

One afternoon, in May 1738, a man had listened to and was moved by the singing of Psalm 130 by a choir in London. That evening, he attended a meeting on Aldersgate Street and at that meeting the preface to Martin Luther's commentary on Romans was read. That night the man believed on Jesus Christ and was saved. His name was John Wesley.

Psalm 130 is a powerful Psalm of Ascents and a powerful Psalm of Grace. Luther called this a "Pauline Psalm." It is a Psalm written by one of God's people. It is certainly a Psalm aimed at the nation Israel (v. 8). It is a Psalm that tells God's people what He will do when they cry out to Him. It is a great Psalm of hope.

It is a Psalm that was written by one who had sinned by committing gross iniquity and was in need of forgiveness. It is a Psalm that tells Israel that because of God's amazing mercy and grace, she can know that He will forgive her and redeem her when she cries out to Him, admitting her sin and asking for His forgiveness.

This Psalm is a great song that will be sung by national Israel and it is also a great Psalm for us as individuals. This is a Psalm that clearly coincides with the theology of I John 1:9. The point of the Psalm is easy to see:

**WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE SINNED, THEY CAN FIND THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD AND THE REDEMPTION OF GOD DUE TO THE MERCY OF GOD IF THEY WILL CRY OUT TO HIM.**

Now we do not want to miss anything in this Psalm. There are a series of observations we want to make:

**OBSERVATION #1** – The writer cried out to the LORD from the depths of despair. **130:1**

This is the way that sin affects people right with God. When they sin, it puts them into the "depths of despair." When we sin and commit iniquity, we need to go to the Lord and cry out to Him for His forgiveness and grace.

Now it is clear that this writer was overwhelmed with his sin because he is crying out to God from the depths of darkness and despair. In fact, the word "depths" (amaq) is one that refers to something so deep or low it is unsearchable. The word can refer to one who has been deep in sin, affliction, mental trouble and sorrow. Whenever God's people find themselves in the depths of despair it is our great privilege to go to God for His help.

There are many, many things that can be resolved if one will do this. If one will cry out to God when he is low, he can experience the amazing delivering power of God.

**OBSERVATION #2** – The writer asked God to listen to his prayer. **130:2**

This writer does not just assume or presume that God will listen to him. He is in sin and he knows it, so this is no name-it-and-claim-it prayer request. His relationship with God was so personal that he appealed to God to listen to him. Sin blocks communication with God. It is very clear that this writer is verbalizing his prayer to God. He is actually using his voice to talk to God and cry out to God

He views God as a real Person who has ears capable of listening to his prayer. We may notice that the noun “supplications” is plural; indicating he believed God would listen to multiple prayers he uttered.

He believed that he could go back to God many times and God would listen to him. Now this is a blessing. God does not promise everyone that He will listen to them. In fact, He warns that if His people do not turn to the reproof found in His Word, He will not listen to them (Prov. 1:23-30).

Contextually, what prompted this writer to ask God to listen to him was because he was turning to God from his sin. In other words, he was dealing with God’s reproof.

**OBSERVATION #3** – The writer reminds God that if God made a mark for every iniquity people commit, no one could have a relationship with Him. **130:3**

This believer was not sure when he made this prayer that God would forgive him. He does not just assume that God will grant His grace to him. He knows God does not overlook sin and he knows he is accountable to God.

He uses the word “iniquity” that is not the same as the word sin or transgression. He uses this word in **verse 3** and again in **verse 8**. This particular word speaks of depraved and perverse things that makes one guilty and punishable in the sight of God. The word does have a connection to perverse things that are not only sinful but also can be sexual (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 613-614).

Keep in mind this is being written by a believer, so this is not being written by a non-believer. For a non-believer, God does keep the record and God does mark down every violation of His law and He will judge and condemn one who does not believe on Jesus Christ. In fact, that one is storing up wrath (Rom. 2:5, 16).

This is being written by a believer who realizes that there is no such thing as a perfect believer. In fact, he realizes that if God were to actually count the number of perverse and depraved things a person has done in his or her lifetime, then no one could stand in a relationship with Him.

If God decided simply to operate out of justice, He would never help anyone because all would receive what they deserve. If God were to simply operate on a payback for sin, no one would have any hope.

If God demanded that His people live a perfect life in order to maintain a relationship with God, there would be no one who would have a relationship with God.

There is no such thing as a perfect person, practically speaking.

**OBSERVATION #4** – The writer reminds God that He is a forgiving God to His people. **130:4**

God is a God of forgiveness. He is a God who will grant forgiveness to His people even when they have done depraved things. When they face their sin and turn from their sin and cry out to Him, they can experience His amazing grace and forgiveness.

Now why would God do this for His people? One reason is so that He will be feared. Now the question comes, how does forgiveness cause us to fear God?

The answer is once God has forgiven you and raised you from the depths of despair, you so reverence God that you want to obey God so that you never end up in the depths of despair again.

**OBSERVATION #5** – The writer waits in his soul for the Lord to answer. **130:5a, 6**

Many of God's people expect that facing their sin will be a painless process and an instantaneous grant of blessings from God. But frankly, it doesn't quite work like that. When we sin we live with consequences for a while of that sin. Sometimes there is a cloud that hangs over your head and in your heart. Those of us who have walked with God for a while can tell you that sometimes the weight of the failure does not instantly go away.

During those times, our soul waits on the Lord. We wait on the Lord to lift the darkness and gloom. We wait on the Lord to open the door of His blessings again. We wait on the Lord to answer us. There is no other person upon which to wait when you are in the depths of darkness and sin. There is no one else to whom you can turn.

The writer in despair was completely waiting on the Lord for deliverance. He was waiting on the Lord for forgiveness and cleansing and freedom.

**OBSERVATION #6** – The writer hopes in God's Word that speaks of forgiveness and grace. **130:5b**

Waiting, forgiveness, hope and blessings are themes that all run together. The writer did know about the forgiveness of God and the grace of God. He did believe that God would grant grace. He was under a tremendous conviction for his sin. Where did he learn of these things? He learned in the Word of God.

When you find yourself in this condition, the only hope you can have is not a hope in man, but in God. God can deliver one from the darkness and cloud of guilt. He is the only One who can do that.

Now the place where we learn about this is in the Word of God. So when one has committed sin and is convicted and goes to God in confession, as he is waiting for God to begin to use and bless him again, he needs to stay in God's Word. You find your hope in the Word of God.

In the Word of God we learn about a God who will forgive and will bless when His sinful people turn from their sin and turn to Him.

**OBSERVATION #7** – The writer knew that God's people who have blown it need to watch for the blessings of the LORD. **130:6**

When God's people have sinned, they need to be convicted by it and confess it and then they need to watch for evidences of God's grace. God's grace can forgive a person and use a person and actually start blessing a person again. One right with God looks for that in the aftermath of a sin.

This writer was obviously watching and looking for an indication that God was once again back on his side. Sin is a horrible thing. It cuts off a vital relationship with God. So once the writer had faced it and confessed it, he waited on God and kept watching for evidences that God was back on his side.

He was looking for this more than a watchman who was on morning watch, looking out for enemies. This writer was looking for God's blessings. Having God on his side was the most important blessing he could have.

The night of darkness was despairing, but through prayer and study of the Word he looked for the dawning of a new day of God's blessings.

**OBSERVATION #8** – The writer knew that God's people who have blown it need to know of God's mercy and lovingkindness. **130:7a**

**Verse 7** begins "O Israel." O Israel, if you only knew of the truth in this Psalm. The word "lovingkindness" or "mercy" is a word that means God has a special mercy and love toward His people. God's grace and mercy stand ready to be poured out on Israel. But her problem is she will not admit she has sinned.

**OBSERVATION #9** – The writer knew that God's people who have blown it need to know that God is a God of redemption. **130:7b-8**

God delights in redeeming people. With God there is abundant redemption given to those who have committed evil and depraved things.

**Verse 8** is a statement of historical fact. God will redeem Israel.

God will redeem from "all iniquities." But you must cry out to God and admit those iniquities and ask for His forgiveness and grace. You do this and you, too, will experience the blessings of God.