

Psalm 130

1. Intro

- a. Approaching “Advent”, Christmas season
 - i. How many already shopped?
 - ii. We plan vacations, air travel and meals
 - 1. Why?
 - a. Celebrate birth of our Savior
 - i. His Birthday (actual date or not) deserves it!
 - 1. Why?
 - He rescued us – birthday of the *rescuer*
 - Saved nasty sinners from mire of sin
 - iii. Today, we’ll look at how forefathers viewed the rescue from sin
 - 1. Forefathers in the faith, OT believers
 - iv. To do that, we will look at Psalm 130
 - 1. But before we stand & read
 - a. Let’s explore the context first
 - i. So we can better understand what’s going on

2. Context - “Song of Ascent”, both a song & a prayer

- a. One of songs sang as people “going up” to Jerusalem (high altitude)
 - i. Going to observe Yom Kippur or “Day of Atonement”
 - 1. Come from all Israel & this trip & Holy day included:
 - a. Trip to the temple
 - b. Prayers for forgiveness
 - c. Sacrifices to atone for sins
 - i. Atone = payment to make peace with God.
 - 1. Recognized their guilt
 - 2. Hebrews sacrificed animals as way of looking forward to Savior¹
 - 2. This whole trip to Jerusalem about guilt and payment
 - a. Many of these travelers had sacrificial animals with them
 - b. Constant reminder along the way. *Picture*:
 - i. Long trip on donkey/foot
 - 1. Dusty roads – (last part uphill)
 - 2. Bleating of animals
 - 3. Smell of animals
 - And the whole reason was *guilt*
 - ii. Every step of this trip revolved around their sin
 - c. Including the songs they sang

¹ Heb 10:4

3. Let me also point out:
 - a. The people didn't drift into J'slm whenever they wanted
 - i. Travelling/sacrificing by 1's and 2's
 - b. Lord appointed one particular day
 - i. Ensured this group of people together one place/time
 - ii. It ensured UNITY
 - iii. They each had to look forward in faith individually
 1. But they did it together
 2. Also note unity in their confession² (of sin and conf of belief)
 - (hard to sneer at neighbors sin when have your own goat at your feet. *Sin equalizes*)
 3. In this unity & confession was common hope
 - (all exercising the same faith in the same savior that was yet to come)

With this scene in mind, Plz stand/Read Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD! ² O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! ³ If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? ⁴ But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. ⁵ I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; ⁶ my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. ⁷ O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. ⁸ And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities. *Psalms 130:1-8*

We're going to take good look at each part of this song, but before we do please notice:

3. Structure

- a. First step of really understanding a passage – pay attention
 - i. This Psalm has three audiences in it – kinda weird, eh?
 1. Verses 1-4 Author talking to God → *Begging for mercy*
 2. Verses 5-6 Talking about God → *Placement of hope*
 3. Verses 7-8 Talking to God's people → *Proclaiming good news*

Let's look at this passage in each of those sections. Author broke into 3 pieces, so that's how we'll look at it...
VI-4

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD! ² 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? ⁴ But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.

4. Sec. 1 Talking TO God – Begging Him for Mercy

- a. First, note the words LORD and Lord
 - i. LORD is spelled that way because proper name YAHWEH
 - ii. Lord is of meaning God and Master
 1. Uses both for a reason
 - a. People singing this aren't simply saying "Dear God"
 - i. Specifically praying to YAHWEH
 1. This prayer couldn't be spoken in another religion
 - b. Using other name to show humility
 - i. Recognizes themselves as servants, Lord as master

- b. Note also tone in how Psalm opens
 - i. These folks, they're in a hole!
 - 1. Dark place filled w/despair.
 - a. See that?
 - ii. Soul is afflicted, distressed
 - iii. Begging...crying out to God to hear them
 - iv. Taking humble begging position before the Lord
 - 1. Not demanding help
 - 2. Not defending themselves
 - 3. Not whining or placing blame
- c. Why in so much despair?
 - i. Money trouble? Marital problems? Bratty kids?
 - ii. No. Verse 3 tell us:

If you, O LORD, should mark *iniquities*, O Lord, who could stand?

- d. That's the answer - their despair comes from guilt
 - i. They mention needing mercy in v2
 - ii. And past sins in v3...they know they have guilt before God!
 - iii. This whole trip is all about guilt
 - 1. And the smell of goat won't let them forget it!
- e. Please understand: This is the despair of a believer
 - i. So the depths they are in are depths we should recognize:
 - 1. Despair of a sin that is now deeply regretted
 - 2. The darkness that surrounds an addictive sin
 - 3. The heartbreak of seeing the damage done after sinning
 - a. Damage done to not only self, but family or friends
 - ii. You see, we know right from wrong
 - 1. So when we sin, we usually do it knowingly
 - iii. We have knowledge of God's law's & character
 - 1. And then do what we want anyway
 - a. And then comes the guilt, and grief, and heartbreak
 - iv. Folks in our passage also aware of law and consequence
 - 1. So they're in stress and despair.
 - a. Tore up with guilt
 - 2. In fact, these folks knew God's Law better than us or anyone
 - a. They were the people group that received it on the mountain
 - i. That had a summary of Lord's law written stone tablets
 - 3. We see here that the law was doing its job (doing it well)
 - a. ? What is the "job" of God's law??
- f. Learn in the New Testament that making us aware of our guilt its purpose:

For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. - Romans 3:20 (NLT) <expound>

- g. But here, let's take pause from looking at them
 - i. Allow me to ask – Are you tracking with me?
 - ii. Do you know right from wrong?
 - 1. I do
 - a. I know I'm not to gossip, lie, lust, rage, pilfer, etc., etc.
 - iii. Yet too I often do it anyway
 - 1. And I gotta ask – Is that you too??
 - 2. Do you recognize your guilt?
- h. If you answered “yes” that you know your guilt
 - i. Now I must ask another question...
 - 1. Are you crying out from the depths?
 - 2. Are you familiar with the hole of despair they are talking about here?
 - a. Or do you have a casual guilt?
 - b. Do you and I even know what this hole of despair looks like?
 - ii. Do we understand and regret our sin like these folks?
 - 1. I hope so!!
 - 2. Look: we all sin, we have unity in that
 - a. If we are the type that feels no sorrow over sin
 - i. How can we say that Spirit of Holy God resides in us?
 - b. If sin is not our obstacle, we cannot be said to be His followers
 - 3. This hole of despair is a good sign!
 - a. It means our conscience is alive!
 - i. God is convicting us
 - b. May God break all our hearts the same way!
 - iii. Here's another question: Do we understand the rescue like these folks?
 - 1. With a copy of the complete & written Word in our hands
 - a. Do we understand it as good as they do?
 - 2. They're looking forward in time, we have advantage of looking back.
 - a. Since we have this clarity
 - i. Should we not be even more heartbroken over sin?
 - ii. Should we not fear YAHWEH the judge even more, knowing the *incredible* price that was paid for sin?
 - iv. I submit to you that these folks singing, they are pointing a convicting finger our way this morning
 - 1. At least to me it seems that way
 - a. For I know my sin, but often don't grieve over it way I should
 - i. And I know full well the price that was paid....
 - b. I am do not often feel the heartbreak that we see here
 - i. To my shame (our shame if you are there with me)

- i. Let's admit it - Often we try to dodge our sin. Explain it away or ignore it
 - i. These folks did no such thing
 - 1. They openly admitted their guilt
 - a. And they did together,
 - b. And they did it with humility and repentance

If you profess to be a believer but have never felt crushing guilt like described in this psalm, I suggest you take some time to consider why. It would be time well spent!

Now that we have explored both their guilt and our own, let's continue on...

³ If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? ⁴ But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.

- j. So does the Lord not "mark" or remember iniquities (sins)?
 - i. Of course He does!
 - 1. Lord is a just judge, who in no way pardon the guilty

He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD².

- k. Simple also logic tells us our Lord remembers sin. If he didn't, why make a trip focusing on atonement? Why all the goats?
 - i. In addition, didn't Christ Himself say every word/deed would be exposed?³
 - ii. So what is being said here?
 - 1. "Marking" of sins is referring to a permanent/unalterable sense
 - 2. So they recognize there is a way that sins might be wiped clean
 - a. Know Lord doesn't simply ignore sins, or casually dismiss
 - i. Just judge can do no such thing!
 - iii. What this line is alluding to (painting around) is some type of hope
 - 1. They know the coming sacrifices pay for sin
 - 2. They know it's act of faith, the goat blood in itself does not qualify
 - a. No one was ever saved by the blood of bulls and goats⁴
 - i. ***Their hope is in a superior & final sacrifice in their future***
 - 1. See how this hope of theirs might relate to Christmas?
- l. Look again at V4 - something very interesting "...that you may be feared"
 - i. Forgiveness is available but:
 - 1. It doesn't seem to lead to carefree & casual attitude toward sin
 - 2. It actually brings about a fear of God

² Proverbs 17:15

³ Matthew 12:36. Also Romans 2:16 & 1 Cor 4:5

⁴ Hebrews 9:13 and 10:4

But with you there is forgiveness, *that you may be feared.*

- m. How can this be? If consequence of sin is removed, wouldn't weightiness of sin also disappear?
- i. <Credit Card w/3rd party payer example>
 - ii. One would think so, but truth is exactly the opposite
 1. Why? Big theological word called "Regeneration"
 - a. When a person is truly saved, something happens
 - i. Bible calls "born again" or becoming a "new creature"
 2. Ezek 36 teaches a man's heart of stone is removed, given new heart⁵
 3. Jer 31 tells us we began to obey God *because we want to*⁶
 - a. Those who truly look in faith to the one ultimate sacrifice
 - i. Are changed
 1. They no longer enjoy sin
 - They hate it, regret it, and flee it
 - They wish to honor & respect their savior
 - i. In all that they do
 - ii. The fear God the way a child fear a good and just Father
 4. Nehemiah 1:11 says those saved "delight to fear the Lord"
 - a. Fearing the Lord is trembling before His name & power
 - b. Listening & obeying out of respect/awe & gratitude/ love
 - i. Recognizing He is both Creator and Sustainer
 - ii. Understanding He is both lawgiver & Just judge
 - c. It is following His orders because He is the Master
 - d. Jesus Himself taught:

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. John 14:21

- iii. Truth is, if no forgiveness was available, we wouldn't fear.
 1. Would be hardened/resentful

Those who are truly saved fear the Lord. A genuine believer has been re-made and is now more broken over sin, not less.

Back to our passage...

5. Sec. 2 Talking ABOUT God – The Placement of Hope

V5-6

⁵ I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; ⁶ my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.

⁵ Ezekiel 36:22-28

⁶ Jeremiah 31:29-34

- a. We see the people have hope in the Word of their Lord
 - i. Their hope (understood as trust) is in the Word
 - 1. Trusting Lord's faithfulness in what He has said
 - 2. All trust is in Masters Word, knowing it is sure/certain
 - a. The fact that God does not lie
 - i. Guides the most important consideration in their life
 - b. Because of this trust in God
 - i. Their souls wait "like a watchman for the morning"
 - 1. What does that mean?
 - a. Think of context of walled city <explain>
 - i. Anxious then relieved
 - ii. Welcoming the rest after being worn, happy
- c. So these people have confidence in their position, yet at same time looking forward
 - i. We are in the same boat, are we not?
 - 1. You have heard Marc call this the "already & not yet"
 - 2. We know Christ's finished work on Cross pays for sins of those who
 - a. Repent & believe
 - b. Those who put all hope/trust in His work alone
 - i. Have had their fine paid
 - 3. We are legally seen as sinless in Lord's Court
 - a. Our salvation is complete–
 - b. And yet...
 - i. Also looking forward to that "day of salvation"
 - ii. To final resting place – a day without sin!
 - iii. To peace that is finished & permanent
 - iv. Already/not yet present even daily
 - 1. As we get out of bed as a redeemed people
 - Cleansed by Christ
 - 2. And Lord again begins separating us from sin
 - 3. Again begins drawing us closer to Himself
 - Further from world
 - 4. We have salvation now, yet we also wait for it

6. Sec. 3 Talking TO God's people – of hope and good news

v7-8

⁷ O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. ⁸ And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

- 7. Look carefully at this last verse:
 - a. Hope...(trust)...is put in the LORD (all caps – YWH)
 - i. Redemption is in Him alone
 - 1. "with Him is plentiful redemption"
 - a. Author knew the upcoming sacrifices paid nothing
 - i. Only looking forward to redeemer/savior

2. “with Him” is steadfast love
 - a. An unwavering love
 - i. Towards us who are not yet perfected
- b. And in V8:
 - i. “He will”
 1. Singular
 - a. Not “He will help” –or- “together we will” - Just HE
 - ii. Do you see the singular references here?
 1. “Him – Him – He”
 - a. He alone is the rescuer, redeemer and cause for all hope/celebration
 - iii. We see this is written of Israel here
 1. But who is Israel?
 - a. God’s chosen people
 - i. As are we
 - ii. Paul even call those who believe
 1. The true Israel⁷
 2. So no crime of interpretation say this speaks of our salvation as well
 3. Did we not saw in Romans, cleaning up our sinful ways does nothing?
 - a. We need a rescuer
 - i. And that is what we have
 1. All of us, our fathers in the faith as well
 2. Truly have cause for hope celebration

8. Close:

- a. So what do we make of all this?
 - i. I suggest that going into the Advent/Christmas season
 1. We adopt for our own what we see here
 - a. This church is a branch of God’s people
 - i. First – let us, like those before us
 1. Come together in Unity
 2. Make peace with each other
 - In all humility
 - Recognizing common sinfulness & common savior
 - All of us need grace found at salvation
 - i. We also need to extend grace to each other
 - ii. Next – Let us recognize the authority/laws of YAWEH
 1. As we recognize His law, the law will do it’s job
 - We will be shown how sinful we are
 - We will feel guilt and despair
 - i. This is a good thing!

⁷ Galatians 3:27-29, Romans 9

- iii. For then, we will beg for mercy
 - 1. Embrace repentance
 - 2. And put all hope in Him
 - 3. Let us each examine our relationship with Christ
 - By examining our relationship with sin
 - i. If we feel no conviction
 - ii. If we have head knowledge of sin
 - iii. But no grief in our heart
 - iv. Let us beg for it
- iv. Lastly, let us go into the coming weeks with the end of this Psalm on our hearts/minds
 - 1. For we truly do have cause to celebrate!
 - 2. Not as a tradition or fun event for kids
 - But because our atoner came
 - Because we are saved
 - And we are being saved
- v. Because our hope is not a “wait-and-see” hope
 - 1. It is an “already but not yet” hope
 - 2. A hope that is fixed, and immovable. Ordained
 - unchangeable before foundation of world
- vi. Indeed, those who have repented of their sin and trusted in the rescue offered by Jesus Christ have the only true hope there is.

Close in Prayer

Resources:

The Forgiveness of Sin
A practical exposition of Psalm 130
By John Owen

Psalms, Vol II
Crossway Classic Commentary
C.H. Spurgeon

Podcast “40 Minutes in the Old Testament”