

Psalm 130

by Carl Armerding

The psalmist expresses his experience of being trapped in sin and his desire for forgiveness and redemption through Jesus Christ.

Duration: 38:32

Scripture: Psalm 130:1, Isaiah 1:6, Isaiah 6:5

Topics: "Psalms"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the late hours of the night when he returns home after preaching. He talks about the weight of sin and how it accumulates like a national debt, emphasizing that good deeds cannot cancel out our wrongdoings. The speaker then shifts the focus to the Word of the Lord and the promise of Jesus' return. He highlights the intensity with which we should wait for the Lord, comparing it to David's anticipation of the morning sacrifice. The sermon concludes with a personal anecdote about getting caught in a political situation and a mention of the atrocities committed during the Holocaust.

Transcript

This morning I'd like to look at Psalm 130. Psalm 130. I'm very thankful that some have been introduced to these psalms, which probably didn't realize how much wealth there is in them.

I trust that as you read them over again, you'll discover many things for yourself. Because they're just rich in experience and expression for the people of God. Before I read the psalm, I'd like to express my deep appreciation to those who invited me here to participate in this conference.

To me it's been a real joy. There were times, like yesterday, when I thought maybe that was it. After the morning service and then after the evening service, I really wondered how things were going to go.

But that's the way it goes when you have a little trouble inside. But we thank the Lord for the prayers, and we trust they'll follow us as we go on this evening from Newark, New Jersey, to speak in the Maplewood Chapel there. And then a couple or three more meetings this week.

Before going up to Canadian Cheswick at the end of the week for a week of meetings up there. I certainly do appreciate all your expressions of appreciation. I feel very much like Dr. James M. Graves, late president of the Moody Bible Institute, who when he was thanked for the words which he had spoken, he said, thank you, I'll pass it on to the Lord Jesus.

And that's what we're going to do. With all of these lovely things that you've said. Psalm 130.

You'll notice that it's one of the songs of degrees. There are 15 of the Psalms, beginning with Psalm 120 and closing with Psalm 134, which are known as songs of degrees or the songs of the goings up. And it is thought that the Israelites will use these songs again when they're restored to the land.

Not the way they are just now, but they're restored to the Lord spiritually. And they'll be going up to Jerusalem to offer their praise and worship. I just want to look at one of these as well.

Psalm 130. Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice.

Let thine ears be attended to the voice of my supplications. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand? But there is forgiveness for thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul, that waiteth 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. He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. It's been a matter of interest to me in reading through the Bible to see how the Spirit of God has led one writer after another in his description of men in their natural state.

We turn back, for example, to the prophecy of Isaiah. Well known portion. First chapter.

And he tells you that from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there's no soundness in it. Nothing but wounds and bruises and incurable sores that have not been bound up and so on. And the picture you get is that of a leper.

That's exactly what the leper would look like. As we have seen him again and again. And this is Isaiah's picture of a person in his state.

Indeed, Isaiah himself puts himself in the same category in the sixth chapter when he says that, looking at the Lord. He says, I've seen the Lord. The Lord of hosts.

The King. And he's smitten in his presence. He said that, I am nothing but a poor leper myself.

I'm a man of unclean lips. And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. Job, likewise, was a man who thought he could be with himself.

You read the book of Job and you get an idea. He was a man who lived a clean life. And he was a man who could be proud of his record.

In fact, he pointed to it again and again. Not only was he just, he was generous. But, when you come to the closing chapter of the book of Job, you really hear something like this.

He says, I've heard of thee by the hearing of the ears. But now mine eyes see of thee. And I abhor myself.

I repent in dust and ashes. This is the effect of measuring yourself, not by other men, but by the perfect standard, the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And that verse in Romans 3 says that all have sinned and come short.

It doesn't say, come short of the moral standards of the human race. It doesn't even say, come short of the Ten Commandments. It doesn't say, he's come short of the Sermon on the Mount.

It says, he's come short of the glory of God. And where do you see the glory of God? You see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And so very frequently when we're talking with men whose lives have been exemplary in their communities in which they live.

They've been honest, they've been generous, they've been gracious and all this sort of thing. And yet they've never seen themselves as lawfully ruined sinners in the sight of God. It's all because they've never compared themselves with a perfect standard.

The minute one compares himself with that perfect standard, the Lord Jesus Christ. He'll do as we've just now indicated, what Isaiah did. He said, I've seen the Lord of Hosts.

I repent. Yes, he confessed that he was just a man of unclean lips. And brought him in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

Likewise as we've seen of Job. Now in the psalm here this morning, we get still another way of referring to this. I could have multiplied illustrations.

Not only does the sinner look like a leper. Not only does he look, shall I say, like a poorly dragged drag picker. Nothing like this.

Neither does he look like a sick man lying on a bed. Or does he look like, shall I say, a prisoner behind the bars. But here's a psalm that says, out of the depths have I called unto thee.

Out deep down he doesn't say. But I'm sure dear friends, the more and more he considered it. He realized that the more and more he was trying to get out of this.

He was just getting in deeper all the time. And this is exactly the experience of men who try to climb out of this on their own. They realize that they haven't measured up.

But they say, well somehow I'm going to make an attempt. I'm going to try and climb up. They only realize that their footing is like quicksand.

And down and down and down they go. Now the psalmist is giving expression to that in the opening verses of our psalm. When he says, out of the depths have I cried unto thee.

Lord hear my voice, be attentive to the voice of my supplication. And then he comes down to the real trouble. The trouble isn't that he's failing in strength.

The trouble isn't that he's poverty stricken. But he says, Lord if thou shouldst mark iniquity. This is the thing that bothers him.

His iniquity, not really his mistakes. I remember when I was on the way to the mission field the first time. I was just a young fellow, 20 years of age.

And the lady on board the ship was recognizing me as a Christian. Because I was speaking to people about the Lord Jesus. And telling some of them I was going to the mission field in Central America.

And she made an acquaintance one day. We were sitting in our steamer chairs on the deck. And she says, I hear you're a missionary.

Going to the foreign field. I said, yes lady, I'm going to Honduras, Central America. Oh, she said, I wish you could have met my father.

My father's a minister. I said, well thank you, I'd like to have met her. She said, you know father had some wonderful new definitions for things.

And I began to get a bit suspicious when I heard about these new definitions for things. And I waited to see what she was going to offer as a first example. She said, you know, father never liked to use that word semen, nicotine.

He always spoke of these stuff, people's mistakes, their mom's mistakes. Well I said, now if your father's interpretation is correct, I said lady, it ought to fit in some of the text. Let's see how it works.

So I selected one out of the 15 chapters of 1 Corinthians. That Christ died for our honest mistakes. I said, how does that sound? She said, it doesn't sound quite right.

I said, no it isn't. And I said, it isn't right either. He didn't simply die for my honest mistakes.

He died for my sins. He died for my rebellion against God. Or as the psalmist puts it here, he uses the strongest word probably that we have in the language when he says, Lord if thou shouldst mark iniquity.

You know, we want to really emphasize sin. You know, all of it sinless, sinfulness. This is the word which we generally use.

It was a nicket. You hear a person using that, you know he's emphasizing the wrongdoing of somebody else. This is the way the psalmist speaks of his sins here.

He's not minimizing them in the least. So he says, Lord if thou shouldst mark them. If you should put them to our account, who in the world could stand? And of course the answer is nobody.

Nobody. Well there's none righteous, no not one. Nobody could stand if the Lord were to mark these against us.

But you say, hasn't he marked them? Yes he has, but you know he's also canceled some of these markings. And this comes out in the very next verse of our psalm where he says, But there is forgiveness within. There is forgiveness.

Now what does the word forgiveness mean? You know we use the word very lightly. I don't think we really realize how much is involved and implied in this word forgiveness. To forgive in the Old Testament as well as in the New, the original meaning of the word, means to lift away.

And this is exactly what God does when he forgives. He lifts away our sins and where does he put them? As we were hearing a little earlier, he laid on him the iniquity of us all. That's not right.

That's forgiveness. Transferring shall I say the guilt from one to another. This is forgiveness.

And of course in order to do this, God had to select one who had no iniquity of his own. He had no sin of his own. And the Lord Jesus was the only one that measured up to that.

Here he stands, the spotless one. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. You know years ago, I picked up an old hymn book and I saw him in there.

I lay my sins on Jesus, the spotless man of God. Well if it remained for me to lay my sins on Jesus, friends, I'm sure I wouldn't have laid them all there. Because of many things I didn't quite think were bad enough to prepare.

But God sees as we don't see. Things that you and I might dismiss as saying, well this is just an honest mistake. But God sees every wrong doing.

And it was he who took my sins and my iniquities and laid them on the head of his beloved son. And this is the only way in which guilt can be canceled. This is the only way in which I could ever hope to stand in the presence of a holy God who knows my record from the beginning to the end.

And this isn't because I was reared, shall I say, in an atmosphere where everything was corrupt. I was born and brought up in a Christian home. I could boast of my morality and the cleanness of my habits.

And yet God had to show me when I came face to face with his beloved son that I was nothing but a poor law-proven sinner. And that's exactly the effect it has when you come face to face with the Lord Jesus. But the minute you say, if thou should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? As we said the answer is nobody.

But there is forgiveness to be. And oh what a word this is that Paul uses. Am I speaking to someone who realizes that he or she still does not have that record canceled? I'm sure it must bother you when you think about it.

Well perhaps you're not the open sinner that the man or the woman down the street may be. But I think you'll agree with me that perhaps a few sins that you do commit every day. You know we speak about sinning in thought.

We speak about sinning in words. And we speak about sinning in deeds. Thought, words, deeds.

That's three times. Suppose you just commit one of these a day. Just one a day.

From the time that you reach the age of accountability. Now in my case that dates back to around five or six years of age. But let's put it at ten years for example.

And take ten years off your life and then multiply the remaining years by three. That'll be a minimum one. One sin in thought, words, deeds.

Three times the number of years. That's three times the number of days in a year and then three times the number of that. Or as many years as you've lived above.

They really pile up don't they? If you can sit down and take a pencil and just figure this thing out. You'd almost need a computer before you teach. You get the total number of them.

There they are. How in the world are you ever going to get rid of deeds? Some people talk about doing good deeds to cancel out the bad. Friends we'll never win that way.

You just simply can't. Because the others are piling up hopelessly like our national debt. We never get rid of that.

We just keep lifting the level that's all. It's time to kid ourselves that we can still live within the budget. But we don't.

And friends our national debt in the United States is merely a picture of the way things go. With you and me, without Christ. Much has been given to Christ.

That he may be feared. Now this brings me to what is really my theme this morning. I never like to close a series of meetings without having at least one talk devoted to the coming again of our Lord Jesus.

You know before you can really enjoy the coming of Christ you have to have all these things set. I remember preaching on the second coming of Christ in a certain neighborhood and they carried a lady out screaming. I wondered what had happened to her.

Whether she suddenly had to scream pain. Or what had happened. No they said she just couldn't bear to hear you talking about the Lord's coming.

She wanted to come. Why didn't she want to come? Because she wasn't ready. She wasn't ready.

But now once you've had forgiveness you're ready. You see. Once the debt has been cancelled everything is put away through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You're ready. And notice how this changes the whole tone of this talk. You notice these in verse 5. I wait for the Lord.

I'm sure he didn't say that when he was in his city. But now his sins are forgiven. He says I wait for the Lord.

Yes dear friends he's like those Thessalonians. To whom Paul wrote what we believe to be his first lesson. He said they turn to God for help.

And serve the living and true God. And to wait for his son to come. Not what Jesus wanted him to take on.

I really believe it could be extended to something like this. To wait up for him. You see that is almost the basic idea there in that passage in Thessalonians.

We say what's the difference between waiting and waiting up. Well. Perhaps I can draw an illustration out of personal experience.

I've already told you from time to time here. That for 10 years I had the honor of being chaplain of a TV sanitarium. And my work very often took me into the wee small hours of morning.

Again and again it would be 1, 1.30, 2 o'clock before I'd get home. Because it just seemed like this was a time, an hour. And life was at its lowest edge.

And many of these whom we've had the joy of leading Christ. Went home about that time and moment. And I'd come back.

And I'd drive into the drivers and the cars. I'd see a light on in the kitchen. And I thought it was so thoughtful of my dear wife.

But what I didn't always anticipate at that hour in the morning. Was that I'd have a personal rush. You know that when I put my feet in the locks and opened the door.

The door would open up itself and then stop. But here she was. She could wait in time.

And her rush was somewhat different from waiting, isn't it? I see people in these airports that wait in time. Some of them get long enough, take it long enough to eat their oatmeal out of the fourth jar. But not so with the person who's waiting for the Lord.

And beloved this is one of the things that marked the early disciples. And it was one of the things that marked the early brethren. I know that the basic truth that was rediscovered by men like Garvey, Kelly and others.

Was the truth of the one body. But in close association with that was the truth of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact I can remember when I was a boy.

This is the thing that seemed to stand out. These are the people that are waiting for God's Son from heaven. And here the psalmist, as if he were speaking a new type of language.

He says, I wait for the Lord. Well now but how much do you really wait for him and why do you wait for him? Well he says here verse 5, my soul does wait. As we pointed out in an earlier meeting, the soul is the seat of our emotions.

The whole emotional part of it is his new victory thought that the Lord might come right now. My soul does wait. And in his word, well I hope I haven't got anything else before we correct this whole thing.

But his word. You know sometimes people challenge you with this. You say, you're waiting for God's Son to come back? Yes.

What do you base that on? Do you base it on the trend of events in history? No I don't. No I don't base it on the trend of events. I could of course base many things on the trend of events today.

And I'm sure I would be wrong in ignoring the trend of events as we see them occurring on every hand today. But friends, it's not the trend of events. It's the word of the Lord himself.

And you know when the apostle introduces this thing in 1 Thessalonians 4, what does he say? This we say unto you, as you behold the trend of events? Oh no. This we say unto you by the word of the Lord. Listen.

Beloved let's stick to this. He said it. He said I am coming again to receive you unto myself.

And where I am there you may be also. In his word do I hope. Now how intensely do you wait for him David? That is if David wrote this psalm.

We don't know who the author may have been. But let us see in verse 6 how intensely wrong he is. He says my soul waited for the Lord more than David watched for the morning.

I say more than David watched for the morning. Now the writer of this psalm lived at a time when there were priests delegated to watch for the first graze of the new day in order that they might offer up the morning sacrifice. If you are at all confident you have read it with the Old Testament you know there was a special offering in the morning and a special offering in the evening.

The morning and the evening sacrifice. And these priests were here to watch. First graze like dawn in the day.

To offer up this sacrifice to God. And David also concluded it. Now the psalmist says I am waiting for the Lord more than David watched for the morning.

Can you see it here in this? That this is even before the day dawned. It's the morning psalm. This is the way the Lord introduces himself as you remember in the last chapter of our Bible.

He says I am the lute and the offspring of David and I write in the morning psalm. Yes, that comes in before the dawn. I suppose some view this as a lie.

I suppose it adds in so much that I couldn't go to bed any night. But I'd have in my adored chair seated by the window during the morning. Even before the dawn came.

I was seated in the morning psalm. I've been somewhat of an amateur at pronger everything. I just love it.

Especially when I think of this figure of my beloved Lord. Shining as a morning star in everything else around me. More than David watched in the morning.

I ask you my dear brother and sister as you leave this conference here. Go back to your local assemblies. Go back to the places where you were.

How intensely are you really waiting for God's judgment day? This is a challenging question. How intensely are you waiting for him? You know there's a lot of things that we do. We leave undone if we were really waiting for him.

There's a lot of things we leave unsaid if we expected him at any moment. All this has a tremendous power upon us. Matter of fact it not only deters but it purifies us.

I believe in Jesus Christ John 3. He that hath this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure. And how we need that in this day of situational ethics. When we're told that there's nothing absolute anymore.

Everything is relative. And as one of the great authors and philosophers of our day. Who ran out of life by the forbidden door as we say.

It makes you feel good why it's good. And this is the philosophy in life of a good man. But God's word calls us back to those standards of purity.

Which are found in all of their perfection in our blessed Lord himself. To which we walk even as he does. And this hope will have a purifying effect upon us.

More than they that watch for the warning. Yes says the psalmist this really does something to us. And I'd like to point out what I think is a lovely dissipation sequence in this psalm.

Notice it says here in verse 7 that Israel hope in the Lord. You know we've been pointing out this week and it's been brought to our attention in the Bible studies in the afternoon. That our hope, our blessed hope is going to precede the restoration of Israel.

In the days of the tribulation and further on. Yes and how lovely it is to see this in this particular order here in the Bible. First of all he speaks of himself waiting for the Lord more than they that watch for the warning.

And he says let Israel hope in the Lord. Yes thank God, God has a future for Israel. He may want to destroy them and he's not the first one.

He's not the first one. In the year 1938 I was in Europe. We were on our way back after having spent three years in New Zealand in the Ministry of the Order.

And on the way we stopped at the Holy Land and came to Europe. I went over to the land of my forefathers, Germany. So it happened that I got a seat, a second class seat.

And this train travelled from Berlin to Bremen. A little while after I got in there. One of Hitler's strong troopers came and I was held by his uniform.

He certainly was proud of this. Throwing his wig around. But I didn't say anything to him.

We didn't speak. When the man came to take my ticket he did as all the conductors did in the trains in those days. Heil Hitler! I suppose he expected me to howl back and I said, long live the President.

My wife said to me, don't you think you might be killed or thrown into jail? Well, so what? But I noticed when he stood in front of this strong trooper, Heil Hitler, he howled back. Well, the train rolled on. We passed over a bridge and over a river.

The river was in flood and before I knew what I was doing, I said to myself, watch the water out there. And this my friend across the aisle, he said, it's much better there, isn't it? It's just a little toxic. I wasn't educated in English.

I was always a journalist. So we got talked, among other things, and he said, I don't know, forget this. We got talked about the political situation.

And he said to me, you'll be alive ten years and there won't be a Jew left in Germany. And you can tell, you can read the story of Ackermann, Buchenwald, and those other concentration camps where they herded the Jews in and put them to death. In a terrible way.

They re-invented, in five years, they re-exterminated a lot of them. There's still some 12, 13 Jews on the road today. According to the World Valley map, about that many.

They destroyed them. And my dear friend Max White, who's now at the war, we were teachers together and we did teach at the time. We were talking about this attempt on the part of one another to destroy this people.

And dear brother White said to me, you know, brother, I don't know if you know, but they have had victims. More than that. So he's got a future for them.

They don't realize it today. They're going back there today simply to restore themselves to a place of statehood and a political position in the world, an economic position. But alas, how little one hears of anything at all about the spiritual side of things.

I remember going into the Israel pavilion in the World's Fair in 1958, over in Krakow. We went into the pavilion. We saw many promises made to Abraham concerning the land, but not one word about repentance of sin.

Not one word. Look at this verse. It says, Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy.

For loving kindness unto him is plenty of redemption. Yes, God is going to come again upon his people, as we have it in Zechariah 12, verse 10. That's a remarkable verse there, Zechariah 12, 10.

I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication. And they shall look upon me whom they have feared, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son. That's going to be a great day in the history of Israel.

For with the Lord there is plenty of redemption. Yes, and ye shall redeem Israel from falsehood. I hope that in all of our getting from the word of God, that we have not been indifferent to what God is doing or yet going to do among his people, as well.

For many years I was busy never raising my voice in prayer before his people. And I've been rebuked for that, because God has a future for us. And when I see that these attempts to exterminate us, in the end, is not yet.

This recess that the United Nations delegates are taking right now is a rather ominous thing, isn't it? You don't know just what's going to come out of this. For God has a future for those ancient people of Israel. But I don't want this to be another truce.

Because along with that, you and I can think of our own hopes of getting just that much closer. And while we are making plans for coming back here next year, the Lord willing, nothing will please me better if I'm left here and have no strength. And God begins to rejuvenate our fellowship together.

And the things of the Lord are developing and waiting for him. I wouldn't be surprised if he came today. That would be wonderful, wouldn't it? I remember a man telling me a lot of these kind of things, right in the beginning.

And I told him, I wouldn't be impressed with him. But he said, you have to be impressed with me, Saint Luke. And he said, you know, I have to go.

He said, I don't think that happens to me. He looked at me and wondered if I belonged in Tel Aviv or Kansas City. So he said to me, are you just temporary here? I said, just temporarily.

He said, are you going back east? I said, no, I'm going up. And he said, is he folding up his sails, though? And he said, no, he's talking to him. And he said, I'm just impressed with the Lord.

He couldn't join in with the silence of saying, I wait for the Lord. And in his words, he said, I wait for the Lord more than they wait for me. And I say, more than they wait for me.

So this series of conference, I've chosen him. And I'll take this expression to many of the feelings of our own hearts. It's hymn number 345.

And the act for us to sing is to the tune of 273. The tune of 273 of the hymn is 345. Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts, Thou fount of life, Thou light of men, From the best bliss of earthly hearts, We turn unto Thee to do good.

Number 345, sung to the tune of 273. Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts, Thou fount of life, Thou light of men, From the best bliss of earthly hearts, We turn unto Thee to do good. Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts,

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