

# Out of the Depths

## Anthony Kim

---

This evening we'll be in Psalm 130. So, if you will go ahead and turn with me to Psalm 130 for this evening's sermon. Psalm 130 is known as a song of degrees. What this means is that as it says in verse one, this expression "out of the depths," that's a degree. Out of the depths, the degree is the lowest pit. The lowest pit and of anguish is that pit. And then it speaks of rising up in degrees into the heights of full assurance from anguish to full assurance.

It is often noted that this psalm follows Psalm 129 rightly so which teaches us that after the Lord has provided a victory over trials brought by men, here in Psalm 130 prepares a soul to meet even sharper sorrows not from men but which arise from our standing before God himself. It is a psalm for people who know what it is to be overwhelmed by sin, sorrow, fear, or even spiritual darkness.

As we walk through these eight verses, let us recognize that every step is authored by God. Your steps are all authored by God. One commentary puts it this way here specifically in Psalm 130. It focuses entirely on the grace and mercy of God rather than the works of men. This psalm is not about us climbing up the spiritual mountain by no means. Again, I mentioned it is God that authors the very steps that you make. He's the one that puts one foot after the other in your life. And so it is about God who comes down to where we are in our anguish in our overwhelmed place into the very depths of possible darkness and he's the one that lifts his people up. This is what we're going to see in this wonderful psalm. In fact, it's a picture of the gospel here in this psalm. We're going to see that in Psalm 130:8 where it talks about redeeming his people.

So let's start with verse one and two. God hears us in the depths. Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice. Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. Here we see the depths are real. These depths again include sin. You can possibly be overwhelmed with sin, overwhelmed by sorrow, overwhelmed the depths of fear, overwhelmed by the depths of spiritual darkness.

As a reminder to us that the depths are often the place where God performs his most profound work. Let me repeat that again. It's where God performs his most profound work. God frequently casts his children into deep waters of affliction, poverty, of soul

trouble so that their hearts may be awakened from the security of worldly comfort. You see, many of us temptation still is there and we can often find our comfort in the world and God knows this and he is the one that authors your steps not down to the anguish. We put ourselves in that place. But it's what God does to lift us up out of the depths. That's the key.

We own up to our anguish. We own up to the depths of sin. We own up to the depths of sorrow. We own up to the depths of fear. We own up to the depths of spiritual darkness. But God is the one that leads us out of it one step at a time. He doesn't want you to ultimately stay in a place of worldly comfort. That's not how he deals with his children. He'll never leave you there. Never.

So, we often find that the pearls actually lie when we are in the depth. And it's the Lord that ensures that the most precious things of faith are discovered only when he has allowed the waves to roll over us. What that means is that in your depths, are you constantly feeling like just overwhelmed and it just won't relent? It's like the fear just increases. The sin increases more conviction. The sorrow hurts more. The spiritual darkness becomes more dark. You see, it's out of there, that place, he wants you to sense you need to get out. You need to get out. And he's going to show you exactly how to get out.

You see, the depths of earnestness are stirred by the depths of tribulation. Some of it tribulation is owned by us. God allows his people to feel the depths. He wants you to feel it. He wants you to feel the depth. Not to destroy them, not to destroy you, but to awaken you to his nearness that you might think that in this place where you are that God's not there, that God can't rescue you. That is not true. Satan wants to convince you of that. Your flesh wants to convince you of that. The world wants to convince you of that. But not God. Not God.

You see, in this passage, we must see that it is God who sustains the cry. He's the one that even makes you cry in your overwhelm. You see the text says, "I cried." That's the psalmist crying. But the very ability to pray in the depths is a gift. It is a gift that you can even pray. Where does those words come from? It's from God. See, the fact that his prayer is even offered to you, that is offered to David to cry out to God, that that's even offered that he doesn't just destroy him, he allows him to pray. And it's God allowing him to pray and to cry out. It's a proof of his attention. He wants to hear. He wants to hear.

The Lord who puts it into our hearts to make prayer even happen. You might think that it's you. It's not. When you're truly praying out of your anguish, that's from God himself. Consider Psalm 18:16. He sent from above. He took me. He drew me out of many waters. It is not the strength of the one that's swimming that saves him. No, it's the reach of the

savior towards that swimmer in need of rescue. Even when the soul feels engulfed by whatever that is overwhelming, I listed it. The Lord does not allow the cry to be silenced. Meaning that even out of your overwhelmed, he won't allow you to stay silent. He keeps the mouth of his servants open even beneath the floods. Only God can do that. When someone's drowning, it's often difficult to breathe. And yet, who is the one that's giving you the breath? God.

The request, Lord, hear my voice. Let thine ears be attentive is not a demand by the psalmist. By the way, it is from a position of I beg you, Father. I beg you. I need you. I need you right now to rescue me. That's where he's coming from. And here's the thing. Let's not just focus our attention on where he's at, but who he is giving his request to to the great King of Earth and heaven. He hears. He knows. He watches. He cares.

The Psalmist does not ask God to answer. Notice, he doesn't pray, "God, answer me." No, he just says, "Hear me. Hear me." He has no concept of an answer at this point. He says, "Just hear me, please, Father. Please hear me. Only hear me." Because when God hears, he acts. He acts. He's a good father. He doesn't allow his children to stay where they are at. We just need to have him hear us. That's all he asks. And he shows us that through the psalmist.

You see, just as a parent notices the cry of a child in danger, the child doesn't ask for an answer. He just cries. She just cries. Doesn't ask for an answer. But yet as a parent, we know what that cry is coming from. We know what that cry is from. Their hunger. We know how that hunger cry sounds like. We know a cry of I'm tired. See, even in the cries, there's nuance to it, isn't there? And God knows and can distinguish every one of our cries. And he knows what's behind that cry. He is sovereign. He knows it all.

So now, let's look at three and four. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand, but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. Here the psalmist knows the truth. And what is this truth? That if God truly kept the records of all of our sins, marks of all of our iniquity, we would all be undone, right? Because he does know everything. But yet, he doesn't act on all of them. Think about that. Spurgeon writes this. If men were judged upon works, who could answer for himself?

Here we encounter a court before the psalmist. And the scene is the judge seated on his throne. And every transgression is marked down. The sentence has already been dealt with by the mark of iniquity. But as he watches and observes all these iniquities, every lack of conformity to his law, remember all sin is transgression of the law. Because his law is perfect. Everything that is accounted for is ruled against that perfect law. And we know what that perfect law is. And none of us can ever perform. When all of us understood what the perfect law that is totally unattainable by our works that everything

had we had to conform to every single law that even one slip of a tongue as it were we will be undone that's what Spurgeon was saying and that's what the psalmist is saying he marks all of our iniquities and no one will be able to stand no one.

You see, it is God who lays aside the records. He's the one that lays aside the records. Even though they're all marked, he lays it aside for the believer. He lays it aside for every true believer. Not because of us, but yet in Christ. Because of Christ. When we look at Jeremiah 2:22, it says this, "For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God." What he's saying here in Jeremiah is that he can try to erase that mark of sin, that blot of sin. And using a physical analogy of using nitre and then with soap and that was the best at the time. And you can do it through a physical work, but it will never wash away the iniquity. That's what the Lord says, the Lord God.

And what this verse underscores is that man cannot cleanse himself. Only the Lord can remove the mark of iniquity. And then we come with the most blessed word. But in all of scripture, this word is a transitional word where before God, he sees everything. He could do whatever he wants at this stage. And yet there's a transition here. And this is the transition. But there is forgiveness with thee. This is the gospel in one line. This forgiveness is the Lord's right to choose alone to exercise what he wants. And he is ready to permanently be ready to apply the instant cleansing in a moment's flash.

One commentator put it this way, the Lord himself has provided the sacrifice for sin, finding a ransom in Jesus Christ. Meaning that no matter how grievous the sin is, how deep in depth you are, his ransom pays for all of it. All of it. It doesn't matter how grievous that sin is, how big you have put yourself in the debt of hell, as it were. How negative you are. He is the perfect ransom for all your sin. This is the blessed but he forgives. There's forgiveness with thee.

Forgiveness is not found in us. Forgiveness is not earned by us. Forgiveness is not even maintained by us. Forgiveness is with God because God provides the sacrifice. It is this psalm about the impossibility of standing before God. Apart from his mercy, apart from his mercy, we are undone. And so for again, this produces fear. He says later on in the text you see there that thou mayest be feared. That thou mayest be feared. Forgiveness does not produce carelessness. It produces reverence and love and worship of God.

You see, we're worshipping before our own selves. We are have self-interest. We are careless in our respect for authority. And he turned all that around. And he allows us to reverence him, God. And he gives us the ability to love him, God. And he allows us to be able to worship him in spirit and truth. A radical change from carelessness to actually caring for the things of God. The result of this forgiveness is that God is to be feared.

This is not a slavish fear that the psalmist is talking about. It's not an anxiety like we see in Adam where he felt in the garden hiding from God. No, it's not this distancing slavish fear that we once had in Adam. No, we come to him but with holy reverence. That's the key. We come to him with holy reverence, deep respect, a fear of God. He doesn't want us to hide from him. But he doesn't also want us to come to him with our arrogance. He wants us to come with reverence, with love, with worship to him.

John Bunyan points it this way. The Lord set such a high esteem upon his creatures that he chooses to pardon them so that they might love and revere him. It is the fire of love from God that melts the icy heart of man. You see, when we're in a bad place, our hearts are ice cold. And if it wasn't for the fire of God to melt that cold heart from us, we would be undone. But he physically wants us to feel the warmth of God. Love is to be felt. Love has heat. It's not cold. There's no such thing as cold love. With God, he is a consuming fire and his fire is pure and is all good. Forgiving people become worshiping people.

So that's where the psalmist has arrived to a place of worship. God, I just want to be in your presence. I don't want to be in the presence of the overwhelm and sin, whatever that is, darkness, sorrow, fear. I just need you. I just need you in my life. That's all that matters. That's his cry answered.

And then verses five and six, God teaches the psalmist to wait. I wait for the Lord. My soul doth wait. And in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning. I say more than they that watch for the morning. Waiting is a grace exercised by God upon the soul. Waiting is a great part of life's discipline in the disciplines of God. And the Lord uses it to show his sovereignty. He's in control, giving us just when and just as he pleases.

He knows the when and what pleases him the most. And so the psalmist says, "My soul doth wait." We should understand this as the Lord sustaining the soul in a posture of faith. William Gurnall describes this as the supernatural grace of the gracious soul hanging in faith upon God. It is not the soul's own stamina that keeps it waiting. Rather, the Lord provides a promise underneath to lean upon. You have now a support. We've always had that support, but it's the acknowledgement of that support.

And this hope is specifically anchored, as he says, the psalmist, in his word. So you go from worship to now hearing from him through his word. Waiting is not human patience. It is God-given hope. That's what waiting is. Is this expectant hope? He says, "And in his word do I hope." Spurgeon says, waiting tries faith, exercises patience, trains submission, and endears the blessing when it comes. Waiting is not passive. It is God sustaining the soul with his promises.

The word is the bread that refreshes the soul. The word is the firm ground upon which the soul is rested. The word is a true word even when it seems to tarry. The repetition of the phrase more than they that watch for the morning in these verses signifies the intensity of the longing that God has placed within the spirit. Just as a weary soldier or a gatekeeper guarding the entrances, protecting the sanctity within longs for the first red streak of the day over the horizon in the mountains. The soul waits for the sun of righteousness to rise.

The source reminds us that God's delays are not denials. God's delays are not denials. It's wait. Prayers are not just yes or no. There is also a wait. Because he will come at his appointed time. And he is more certain to appear than the dawn itself, the morning itself. And I gave a sermon about this, about the sun and the moon rising perfectly. Even that compared to God's timing is incomparable because it's God that controls ultimately the rising and the falling.

And so we're looking now at verse 7 to 8 that there is a promise waiting for the psalmist of plenteous redemption. Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Here is the final movement of the psalm. Turns from the individual "I" to the whole people of God, Israel. Forgiven people become proclaiming people. These words that he writes gives us a taste for his mercy. Gives us a mercy that calls us to hope in this promise to wait upon his promise.

Psalm 130 is not merely speaking of ethnic lineage by the way of Israel. It is speaking of the people whom God himself redeems. So it speaks of people who God himself redeems. Spurgeon says this, "He shall redeem Israel from all its iniquities. Redemption is already wrought out and laid up with him." You see, Israel in this psalm is the people who receive God's mercy. So if you're a person that receive God's mercy and God's forgiveness and God's redemption, Paul explains this in Romans 9 through 11.

Paul picks up this theme from Psalm 130 in Romans 9-11. And he begins by saying, "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel." Romans 9:6. In other words, the true Israel, the Israel we see in Psalm 130 is pointing to God's calling and God's mercy. Paul says this, not all physical descendants are the true Israel. The true Israel is a people of promise. Those that God calls, saves, and then redeems. And this is exactly what we see here in Psalm 130. He calls, he saves, and redeems.

And Israel is a people God redeems from all iniquities, making it very clear it's from iniquities. And so now going and advancing, we're going to go to chapter 11 of Romans. And this we see that its gentile believers are grafted into the same Israel. Paul then uses this olive tree image. Thou wert grafted in among them and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree. Romans 11:17. So as gentile believers, that's all of us

that are non-Jews are not a separate people. We are grafted into the same covenant mercy that Psalm 130 speaks about. The same mercy that 130 celebrates in salvation and redemption. The same promise that's given in 130. The same hope that 130 commands, it is through Christ.

That's the overhanging mercy. Grace is in Christ. And so God brings Jew and Gentiles into one redeemed people, one olive tree, one covenant family. Paul concludes, "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," meaning all Jews and all Gentiles, the true Israel, those who are saved and redeemed. Romans 11:32. So Psalm 130 says, "With the Lord there is mercy. With him is plenteous redemption. He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." And then Romans 11 continues to say, "It's God's mercy that extended to all. It's God's redemption that gathers a people from every nation. God's plan is one plan of mercy for Jew and Gentile alike."

So Psalm 130, Israel becomes in Christ a multi-ethnic redeemed people united by God's redeeming grace. So mercy and grace all the same to both all multi-ethnic redeemed people. So because of Christ, we are the people who hope in the Lord. We are the people who receive the plenteous redemption. We are the people God redeems from all iniquities. And as Paul says in Galatians 3:29, if you be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. And so Psalm 130 ends with a promise that stretches across the Old Testament into the New Testament across the covenants across the nations fulfilled in Christ and extended to all who belong to him.

So, continuing on where we left off, we're going to focus on that word plenteous. What is plenteous redemption? It is a redemption that restores the backslider and keeps the believer. It is God who restores the backslider. It is God who keeps the believer. It is a redemption that not only delivers us from the depths out of the depths but puts the soul in possession of a place of being heirs with Christ. There is no higher height no greater hope than us being heirs in Christ. Nothing, no inheritance can match to the heirs that we have in Christ. And that out of that is that plenteous because it's far exceeds our capacity to even take it in in our physical bodies.

And so this redemption was paid for with the precious blood of the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. We see this fulfilled in Matthew 1:21 and continuing that Jesus declares he shall save his people from their sins. What a great redemption we have. This is the concluding promise and it's absolute. He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Not some, not most, all. And so that word dwelling on that word all, not one iniquity is left behind in God's eyes. Just as much he can mark every iniquity in his records. He counts them all and he just all of it gone. Nothing is left behind, not a trace, not a shade. The Lord blots them all out and casts them behind his back. And this is the restoration of man performed entirely by the hand of the Lord, the Lord's finished work.

You see, forgiveness, we don't have to constantly confess our forgiveness to God, but out of that one simple act of forgiveness, he continues to forgive us. He continues to help us to cry out to him. And he is the one that brings us out of the depths again and again and again and again for all until we see him face to face. You see, that's really what a believer goes through. We're not playing around here. We know we're dealing with stuff, true things like this psalmist. We all seek our own, don't we? Even as redeemed people of God. But you see, he never leaves us where we are.

Do you sense that promise? Do you sense that rescuing work in your life again and again. So that why does he want to do this? So that he can reveal more of the importance of the gospel in our lives. How good the gospel really really is. And he wants to show that and he wants us to live it out out of whatever depths you are in to experience that first love experience. That moment that you were once saved and secure, but he wants you to remember it again and again and again going back and forth, back and forth. And that cry comes from a real place. God, why do I keep making this mistake? God, why do I keep going down this path? Why do I keep going four steps forward and then three steps back and I'm just constantly overwhelmed? Why? And we just He hears us.

He hears us out of the depths of that cry. And if you're a real believer, you know that cry. You know it. You know it. And you know how he has rescued you again and again and again. And where's he rescued you? You're forgiven, my child, in my son. Your iniquities are blotted out. All of it gone. Do you come back to that place again and again and again and again? There's nothing like it. There's nothing like it's free. The gospel was free. He paid it all. His ransom was worth enough to pay for all.

And so I conclude here. This is a meditative psalm. It's one we can come back to over and over and over again because it reminds us of that first cry in the depths to the final note of the plenteous redemption that has found the Lord Jesus Christ. He allows the depths to be awakened in us. He puts the cry of faith into our hearts. He provides the forgiveness that creates holy fear. He forgives what would condemn us. He exercises the grace of waiting within us. He sustains us while we wait and redeems us from all iniquities completely through the blood of his dear son Jesus Christ.

And this is another way expressing it as one commentary says it's a word painting of man restored by the grace of God. And may the Lord Jesus seal these truths in our hearts. The word that gives us hope that we may rest not in our own efforts. Even though they want to come back here and there, it is by the plenteous redemption that we are to be reminded that it is all of him all the time. And it was not us that we climb out of the depths, but rather God that descends into the depths and lifts us up time and time again. Spurgeon said this, "He that cries out of the depths shall soon sing in the heights."

This is a psalm, by the way, where to sing this. Let us stand out of the respect of God's word as I read Psalm 130. Again, I am doing this intentionally. Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice. Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand. But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning. I say more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. May God bless the reading of his word. You may be seated as I close out in prayer.

Father, thank you for this wonderful reminder of what the gospel really is. Not only in the day of our salvation, but continually a reminder for us of what Christ has done for us. And that whatever experiences we have right now or have come from or will come go into that whatever depths that we are in, if we are your children, you will rescue us out of the depths. You will rescue us from the feeling of being overwhelmed. And Lord, it's your goodness that brings us back to having reverence and of a love and a worshipful heart towards you. And that we thank you that we can do all of this in Christ who helped and made this reality true to us. Thank you for what Christ has done for us on the cross, pay full payment for our sins, that we can be washed and cleansed by his precious blood and that we can live aright to you as reconciled through him. Thank you, Father, for all your blessings for now and forever more. And we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.