

There is Forgiveness with Thee, Psalm 130

The scripture for our sermon today is Psalm 130. “1 *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. 2 Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. 3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? 4 But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. 5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. 6 My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. 7 Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. 8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities” (Ps. 130:1-8).*

I’ve entitled this sermon, “There is forgiveness with Thee.”

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O LORD

Why would any man so cry to God? Because God has brought the guilt of his conscience, the corruptions of his nature, to weigh upon him as a heavy burden. His sins and his sinfulness have come into his soul as a flood. He sinks in the deep mire of his guilt and shame, his filth and corruptions in light of God’s word! He is in despair because of his sin! But isn’t this a Psalm of David?! David is the king! Why would a king so cry? King David was indescribably wealthy! He could command his servants to provide him with all the comforts and pleasures of earth! Why would a king so cry? Because his sin had become a plague in his heart (1 Kings 8:38)! It is a disease that he cannot cure. No man in his vast kingdom could cure his sin disease. The most powerful king, the wisest king, the richest king, one who could command every pleasure cannot lift one sin from his own conscience before God. God made his sin THE problem of his soul! Until God brings me low before Him because of my sin, until God causes what offends Him to be my greatest offence, until I own all my sin as all my fault, until I believe that God is just in condemning me for my many and great sins, and until I see that sin is what I am; until I know that I have sinned against God only and only God can forgive me, only then will I cry to Him out of the depths! Men cry out of the depths when God burdens their conscience with their sin in the preaching of His Gospel. No man can lift that burden. Not even a king! Sin is against God only (Ps. 51:4). Therefore, the cry God brings from a sinner is to the LORD alone. If I am not a sinner, I need no forgiveness from God! If I have no sin or if I have not sinned against God, then I

don't need His forgiveness. And I will not cry out of the depths. If I need only a little forgiveness for little sins, or if I only need forgiveness for some sins, then I must bear the full weight of God's justice against my sins -- not only in my conscience, but in my body and soul throughout eternity (Matt. 10:28)!

Hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications

We only cry to God when only God can help. This is a sad fact. True prayer is prayer that God draws forth from our soul in trouble when we have no strength and can do nothing to help ourselves (Ps. 50:15)! Over and over in Psalm 107 this truth is illustrated. "*Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble*" (Ps. 107:5-6). Can you hear the heart of a broken, and helpless sinner in this cry, "*Hear my voice?*" Do you need this one thing above all others, that the LORD would hear your prayer and have mercy on you, a sinner? Then you will join the Psalmist: "*Hear my voice!*"

If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

God is just. He will by no means clear the guilty. And He raises this question from the heart of a desperate sinner. "*If the LORD should mark iniquities, who shall stand?*" The hymn writer, Thomas Binney said,

Eternal Light! eternal Light!
How pure the soul must be
When, placed within Thy burning sight,
Shrinks not, but with calm delight
Can live, and look on Thee!

The spirits that surround Thy throne
May bear that burning bliss;
For surely they have never, never known
A fallen soul as this.

But how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear,

And on my naked spirit bear
The uncreated beam?

There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode:
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God.

These, these prepare us for the sight
Of holiness above;
The sons of ignorance in night,
May dwell with eternal Light,
Through the eternal Love.

-- Thomas Binney

LORD, *“If thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?!”* That little word “if” is from God’s own word! Though *“The soul that sinneth it shall die”* (Ezek. 18:4), yet here is a sunbeam of divine logic that streams forth as light from the pages of holy scripture! *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool”* (Isa. 1:18)! Yes, God is just. Yes, He will by no means clear the guilty, yet, not the sons of Adam are banished eternally in everlasting perdition. The question, therefore, gives cause for hope! Though the LORD is holy, though He is just, yet by His word here, He does not impute sin to those who He makes to stand! What cause can we find that the LORD would not impute iniquities? What just ground does He give? The motivation is found in His grace alone. If the LORD forgives any, He will forgive out of His pure grace alone! If God does not forgive by His grace alone, He will not forgive at all! *“If by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace”* (Rom. 11:6). We are *“Justified freely by His grace”* (Rom. 3:24)! If the LORD should mark any iniquity -- any iniquity, even one -- none could stand. Therefore, when God forgives sin, He forgives all sin! *“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we*

have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). The light in which we must walk, is the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4)! We walk by faith. We look to Christ only. In the Gospel alone do we see how God can be just and justify the ungodly! Why does God not keep account of iniquities for His people? Why does He not hold their sins against them? There is but one cause alone. Because He is gracious. In His grace, He found a Redeemer, one who is mighty *“I have laid help upon one that is mighty”* (Ps. 89:19). God does not charge His elect for their sins because He charged Christ for them. God can forgive His people, because He did not forgive His Son!

But...

Never was there a more gracious word in all of the words ever written in this word: *“But God!”* No man cared for my soul (Ps. 142:4), *“But God!”* Men express sympathy. But man’s sympathy has no strength to deliver, even from sickness and death, much less from my sin! *“But God!”* My sin is against God! *“But God!”*, by His grace alone has saved His people from their sins! This little word is the great word of grace in scripture. It means in spite of me, in spite of my offence against God, in spite of my rebellion, in spite of my perversity, in spite of my crooked deceit and unbelief, in spite of all that I am, God has spared! He has found a ransom (Job 33:24)! All that is in me cries out for God’s judgment! *“But God!”* *“You, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. **But God**(!), who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)”* (Eph. 2:1-5)! John Newton, who wrote that familiar song, *“Amazing Grace!”* also wrote this song:

In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear;
'Till a new object struck my sight,

And stopped my wild career.

I saw one hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood;
Who fixed his languid eyes on me,
As near his cross I stood.

Sure, never to my latest breath
Can I forget that look:
It seemed to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke.

My conscience felt and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins his blood had spilt,
And helped to nail him there.

Alas I knew not what I did,
But now my tears are vain:
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?
For I the Lord have slain.

A second look he gave, which said,
"I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid;
I'll die that thou mayest live."

Thus, while his death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
(Such is the mystery of grace)
It seals my pardon too.

With pleasing grief and mournful joy,

My spirit now is filled,
That I should such a life destroy,
Yet live by him I killed

-- John Newton

But there is forgiveness with Thee!

Here is revelation of the eternal riches of God's grace! This is the golden truth, the promise of life to sinners! "*There is forgiveness with Thee!*" God did not spare the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (2 Pet. 2:4). He did not spare the world of the ungodly in the days of Noah, but swallowed up millions in the flood of His judgment (2 Pet. 2:5). God did not spare Sodom and Gomorrah, who in their proud perversity judged Lot for judging them (Gen. 19:9-11). God did not spare Egypt or Egypt's king, who held His chosen in bondage, but delivered them up to pestilence and death (Ps. 78:50). And God did not spare Israel for their unbelief (Rom. 11:20), but cut them out of the Church, the true olive tree (Rom. 11:20-21). Therefore, well would any sinner wonder that there is forgiveness with the LORD! God is just. Every sin must be punished. What hope then is there for one so sinful as me!? Though there is no cause in me for forgiveness, yet God says! "*He justifieth the ungodly*" (Rom. 4:5)! There is no forgiveness apart from Christ. "*There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12)! Though God did not spare these; He did not forgive these; He did spare His remnant people. "*Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha*" (Rom. 9:29)! But how could a just God spare the elect, because in themselves they only ungodly and unrighteous?! Only this: He can forgive His people because He did not spare His Son! "*He did not spare Him, but delivered Him up for us all*" (Rom. 8:32)! O, Spirit of God! Bind and seal this truth to my heart, that in Christ, there is forgiveness with thee, because God did not forgive His Son! "*God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*" (Eph. 4:32). "*Little children, your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake*" (1 John 2:14)! You who look to Christ for all in salvation, who renounce your own will, who renounce your own worth, who renounce your own works, and loathe your own sin, and dare not think for a moment that God can

accept one thing from you, but who look only to Christ; know this: from God's own word, "*There is forgiveness with thee!*"

That thou mayest be feared

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. But no sinner will ever fear the LORD unless God first gives full and free forgiveness! We are sinners. We cannot fear God as sons until we are let go from our bondage of sin. God told Moses to command Pharaoh, "*Let my people go **that** they may serve me*" (Ex. 8:1)! Only the soul that knows God has forgiven him, freely, justified him by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, with no conditions found in the sinner, but for Christ's sake alone, on the sole ground of His blood and righteousness, only that one will be awe-struck with a holy reverence for God. Only those who know that salvation is in Christ alone, and that God has saved them in Christ, can truly love God (1 John 4:19). "*To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little*" (Luke 7:47). But when we know that we owed an eternal debt, and when when we had nothing to pay, God, for Christ's sake alone, frankly and freely forgave us all, then we will "*fear His goodness*" (Hosea 3:5)! We will realize that God, only because He is good, determined, purposed and found the reason of pure grace in Himself to give His only begotten Son, and did not spare Him, but delivered Him up to justice, to suffer the punishment my sins deserved, then I will stand in awe that I have only Him to thank, Him to worship, Him to fear; that He did not throw me over the precipice His justice demanded, but interposed His own blood in answer to His own justice! Oh, how can I not tremble at His goodness to me in Christ! "But God!!"

I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope

The enemies of my soul threaten to bring me into the pit of destruction. I hear their clamouring. I have but one confidence and one hope: I look to Christ crucified, risen, reigning and interceding for me! How do I know that I, a guilty, foul, shameful, helpless, justly condemned sinner can hope in Christ? Only this: His own word! From the depths of my conscious awareness of my guilt and corruptions before God, I tremble in my soul that I would be left unforgiven, uncovered, exposed in all my nakedness before God in all His holiness. And into

this black darkness shines the bright light of the Gospel! *“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins”* (Acts 13:38). The forgiveness of sins?! By this man, Christ Jesus the Lord?! This is God’s word! Therefore, in Him alone do I hope! I will come to Him with a look of need and expectation that wisdom and righteousness and strength is not in me, nor will it ever be found in me, but in Him alone! And I see that God’s own Holy Spirit has given testimony from the throne of heaven to sinners that Christ is a great Savior of great sinners! *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief”* (1 Tim. 1:15)! But what assurance can a foul sinner have? What hope can one have who is continuously bombarded and assaulted by the sin of his own mind and body? Can God forgive me? Can God deliver me from my sins? Is there hope for a justly damned sinner with no strength, one who is dead in sins? *“The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”* (Rom. 1:16)! The strength, the obedience, the faith, the prayers that God hears, the salvation, all that is required comes from my Substitute, my Surety, my Mediator, my Advocate, my ruling and reigning Intercessor, the Lord Jesus Christ!

My soul waits for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning

Waiting is not a one-time act. Believing sinners continuously look to Christ as all their standing and hope before God. *“The just shall live by faith”* (Hab. 2:4)! Enemies attack at night. Watchmen strain to listen for any sign of the enemy. The enemy of my soul is my own sin: my guilt, my corruptions, my unbelief. And because of my sin, the devil and the world and God’s law and death are all my enemies! In light of these enemies of my soul, what is my one longing desire? Is it the Lord Jesus Christ! He is my sin-bearer! He is my righteousness! *“As sin hath reigned unto death, even so, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom. 5:21). My victory is in my Captain! He ran the race. He overcame. He nailed the accusations of God’s law that were against me to His cross, having answered every charge by His obedience and blood. *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross”* (Col. 2:14). Christ

is my only answer, He is my complete answer, He is only my Advocate and Intercessor. God can and will only hear Him. Therefore, when my name is called, I wait for Him to answer. I will present myself to Him as a great sinner with great and many sins. I come as a foul and shameful sinner, and cry, “*Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help. Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: **say unto my soul, I am thy salvation**” (Ps. 35:1-3)!*

Let Israel hope in the LORD, for with the LORD there is mercy and with him is plenteous redemption

What hope does a sinner have? Only one. It is the LORD against whom I have sinned. How can a sinner hope in the LORD? Not because of anything he finds in himself. There is but one reason alone: because with the LORD there is mercy and plenteous redemption! What is this mercy? What is this redemption that is “*in the LORD?*” Mercy is withholding just punishment from the guilty, it is providing relief to the miserable, and help to the helpless. Redemption is setting the imprisoned debtor free from all debt and from prison by payment of a ransom. The ransom price God required is the blood of His dear Son (1 Pet. 1:18-20). Christ Jesus came into the world to “*give Himself a ransom for many*” (Matt. 20:28). He gave Himself to God in obedience and sacrifice, not for Himself, but for those God gave to Him. It is to God we owe our immortal souls for the debt of our sins. But we have nothing to pay. When we were thus bankrupt, lawfully held under the curse of God’s law, Christ Jesus stepped forward, and paid Himself to God as a justice-satisfying propitiation. In Isa. 53:11 it says, The LORD shall “*shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied*” (Isa. 53:11). Therefore, all for whom Christ gave Himself in death as a ransom to God’s justice, are redeemed by His blood. They are forgiven. Their transgressions are lifted (Ps. 32:1, forgiven). Their sins are covered. The LORD does not impute their sins to them, because He charged Christ with those sins. “*He hath made Him sin for us*” (2 Cor. 5:21). God forgives those for whom Christ died. God not only pardons the guilty, but He shows to all that in Christ they have not only been forgiven their sins, but they have fulfilled the full righteousness of His law. Both the penal curse and the

precept of the law were fulfilled by Christ on their behalf. Christ answered God's law in their place. Christ's answer is a plenteous redemption. There is payment enough for all of God's elect, both Jews and Gentiles. There is a profuseness of pardon, an abundance of pardon! Justice now sides with the accused to answer every accuser against their. *"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth!" "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died! Yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"* (Rom. 8:33-34)! God's justice delights in Christ's obedience unto death. God therefore justifies His people. He shows all that in Christ they are just; they are righteous. Not only are they not guilty of all charges, not only are they not condemned, but Christ has worked out a perfect righteousness for them with which God Himself can find no blemish. *"Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him"* (Rom. 5:9)!

He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities

"Thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called" (Isa. 54:5). The Maker of the Church is the Husband of the Church. Christ is married to His people. Marriage between a man and a woman is God's design. It teaches a much greater reality: the eternal union of Christ and His people. In eternity, God the Father gave a people to Christ to redeem. Christ gave Himself for them; His blood is the price of their redemption (1 Pet. 1:18-20). The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world in the will and decree of God (Rev. 13:8). Jesus Christ obligated Himself to God in eternity for His espoused people. Then, in time, He came into the world, gave Himself a ransom for them (Matt. 20:28). He purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Those He espoused in marriage to Himself in eternal election, He redeemed in time. He calls all these in the open espousals of marriage by their conversion. He gives them His own Spirit. They are one with Him in eternal election (Eph. 2:3-7), one with Him in legal representation as their covenant head (Rom. 5:12-21), one with Him in nature (Php. 2:6-8) and one with Him in Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). The eternally chosen people of God are a holy nation, they are the true Israel of God (1 Pet. 2:9; Gal. 6:16). Christ redeemed them. *"By His own blood, He entered once into the holy place,*

having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:12). The “*us*” whom Christ redeemed are the elect of God, the children of promise, those whose hearts God circumcises (Rom. 2:28-29), those who have no confidence in their flesh, whose only confidence and boast is Jesus Christ (Php. 3:3-11). Now, in this verse in Ps. 130:8, the reason for hope and confidence is given. It is this. “*The LORD shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities*” (Ps. 130:8). The LORD, the Lord Jesus Christ, is our Redeemer: our Redeemer, our Husband, our Maker. Therefore, Christ is Husband of the Church, the Creator of the Church, the LORD Jehovah, He is God over all. Our Redeemer cannot fail; He is almighty God! Will God forgive my sins? He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities! Therefore, let all who look to Christ alone hope in the LORD!