

Out of the Depths

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[0 : 00] Psalm 130. I've called this study Out of the Depths. Out of the Depths is how this psalm starts.

! It's a collection. This psalm is a part of a collection of the Song of the Sense. Psalm 120-134. As the Jews would approach Jerusalem, Jerusalem was up on a hill, they would ascend to the worship place. Tradition says that they would sing these psalms as they went.

So this is one of those. So before tonight is over, I hope that you too will worship our great Savior as we study this psalm. Let me go ahead and read it. I'm sure it will be familiar. Psalm 130. 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. If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. I wait for the Lord. My soul waits for the Lord. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. 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. It's a wonderful psalm. One of my favorites. And what I've just read to you is the most important thing I'll say all night. God's Word is a holy, unchanging, and it's precious for every believer. Verses 1 and 2, I see the cry of the depraved. The cry of the depraved. It starts off, out of the depths. It has not come to God demanding anything, the psalmist. He does not come feeling as if he's owed anything. Rather, he discovers a truer version of himself, and he expresses it. And he says, out of the depths. And this is where he's speaking from. Okay, well, that's the question. Why is he there? Why does he see himself in this way, out of the depths? In a full view of the psalm, it's because of his sinfulness. This is a position where sin left him. This is the posture of his despondent heart. Note that this is not an unregenerate man. This is someone who is a believer. He's someone who knows the Lord, yet in his sin, he's plagued and he's in the depths. We too must come to grips with the existence and the power of indwelling sin in our lives. We should not ignore it or even explain it away, because we'll say, well, everyone sins. Every believer will have outbreaks of indwelling sin. We must acknowledge the effect that sin has on our lives. It leaves us in the depths. Sin is a separating agent. It mars fellowship with God.

Consider the King of Kings, holy and righteous, high and lifted up. And then consider your own life when you yield to temptation. Could we be any lower than where he is? So the psalmist correctly identifies his state. Out of the depths, I cry. First, he cries. Yes, he calls aloud for help in that sense, a cry. But here the urgent angst of his soul. Look at a room full of men. And probably seldom shed a tear. And while I think tears are necessary at times, I wonder about the emotion of our hearts. Are you ever broken enough about your sin that your heart breaks within you? Are you grieved that you have sinned against God? Do you truly see your state when you dwell in sinfulness? And not to bother us more than it really does. We've learned far too often to dismiss the thoughts of remorse and repentance. We've silenced the spirit too often in our Christian lives. The psalmist says, out of the depths, I cry. But he doesn't just cry in general. He cries to you, O Lord, he says. This is not undefined despair, but an intense cry for help from the only help he had. Listen to this quote from Octavius Winslow.

[5 : 08] Christ alone is our Redeemer. His righteousness, our justification, his blood, our pardon, his merits, our standing before God. And it is looking to him in faith, to his mediation, merits, and fullness that we arrive at any degree of spiritual evidence, fruitfulness, and assurance. Turning within yourself for marks and signs of grace, and finding instead nothing but sin and darkness and change. How are you to become a firm believer and a joyful Christian? Looking to your experience, your fitful frames and feelings, and not by faith to Christ. The wind is not more capricious, nor the tide more shameful. It may be your peace and comfort, your holiness and hope. He's saying, don't

look to yourself. You're going to disappoint yourself every time. But try the experiment of looking away from yourself to Jesus. Pass by even the cross, the atonement, the gospel, and the sacrament, and rest not until you find yourself face to face, heart to heart, with a personal, living, loving Savior, and the gracious words breathing in sweetest cadence from his lips.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Look unto me at all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved. For I am God, and there is none else. I am the door. I am the bread of life. So the psalmist knew who to cry to, and so should we. In our depravity, in our state of sinfulness, we need rescue. There's no refuge like Christ. There's no shelter from the storm as our mighty God. The psalmist calls him Lord. I cried to the Lord, to you, O Lord. And so we should. Our very souls hang upon the fact that he is God. Our souls hang upon his deity. Why do we pray to him? Because he is God. He is the Lord. O Lord, hear my voice. Verse 2. Let your ears be attentive. To my voice. This is a prayer from his heart. There is a plea for alertness accompanied by a response. Hear and be attentive. He's almost saying, do not turn your gaze from me. My cries will continually remind you of my peril. It's an unceasing cry. Lord, help me. And for each of us here tonight, when was the last time that you intently called upon the Lord, pleading with him for an answer?

A great comfort for all of God's children is that he would even hear our prayers. That's a great comfort. What a gift and promise we have to speak with the creator of the universe. We may never look back on a difficult time and find that we didn't spend the time needed in prayer. We have that available to us to speak to our Lord and our God. Don't neglect it. Lamentations 3, 55-57 says this, I called on your name, O Lord, from the depths of the pit. You heard my plea. Do not close your ear to my cry for help. You came near when I called on you. You said, do not fear. Continuing in verse 2, let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy. Please for mercy. The psalmist asks for mercy. Again, we must ask why he pleaded for mercy. Why would you need mercy? You don't need mercy from someone you have not wronged. This is an acknowledgement of his just plight. He's in the depths for a reason.

And he asks the Lord for mercy. He's in the depths. Sin has left him helpless. And now he craves the divine favor of the Lord. Psalm 140, verse 6 says, I say to the Lord, you are my God. Give ear to the voice of my pleas for mercy, O Lord. You hear throughout the psalms, this is a recurring thing. Pleading for mercy.

[9 : 24] It's a very humble thing to plead for mercy. You're acknowledging something. Here's an old hymn text. Death of mercy. Can there be mercy still reserved for me? Can my God, his wrath forbear, me, the chief of sinners, spare?

I have long withstood his grace, long provoked into his face, would not hearken to his calls, grieved him by a thousand falls. Jesus, answer from above. Is not all thy nature love? Would thou not wrong forget? Suffer me to kiss thy feet.

If I rightly read thy heart. If thou all compassion art, now thine ear in mercy bow. Pardon and accept me now. So in these first two verses, we see the cry of the depraved.

In the next two verses, we find a fearsome foundational forgiveness. A fearsome foundational forgiveness. Verse 3 starts, If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities.

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities. So question for you. Does the Lord mark iniquities? Yes, and then he forgets it.

[10 : 38] Yeah, alright. Alright. Well, we're talking about a regenerate man here, right? The psalmist is a believer. But make no mistake, one of the greatest lies the devil tells the lost is that the Lord takes no thought for their sinful ways.

There is wrath stored up for every person who rejects Christ because they commit iniquities every second of the day. It's easy for us to think about that. They always commit iniquity. They're lost. Okay. Well, let's talk about us. Think about us as Christians. Your most holy offerings to God are still laced with self-praise and false humility.

You don't have to make an overt error to offend the holiness of God. So what can you do? The psalmist recognizes the omniscience of God and that he knows all things, even the intent of the heart.

He recognizes the holiness of God that all sin stands in stark enmity to him. And he also recognizes God's righteous position as judge.

[11 : 46] But he doesn't leave us there. He moves on. There's contrition and confession in this first statement, if you should mark iniquities. The psalmist knows his sinfulness. He knows that it's an

aspersion to God.

He's inferring that his iniquity is ever before the Lord and he is demonstrating his unworthiness to come before God unless God made some provision for him. If, Lord, you should mark iniquities, he's saying, Lord, you know I have some.

You know I have many. We should cultivate a holy contrition toward God for our sin. We should develop confession in our lives, a humble acknowledgement of our sin that is continually exercised, continue to confess your sins before the Lord.

Be contrite about them. Psalm 32.5 captures this, I acknowledged my sin to you and I did not cover my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.

And what? And you forgave the iniquity of my sin. So if you, Lord, should mark iniquities, what's the next phrase? Who could stand?

[12:51] Who could stand? If you think about this phrase, the gospel is squarely here. For who could stand were it not for Christ?

That's what he's saying. Sin's infinite hatefulness is overrun by love's infinite holiness. In the cross of Christ, we not only see the enormity of man's sin and the greatness of God's love, but there's the atonement there.

It's offered for us. The believing soul beholds the entire canceling of all his transgressions, the complete blotting out of the thick cloud of all his guilt.

Christ is our great sin bearer. The sins that were marked against us are marked on him. He changed places with us so that we could stand.

For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. He provided substitutionary atonement for his elect, and we are now rogues in the righteousness of Christ.

[14:00] Lord, if you marked iniquities, who could stand? It's a statement of faith in the Redeemer. It gets better.

But with you there is forgiveness. To the Lord our God belongs mercy and forgiveness. Our God defines forgiveness. This is who he is.

This forgiveness is a kingly prerogative. He pardons. This pardon is a divine right, and how vast the cost is only one.

How immeasurable the sacrifice. The price was so high, only heaven could find it. Only deity could pay the price. But think for a moment about the forgiveness that man can offer.

If we are pardoned by man, what have we gained but a very limited sense of restoration?

Sometimes it won't last, and sometimes we are unchanged by it, though we are pardoned for something.

[15:08] But how great the chasm that the cross did span, God's forgiveness brings ultimate restoration. He not only pardons, but justifies. Not only justifies, but adopts.

And with adoption, confers upon his child an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that never fades away. With you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.

That you may be feared. Fearing God is a necessary fruit of forgiveness. His forgiveness is the foundation for this fear.

Listen to this quote. The pardoned soul sees in the grace of the act such a display of God's holiness and hatred of sin, such an unfolding of His grace and love as at once inspires a holy, reverential, and childlike fear of offending Him.

So great is His love toward us that we have such a fear of offending our great Redeemer. We must see sin's exceeding sinfulness and love's amazing greatness and grace's fullness and freeness when we see God's pardon, His forgiveness.

[16:22] There's infinite power at work here. Only He could do it. The God whom we have offended doesn't demand our blood, but He gives His own in Christ Jesus.

If you would take seriously the guilt of sin, you will take seriously the grace of forgiveness. Think of the gravity of forgiveness in Scripture. In the model prayer, what does Jesus say?

He says, pray this way, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. It's a serious thing. We should forgive others if we want the Lord's forgiveness.

Peter asked Jesus, how many times He should forgive a brother who offends Him. Jesus basically says, you can't count how many times you ought to forgive Him. How many times has God forgiven us?

He's forgiven us for every sin in Christ Jesus. Why would we withhold forgiveness from one another? So, with Him there is forgiveness that He may be feared.

[17:23] So, it's a fearsome, foundational forgiveness. Verse 5 and 6, abiding in His Word. It says, I wait for the Lord.

My soul waits for the Lord. Notice that the psalmist is waiting for the faithful one. He knows He was coming. He did not wait for man. He was already in the depths.

He didn't want to stay down there. Right? Why go any lower? Instead, He reached for the greatest heights. The psalmist takes many postures in this statement.

First, He takes the posture of faith. He knows the Lord will deliver Him. He also takes the posture of prayer. He sets His heart toward the Lord as He waits.

He takes the posture of patience. He was up to God's timing and not His. And He takes the posture of rest. His soul waited upon the Lord.

[18:23] Deep inside, He waited. Psalm 40, 1-3-3 is a similar passage. I waited patiently for the Lord. He inclined to me and heard my cry.

He drew me up from the pit of destruction out of the miry bog and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.

Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. And the time of waiting is beneficial to us. Don't get frustrated through the waiting period.

It's beneficial to you. It tries your faith, exercises patience, it trains you in submission to Him, and endears us the blessing whenever it comes.

I wait for the Lord. My soul waits for the Lord. And skip to the last part of the verse. More than watchmen for the morning.

[19:19] Verse 6, More than watchmen for the morning. What does a watchman do? Watches. He watches. When? During his shift. During his shift.

What's the key time for the watchman that night? They would spend all night watching for danger. But they didn't long for the danger.

What did they long for? They longed for the light. Longed for the morning. If the watchman could make it until the first rays of the rising sun, they could rejoice in their security for yet another night. Waiting in darkness really emphasized the glory of the sunrise. And this is the intensity with which the psalmist waits. How deep the darkness of this world.

How black the night. Think of the Old Testament saints. How they longed to see the light of the world. Christ's first advent sparked the dawn of redeeming grace.

[20:17] We see this in several of our Christmas hymns. The sun of righteousness. S-U-N, the sun. Brought light and light to this world.

Think of the darkness of Good Friday and the despair and deep sorrow that surrounded that day. And then imagine the third day. Resurrection morning. As a new day sprang forth. How glorious will our King be when He returns in all His splendor.

What a day that will be when my Jesus I shall see. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus. More than watchmen in the morning I wait.

Why? Because it's that much more glorious when our King comes for His own. Back up to the last part of verse 5.

And in His Word I hope. And this is how you effectively wait. By immersing yourself in the Word of God. His Word is unchanging, eternal, inerrant, infallible, holy, sustaining, powerful, cleansing, and altogether wonderful.

[21:23] The believing, sinking soul trusts in nothing human and nothing visionary when it trusts in the revealed Word of God. All other foundations are but as the shifting, treacherous sand.

All expectation is visionary and delusive but that which draws its inspiration from and rears the structure of its hope upon the eternal, unchangeable Word with God.

God's revealed Word is a divine, immortal rock building upon and hoping in which the soul shall before long spring from its lowest depth to its loftiest height chanting its new song before the throne of God and the Lamb.

Oh, whatever else fails you, cling to God's Word. Part with all, yea, with life itself rather than part with God's Word. Abide in His Word.

In a world of created changeable things, Christ and His Word alone remain unshaken. Oh, to forsake all creatures, to rest as a stone on Him the foundation, to abide in Him, be borne up by Him.

[22 : 28] This is the Word of Christ. A couple words from Psalm 119. Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice because I have hoped in your Word.

May we all abide in God's Word. My soul longs for your salvation. I hope in your Word. The last two verses of this psalm, verses 7 and 8.

We have enduring redemption. Enduring redemption. For with the Lord there is steadfast love. We'll come back to the first part of that. But with the Lord there is steadfast love.

This is who He is. This is where love is found. And His love does not waver. We are continual recipients of His dedication.

Steadfast love. He has steadfast love for us. It's a peace-giving thing to know that.

[23 : 29] If we would think about that, we could be at rest in His love. For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding, and steadfast love to all who call upon you. His love endures forever and it never lessens.

It never lessens. With Him is plentiful redemption. Plentiful redemption. I love that. His saving power is sufficient in character.

It effectively redeems His people. But His saving power is also abundant in nature. It is overwhelming in its substance. He abundantly pardons.

out of the depths of our sin we cry out and out of the depths of His being Christ saves. Out of the depths.

With Him is plentiful redemption. First part of verse 7, O Israel, hope in the Lord. Because of these truths you have reason to hope. Because He is Lord you can implicitly trust Him.

[24 : 31] He's trustworthy. Amen? So do not deny Him what is due Him. How do you react when someone says that you are untrustworthy? Get offended by it.

Why? You feel trustworthy. You ought to trust me. Would you ever say that about God? You're untrustworthy? Every time we don't trust Him we're saying that about God.

We say great and terrible things against God and His sovereignty, His integrity, His holiness, and His righteous ways when we refuse to trust Him. O Israel, hope in the Lord.

Why? For with the Lord there is steadfast love and with Him is plentiful redemption. And lastly, verse 8, and He will redeem Israel from all His iniquities.

The wonder of this phrase is the word all. We are redeemed from sin's curse, sin's guilt, and sin's power. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[25 : 37] He is a fitting Redeemer. Only Jesus could accomplish this wonderful redemption. And only Jesus did. So as we close, probably pretty early here, Tom, think of these points of application tonight.

Recognize your true state before God. At times, we need to confess our sin and cry out for mercy. It's the cry of the depraved. Cry out to Him.

Be burdened about your sin enough to deal with it with the Father. Secondly, celebrate His fearsome foundational forgiveness that demands our obedience and love. Do not neglect so great a salvation.

He has forgiven us. Don't wallow in your sin. Get it right with God and live in victory. Third, abide in His word as you wait for His work.

Much of our lives will be waiting on the Lord to see what He will do. We don't know His ways. We don't know His thoughts. But we can trust Him. And then lastly, trust Him to sustain you with His enduring work of redemption.

[26 : 48] He works all things together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. His purpose. Our good. His glory. Out of the depths we cry.

Out of the depths He provides. The wonder. The magic. The wonder. May this psalm be encouragement to you and are made by their lives. .