

Exposition on Psalm 130

by St. Augustine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging our sinfulness and trusting in the Lord's mercy and redemption, which offers forgiveness and resurrection.

Topics: "Repentance And Mercy", "Resurrection Hope"

Description

St. Augustine preaches on the deep cries of the soul to the Lord, emphasizing the need for sincere repentance and acknowledgment of sins. He highlights the profound mercy and redemption found in God, symbolized by the sacrifice and propitiation made for sinners. Augustine encourages believers to trust in the Lord's promise of resurrection and redemption, despite the weight of their sins, as seen in the hope of rising again with Christ.

Transcript

1. Out of the deep have I called unto You, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice Psalm 129:1. Jonas cried from the deep; from the whale's belly. Jonah 2:2 He was not only beneath the waves, but also in the entrails of the beast; nevertheless, those waves and that body prevented not his prayer from reaching God, and the beast's belly could not contain the voice of his prayer It penetrated all things, it burst through all things, it reached the ears of God: if indeed we ought to say that, bursting through all things, it reached the ears of God, since the ears of God were in the heart of him who prayed. For where has not he God present, whose voice is faithful? Nevertheless, we also ought to understand from what deep we cry unto the Lord. For this mortal life is our deep. Whoever has understood himself to be in the deep, cries out, groans, sighs, until he be delivered from the deep, and come unto Him who sits above all the deeps....For they are very deep in the deep, who do not even cry from the deep. The Scripture says, When the wicked has reached the depth of evils, he despises. Proverbs 18:3 Now consider, brethren, what sort of deep that is, where God is despised. When each man sees himself overwhelmed with daily sins, pressed down by heaps and weights, so to speak, of iniquities: if it be said unto him, Pray unto God, he laughs. In what manner? He first says, If crimes were displeasing unto God, should I live? If God regarded human affairs, considering the great crimes which I have committed, should I not only live, but be prosperous? For this is wont to happen to those who are far in the deep, and are prosperous in their iniquities: and they are the more plunged in the deep, in proportion as they seem to be more happy; for a deceitful happiness is itself a greater unhappiness....

2. Lord, hear my voice. O let Your ears consider well the voice of my complaint Psalm 129:2. Whence does he cry? From the deep. Who is it then who cries? A sinner. And with what hope does he cry? Because He who came to absolve from sins, gave hope even to the sinner down in the deep. What therefore follows after these words: If Thou, Lord, will be extreme to mark what is amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? Psalm 129:3. So, he has disclosed from what deep he cried out. For he cries beneath the weights and billows of his iniquities....He said not, I may not abide it: but, who may abide it? For he saw that near the whole of human life on every side was ever bayed at by its sins, that all consciences were accused by their thoughts, that a clean heart trusting in its own righteousness could not be found.

3. But wherefore is there hope? For there is propitiation with You Psalm 129:4. And what is this propitiation, except sacrifice? And what is sacrifice, save that which has been offered for us? The pouring forth of innocent blood blotted out all the sins of the guilty: so great a price paid down redeemed all captives from the hand of the enemy who captured them. With You, then, there is propitiation. For if there were not mercy with You, if Thou chocest to be Judge only, and refused to be merciful, You would mark all our iniquities, and search after them. Who could abide this? Who could stand before You, and say, I am innocent? Who could stand in Your judgment? There is therefore one hope: for the sake of Your law have I borne You, O Lord. What law? That which made men guilty. For a law, holy, just, and good, Romans 7:12 was given to the Jews; but its effect was to make them guilty. A law was not given that could give life, Galatians 3:21 but which might show his sins to the sinner. For the sinner had forgotten himself, and saw not himself; the law was given him, that he might see himself. The law made him guilty, the Lawgiver freed him: for the Lawgiver is the Supreme Power.. ..There is therefore a law of the mercy of God, a law of the propitiation of God. The one was a law of fear, the other is a law of love. The law of love gives forgiveness to sins, blots out the past, warns concerning the future; forsakes not its companion by the way, becomes a companion to him whom it leads on the way. But it is needful to agree with the adversary, while you are with him in the way. Matthew 5:25 For the Word of God is your adversary, as long as thou dost not agree with it. But you agree, when it has begun to be your delight to do what God's Word commands. Then he who was your adversary becomes your friend: so, when the way is finished, there will be none to deliver you to the Judge. Therefore, For the sake of Your law I have waited for You, O Lord, because you have condescended to bring in a law of mercy, to forgive me all my sins, to give me for the future warnings that I may not offend....For the sake, therefore, of this law I have waited for You, O Lord. I have waited until You may come and free me from all need, for in my very need You have not forsaken the law of mercy....My soul has waited for Your word....

4. We therefore trust without fear on the word of Him who cannot deceive. My soul has trusted in the Lord, from the morning watch even unto night Psalm 129:5. This morning watch is the end of night. We must therefore understand it so that we may not suppose we are to trust in the Lord for one day only. What do you conceive to be the sense, then, brethren? The words mean this: that the Lord, through whom our sins have been remitted, arose from the dead at the morning watch, so that we may hope that what went before in the Lord will take place in us. For our sins have been already forgiven: but we have not yet risen again: if we have not risen again, not as yet has that taken place in us which went before in our Head. What went before in our Head? Because the flesh of that Head rose again; did the Spirit of that Head die? What had died in Him, rose again. Now He arose on the third day; and the Lord as it were thus speaks to us: What you have seen in Me, hope for in yourselves; that is, because I have risen from the dead, you also shall rise again.

5. But there are who say, Behold, the Lord has risen again; but must I hope on that account that I also may rise again? Certainly, on that account: for the Lord rose again in that which He assumed from you. For He would not rise again, save He had died; and He could not have died, except He bore the flesh. What did the Lord assume from you? The flesh. What was He that came Himself? The Word of God, who was before all things, through whom all things were made. But that He might receive something from you, The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. He received from you, what He might offer for you; as the priest receives from you, what he may offer for you, when you wish to appease God for your sins. It has already been done, it has been done thus. Our Priest received from us what He might offer for us: for He received flesh from us, in the flesh itself He was made a victim, He was made a holocaust, He was made a sacrifice. In the Passion He was made a sacrifice; in the Resurrection He renewed that which was slain, and offered it as His first-fruits unto God, and says unto you, All that is yours is now consecrated: since such first-fruits have been offered unto God from you; hope therefore that that will take place in yourself which went before in your first-fruits.

6. Since He then rose with the morning watch, our soul began to hope from hence: and how far? Even unto night; until we die; for all our carnal death is as it were sleep....

7. And he returns to this, From the morning watch let Israel hope in the Lord. Not only let Israel hope, but from the morning watch let Israel hope. Do I then blame the hope of the world, when it is placed in the Lord? No; but there is another hope belonging to Israel. Let not Israel hope for riches as his highest good, not for health of body, not for abundance of earthly things: he will indeed have to suffer tribulation here, if it should be his lot to suffer any troubles for the sake of the truth....

8. For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption Psalm 129:7. Admirable! This could not have been better said in its own place, on account of the words, From the morning watch. Wherefore? Because the Lord rose again from the morning watch; and the body ought to hope for that which went before in the Head. But, lest this thought should be suggested: The Head might rise again, because It was not weighed down with sins, there was no sin in Him; what shall we do? Shall we hope for such a resurrection, as went before in the Lord, while we are weighed down by our sins? But see what follows: And He shall redeem Israel from all his sins Psalm 129:8. Though therefore he was weighed down with his sins, the mercy of God is present to him. For this reason, He went before without sin, that He may blot out the sins of those that follow Him. Trust not in yourselves, but trust from the morning watch....

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