that excitement that we hang on to kind of like our children on Christmas morning.

waiting. Waiting. We're yearning. We're ready for God to move and to move in our lives and we're ready to worship Him because we acknowledge and we enjoy and we grab a hold of that

forgiveness that He has given us.

You never thought of Fred Flintstone as being very theologically correct, but he was. He was. If you remember at the beginning of the Flintstones, what happened? You know, the horn went off.

You know, what happened? What did he do? He hopped in his car and boom, he was gone. But unfortunately, so many Christians today said, yes, it's time.

Let's time. Let's go worship. Okay. The Church of the Holy Eeyore. All right.

[18:01] We'll get together and worship. Okay. No problem. God is calling us to embrace Him and get into His love with His faithfulness.

Only He can give it to us and we come to Him. So how dare we? Okay. I'm here. He wants us to worship and give Him that worth and praise Him for His forgiving work that He's done in our life. more than watchmen for the morning. This is that deep yearning. This is the answer to that deep yearning that the psalmist gives us in verse 1.

It's the worship. But it's not just me. when we look at verses 5 and 6 in this third couplet that we have, what do we say?

O Israel, hope in the Lord. For with the Lord there is steadfast love and with Him there is plentiful redemption. And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

[19:09] We go from me to we. See, our Christian walks are not a solo walk. Our Christian walk, we do it in a community. We do it together.

And when we're together is when God can really move in our lives. I don't know if you've ever had the opportunity when you get together if there's something you've really gone through and you've had an answer to prayer and you're ready to share it.

You have this feel, I really, really need to share it. You find somebody and you're going to sit down with them and you can share it and you are so excited. And are you hoping that they are going to look at you and say, yeah, I understand.

I've got this. And they can praise God and you can worship God together. As our psalm says, He will redeem Israel from all his iniquity.

We've gone from the individual to the community. And so with us, so he has gone from out of our despair. We worship and praise him. And when every one of us do that, we come together and worship him.

[20:18] We become the community and the people of God. And that's when great things can really happen. You see, we examine our hearts.

We allow his forgiveness to flow in us. We embrace that love that he's given us in his faithfulness. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As Paul wrote, He is the Father of all mercies and the God of all comfort who comforts us in our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves have been comforted by God.

That's a key verse for the church right there. When we are comforted by God, we're called to share that comfort with each other and with those around us.

And that is what the psalmist is calling us to do. We start in the despair. We confess our sins. We rely on that forgiveness that moves us into worship and then out of that worship we join together and we take the gospel around to help those around us who need to hear the gospel.

[21:42] It's a very simple process, don't you think? It really is. Sharing that which we have received and knowing that God is there walking with us and leading us.

no matter the circumstances, God will transform our lives. He transforms us through His forgiveness, through His shed blood on the cross, through the empty tomb in His ascension, and leads us to proclaim the gospel.

And that is when our lives are changed. That is when we are able to go and share the gospel and change the lives of those around. Well, what about this struggling pilgrim from St. Paul's?

He walked out of St. Paul's still struggling, still trying to figure out why isn't anything going on? He's tried, he's tried, he's tried, he's tried, and nothing is happening.

By the way, you know who I'm talking about. How do you know? Because the day was May 24th, 1738.

[23:01] The young man was a young priest named John Wesley. He sat and he left there. After hearing Psalm 130, holding on to the promises that God had made in this Psalm that he heard in that service, that night, he reluctantly accepted an invitation to go to a meeting house on Aldersgate

And while they were reading the introduction to Martin Luther's commentary on Romans, he said his heart was strangely warmed. God answered his prayer.

God answered the prayer of Psalm 130 that he had heard early. He wrote in his journal, I felt I did trust Christ, Christ alone for my salvation and the assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins and even mine he saved me from the law of sin and death.

I felt that God loved me. We don't hear about that part. But it was in Psalm 130 that set his heart seeking God.

He claimed the promise of God in that Psalm and he went forward from there. And you could say as Paul Harvey would say, and now you know the rest of the story.

[24 : 36] Because he hung on to the promises of Psalm 130, the church was changed. England was changed.

Psalm 130. What challenge do we have today? what part of this Psalm are you going to hold on to? What part of the Psalm are you going to hold on to?

It's as simple as that. Do we have a John Wesley sitting here or a Jane Wesley today? Or you could say Susanna Wesley, his mother, a wonderful saint of the church.

His faithfulness and his forgiveness is there for you. Allow him to take that. Worship him. Take the anxiousness and anxiously seek him more than watchman for the morning, more than watchman for the morning.

There's a world out there that needs to hear the gospel. It needs to hear your testimony, how God has worked in your life. And there are people out there waiting to hear it.

[27: 00] Don't keep it quiet. Don't keep because out of the depths we cry to the Lord. Hear our prayers. Don't mark our iniquities, Lord.

Give us your forgiveness. We wait for the Lord. Our souls wait for the Lord more than watchman for the morning, for we know that with you is plenteous redemption.

Move in us. Move powerfully in us. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. God.

[illegible]