

A Pilgrim's Progress

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Bible Text: Psalm 130

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Amen. Take your Bibles and let's go to Psalm 130, would you do that? We want to look at this Psalm. Now when you're looking at the Psalms very often you have the experience of David, sometimes another writer. Very often, it's a statement about the nation of Israel and that's what this is, a season of revival, if you will, in the nation of Israel and it is the perfect portrait of Christian conversion. So we see the rich truths of what we call the doctrines of grace and even the doctrines of redemption here as the Psalmist cries out and really talking about the whole nation.

Let's look at it together. Psalm 130. I just simply called this "Pilgrim's Progress" because it is in a nutshell the progress we make to find the Lord and then go forward in sanctification walking with the Lord. Psalm 130, beginning in verse 1.

1 Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD. 2 Lord, hear my voice!
Let Your ears be attentive To the voice of my supplications. 3 If You,
LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But there is
forgiveness with You, That You may be feared. 5 I wait for the LORD,
my soul does wait, And in His word do I hope. 6 My soul waits for the
Lord More than the watchmen for the morning; Indeed, more than the
watchmen for the morning. 7 O Israel, hope in the LORD; For with the
LORD there is lovingkindness, And with Him is abundant redemption. 8
And He will redeem Israel From all his iniquities.

Now, there's certainly a progression recorded in this Psalm as you go from verse 1 down through verse 8. Just like a barometer marks the rising of the weather, so this Psalm marks the rising of what you might call Christian sanctification or Christian progression verse-by-verse, sentence-by-sentence. And you might ask yourself at each point, "Am I there? Have I experienced that? Is that something that's been real in my own walk or in my own life?" It's another time for you at Grace Life Church to test yourself and to see if you're in the faith.

Notice, I. We look at verses 1 through 4 under this. I. Is: the cry that brings conversion. Not all crying out to God brings conversion but there is a crying out to God that brings conversion to the soul. The Psalmist says here in the first verse there, "Out of the depths I have cried to You, O God." Out of the depths. Now, some scholars and historians said

this is actually the testimony of King Hezekiah. King Hezekiah had a barrenness in his household; he had no one to ascend to the throne after him. King Hezekiah had the burdens of the battlefield on him as he had to deal with what was the China, the Soviet Union of the Old Testament, Assyria and there was constant troublings from battlings with Assyria. Then he had the burden of the wickedness of the people. They had experienced something of a superficial coming to God but no true heart changing regeneration and revival in the nation. So King Hezekiah was crying out to God, "God, we need you to come. Things just aren't right. Things just are not well." I can't help but think about the United States America when I look across the landscape and experience what we're experiencing in our country. Again, I'm just rather shocked at how quickly our country has just forsaken her Christian roots and now we are clearly a post-Christian nation and you can't even bring to the public square the notion that we are anchored in the Judeo-Christian ethic anymore, that's just gone. It's as if you came off of Mars or something if you mention such a notion these days and so we sense as a country something of being in the depths. So here the writer says, "He's crying out of the depths," but there's far, far more here than just the historically context which was the physical condition of the ancient nation of Israel. Here we see a powerful, spiritual application. My friend, every true Christian, every true convert, has cried out from the depths. That's where you start. If you didn't start there, you haven't started at all. We cry out from the depths.

Now, we think about what depths are we talking about? It's when the Spirit of God under the ministry of the word of God, begins to show us our sin. Remember the word "sin" has the idea of "missing the mark." It's as if God were saying, as a matter of fact it is as if God were saying, "I made you, mankind, and I made every single one of you to reach a certain standard. I made you to perform a certain way. I made you to exemplify my perfections and I even stamped my image on you. There's a mark for you to reach to. There's a standard you ought to be conducting yourself by." The Bible says, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." That means every single person who has ever lived on the earth apart from Christ, has failed and missed the standard. God said, "I made you for this and you've fallen way, way, way short." The Psalmist says, "I'm crying out from the depths. I feel bas. I sense the reality that I don't even come close to the mark of what God made me to be and I ought to be." If you feel pretty good about yourself and think God ought to be pretty proud of you then you don't know God. The Psalmist says, "I cry from the depths." We talk about the word "iniquity," it's another Bible word. The word "iniquity" has to do with "an inherent crookedness" that even from the time we were a one-cell human being in our mother's womb, we inherited a depravity the theologians would call it, a crookedness of soul and we come forth from the womb and we come forth speaking lies the Scriptures says. There's just a bent towards self-exultation. There's a bent towards denying God. There's a bent towards rebellion and the Psalmist says, "I feel the weight of the reality of that crookedness, that wretchedness that's natural in my soul."

All true Christians begin to feel this and then, of course, the depth of rebellion. Isn't rebellion natural? Isn't it just natural? Do your own thing. Do it your own way. Captain your own ship. Master of your own destiny. It's just so natural. "I will do my thing my

way," but the real child of God begins to sense that independent, proud spirit that wants to push God away, that rebel in his heart that is anti-God and he cries out from the depths. This crying out from the depths has the idea of being stuck in the muck and the mire of sin. You're a sinner. You're full of iniquity. You are a rebel at heart and you're just entrapped in it and you just feel, "Woe is me! I just can't fix it. There's no hope that I can look to." The depths has the idea of doom and depression. It means you are at the bottom. You are locked behind the door of discouragement in the dungeon of despair because of sin, because of iniquity, because of the rebellion you find in your own heart and in your own life. Isn't it true, child of God, that once God enables you to see it in your own life, you begin to see it in your children and then in your grandchildren? Oh, they're precious beyond compare but they have wicked little rebel hearts and we realize that all the training, we can't get Dr. Spock, Dr. Phil and all the rest of them in between together to fix that soul. They are just little rebels. They're just little evil ones full of sin and wickedness and rebellion and if they are left to their own ways, if God doesn't intervene, they will wreck and ruin themselves in this life and answer at the judgment to come.

"Out of the depths," he said he cried. Out of the depths you cry when sin has lost its satisfaction and rebellion has lost its reward. The satisfaction you see in sin or in sinning is short lived and the reward of rebellion is quickly removed. The misery of the depths though has a way of pointing us to God. Thank God, thank God for the day that you realized your sinfulness. Thank God for the day that you were burdened over the crookedness of your soul and the warpness of your nature before a true and holy God. Thank God for the day you agreed that there's a rebel in you that wants to deny God and just shirk his law and throw off his authority and resist his restraints. You're grieved about that. You do understand that you didn't do that naturally? You didn't wake up one morning and say, "I just decide today I'm going to be exceedingly wise. I'm going to begin to examine myself and just see what I am." No, you didn't do that. God got you there and when he gets you there it's got a way of pointing you back up to him.

God has a way of putting his children in the depths. He put Joseph in the depths, didn't he? Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery, ends up being in a gypsy caravan, if you will, sold into ownership in Egypt. Finds himself in the Egyptian dungeon and here he is a Jewish boy in an Egyptian dungeon and nobody knows him from nothing. What are you going to do in a foreign country? Nobody knows your name, your heritage or cares anything about you. You're in the depths of the depths but Joseph just kept his heart focused on God. Daniel, the same way. Daniel, as a teenage boy is carted off into Babylonian captivity and instructed that he is to do all these things to serve the King of Babylon and those things just happened to violate the Jewish law and he appealed respectfully and honorably because men in authority if they're wicked, are to be respected. He appealed that, "King let me keep my Jewish dietary laws and see if I'm not better for you." Turns out that wasn't good enough. A lot of the other young boys in Babylon were jealous of Daniel and his companions because they had a spirit about them that was exceptional and the King was drawn to them and they had Daniel framed and said, "He wouldn't bow to the King's idol," and then they had Daniel thrown into the lions' den. I'm going to tell you, when you go into the lions' den with hungry lions, that's the depths.

God's got a way of getting us in the depths. Someone said, "It's better to be in deep dangers praying than on a mountaintop playing." Don't you thank God for the depths? You see, you were in the depths when you didn't know you were in the depths. You were deep in sin and deep in iniquity and deep in rebellion before you were aware of it. It's a wonderful blessing from God to enable you to see the depths. When you realize you're lost apart from God, that is the deepest and most horrible depth one can get into. When the soul senses the weight of our sinfulness, not this little vacation Bible school, "Oh, we all know we are sinners. Let's pray a prayer and let's all say 'zap' and we're done." No, that's not what the Psalmist is talking about. That's not what true conversion is. That's why our Baptist churches have millions on the roll who don't even come to church because they jump through a hoop, they've gone through emotion. I'm asking you: have you ever cried out from the depths? Does that register in your heart? By the way, once you've cried out from the depths, you never get over the depths. Now you have joy that Christ is your sufficiency, but you carry with you that, "Blessed are those who mourn and blessed are those who are poor in spirit," which means you carry with you, "Woe is me apart from Christ!" You never get over that and you shouldn't.

Here's a key thought here: the Psalmist said he cried out from the depths to God. You see, God does not hear us just because we cry. You understand that don't you? A lot of people have gone through deep emotional trauma and they thought somehow in there they found God. Well, they may have but then again, they may not. God didn't hear you just because you cry. There are people who cry crocodile tears and say, "O God, fix this! O God, change this! O God, heal me! O God, save me from this ruin!" and it doesn't have any effect at all. Just because you cry doesn't mean anything. God does not hear just because we cry out and God does not hear just because we are in the depths, but when you cry out, notice the wording of the Psalmist "from the depths," your cry to God is based on the utter, weighty realization of your sin, iniquity and rebellion that you have no hope if God doesn't help you. Do you get it? You cry from that depth. It's not just realizing you're a sinner, it's realizing you're a sinner and looking to God as your only hope of salvation. The Psalmist said, "I cried out of the depths to You, O Lord."

You know, you might cry to friends. Have you realized that friends are fickle? I told some pastors one time that we had decided here that we'd never go in debt again. Now, that's not, I guess, the absolute law and the means, I suppose some extreme emergency could happen but, I mean, our conviction is we're not going into debt and I said, "Man, in today's average Baptist church, when you have fragile, fickle, fleshly, fleeting Baptists that you've got to keep happy, you're going to go in debt with those guys?" Are you kidding me? Do you know how many people voted to build this building and has left? I want to send them a bill every month and say, "Bless God, you voted with us." Amen. Some of you served on the committees to promote it. I want to say something to you: that's immoral. Don't give me the spirit, "Well, God led me." Did God tell you to vote for this building? Now look, if there's serious violations of truth and doctrine than God may be moving but if you can open the Bible and show me that, then I'll leave with you, amen.

But now this fickle stuff and let's just be honest: a lot of people leave churches because they want out from under the truth. They do. Scripture teaches that over and over again. And the Bible also teaches on the positive side, that sometimes you have to leave and find a church to find the truth. Amen? Friends are fickle, what got me on Baptists again? Friends are fickle. I have a lot of Baptists friends and I can't find them anymore that's what got me on it. I'm not just sitting up here and blowing off either. Do you know how many buddies I don't have that I can't find anymore? Family sometimes won't help you; they'll find excuses. The federal government? That's the new God. That's the new savior. "Save me, Government. I want to be a pervert and live in immorality and you ought to pay for it, Government," which means you pay for it. The federal government can't fix itself. Who is the cowboy philosopher? Will Rogers. Will Rogers said, "Thank God you're not getting all the government you're paying for." Well, there's a lot of truth to that. Amen? There's a lot of truth to that. But here's my point, look, there's that point in time that you are shipwrecked and abandoned and alone. You sense the weightiness and the depths of your sin and iniquity and rebel spirit and there's nothing and nowhere but God that you want to turn. "God, if you won't take me, if you won't forgive me, if you won't love me, I have nowhere to go. There's no priest. There's no pope. There's no bishop. My mom or my dad, my brothers, my friends, no one but God." Friends, that's what I'm asking you: have you been there? Have you cried from there to God?

Verse 2, he amplifies this and shows that this is a desperate cry, "Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive To the voice of my supplications. So we see a desperate pleading and a frequent cry. There's no where else to turn. Now keep your finger in Psalm 130 and go to John 6. Would you do that? John chapter 6. Nowhere else to go because God's wrought a work in you whereby you don't want to look anywhere else. You know child of God, we need to walk every day, I told you this before, we need to be getting saved many times every day and I mean that, of course, tongue in cheek. What I mean by that is: you're saying a sinner's prayer over and over every day. You're doing something like this, "O God, I'm a sinner and, O God, I am weak and, O Christ, if you do not save me, I'm lost forever." Amen? Now you're not getting re-saved, it's just your re-acknowledgment of you're the one in the depths apart from God and Christ is your only hope. It's the ever-present realization, that's what Christianity is.

Now let's look at John 6 and look at verse 63. Jesus is speaking, he says, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing." So you can't look to anything of the flesh, that's the world of man and your own natural energies or abilities. "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." Verse 64, "But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. And He was saying," which means he said this many times, ""For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." Look at verse 66, "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew." Now, I've just got to say this kind of tongue in cheek, are you okay tonight? Can you take a tongue in cheek? Jesus lost a lot of so-called followers when he told them, "You can't come to me unless my Father grants it that you can come to me." So a bunch of people quit hanging out with Jesus after that because he was a Calvinist. That's what the doctrine of Calvin is which is really the doctrine of Paul which is the doctrine of

Scripture that God sovereignly has to draw you to God or you won't come. That's what Jesus said and they said, "We're not following you, you're one of those Calvinists." That's exactly what's happening here. I'm not making this up. It's right here in the Bible. Verse 66, "many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore," because he said that. But you know, they wanted, look, those Pharisees were so steeped in ritual and works and law, they thought they were dotting the "i's" and crossing the "t's" and they wanted this man Jesus whom they at least esteemed to be a prophet, to tell them, "You guys are doing good. You're keeping the law. You're working in your own energies." Jesus said, "Wait a minute. Time out. You've got to understand something, this is not about all your works of the law, it's all in God's hands." You're not going to come to him unless he grants it to you. So they quit following him, a bunch of them.

Verse 67, "So Jesus turns to the twelve and says, 'You do not want to go away also, do you?'" Here's my point, verse 68, "Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You've got the words of eternal life.'" In other words, it don't matter how small the group gets. It doesn't matter who quits following you. It doesn't matter who doesn't want Bible preaching. It doesn't matter whether you're popular or not popular. It doesn't matter whether it's easy or whether it's hard. It doesn't matter if we have a place to lay our head or don't have a place to lay our head. You are the truth and your our only hope and that's it. That's what the Psalmist is saying. That's what the Psalmist is saying. "I'm in the depths and I've got nowhere to go but to God." To God. God forbid, you ever have the tiniest notion sitting under this pulpit that somehow if you come to Jeff Noblit or a staff member or an evangelist or an elder or some person and do something with them that somehow that helps you to God, that does not, you must go to God. Get us out of it. We're not priest. I don't want that responsibility. God help the man who in order to control people and to keep people following him, he gives them some indication that coming to him somehow saves their soul. You must go to Christ. "Out of the depths," the Psalmist cried. He said, "O God, I'm coming to you. I'm coming to you." Look at it again, Psalm 130:2, he says, "Lord, hear my voice," it's a desperate plea, "let your ears be attentive to my supplications."

Look at verse 3, he says, "If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" Wow. Here's his point, "God, if you mark down what we are, if you remember it before yourself, we're all doomed. We are all doomed." Look, you can't live for five minutes in front of another adult without that adult finding out that you're a failure and a sinner. You can't live in front of a five-year-old child without that five-year-old child knowing you're a sinner. Amen? You've been a grandparent and I have and spent five minutes and you'll be quoted and you'll be reminded that you're a failure. You're not righteous in and of yourself. So how in the world could we ever think that we're going to stand before the omniscient One? He says, "If you should mark iniquities, who could stand?" You choose the sweetest little girl in this entire congregation, you pick out the noblest and most respectful lady, you pick out the most esteemed and honorable gentleman and they themselves will not be able to stand. We are all sinners. So that's the unanswerable question when he said, "O Lord, if you should mark iniquities, who could possibly stand?"

Notice there is some comfort. He's crying out of these depths. He senses the weightiness of his deficit and his bankruptcy and his condemnation before this wonderful true and holy God. But verse 4, "But," what a great conjunctive word, "But there is forgiveness with You, That," to the end of, you might say, "You may be feared." So in verse 4, there is something of a cry of relief. He's found the pearl of redemption and pearls lie in the depths. That's where you find it. "Brother Jeff, why do you preach so hard? Brother Jeff, why do you constantly take us back to total depravity and the offensiveness we have before a holy God and that God is transcendent in holiness and that we are totally bankrupt and empty and wanting and we can't save ourselves?" So that in that depth, you might truly look to him and find...I don't want to do that because I have a design, I want to do that because that's God's will for me to preach that truth to you.

He says, "There is forgiveness with You," in verse 4. You know, in sin and rebellion, we hurt others but we've hurt others not anywhere close to how we have hurt God. In our sin, we offend others but it's not anything compared to how we have offended God. He created us. He keeps us. He showers us with common grace. He protects us. As an extension, or rather he makes us in his image and we're an extension of his very nature. We're not deity but we have the image of God stamped on us as the highest of his creation. He has given us his beautiful and perfect law and we have willfully broken it over and over. You may have sinned against others but none can compare to your sin against God yet in wonderful, endless, matchless grace and mercy, the one most offended forgives the most. He says, "God, there is forgiveness with You. There is forgiveness with You."

Two aspects here. To know the greatness of forgiveness, you must know something of the greatness of your sinfulness. You know, it's troubling the trivial, light, irreverent way, God is dealt with even by many who claim to know Christ. I think a lot of that is due to the fact that there is not a great awareness of their great sinfulness and God's true holiness and the wonders of his great forgiveness toward us. So to know something of the greatness of forgiveness, you need to know something of the greatness of your sinfulness. But you really can't know the depths of your sinfulness until you know something of his holiness. That's why we must preach strongly and thoroughly the great truths on the attributes of who God is. God is not nothing like most people think he is. He is transcendent in holiness which means he vastly and infinitely is greater than us and different from us. I told you that over and over because I want it to stick with you and every way that we're made like God, God's infinitely better than us and then God has dimensions to who he is that are radically transcendent, different from us. I don't want you to walk out of here thinking, "I've got God in my hip pocket. I know exactly what God's like." You don't know nothing. You need to walk out of here with an element of trembling about the vast, unsearchable, unknowableness of his majesty and his greatness.

Yet know this for certain: he forgives. He forgives and that's what the Psalmist is saying here. He says, "You forgive in order that," verse 4, "Thou mayest be feared." There is forgiveness that you may be feared. Here's what the Psalmist is saying here, we think, "What does he mean, feared?" Here's the point, "You enable us to see the depths of where we are so that we might look to you in salvation and you allow us and enable us to look

to you and find you and find forgiveness and then God, by your initiative, you change the nature of our very hearts so that we may begin to know that you are our true treasure and you are the one that we revere and reverence and love the most." That's fearing God. "You forgive us to the end that we might know you truly and from our hearts begin to treasure and love you truly." That's what he's saying. You see, we do not have the privilege of fearing him, now listen, until he cleanses us and draws us near. As an unforgiven sinner, you can't get near him much less fear him. Did you get that? You say, "People don't fear God anymore." That's because God is not letting them get near him. It's a privilege for him to put you in the depths so that you might repent and look to him and he forgive you and let you draw near. Then you learn to fear him which means to reverence him and to love him above all others. Without the grace and mercy which extends from his love, we would be immediately consumed by his righteous indignation and cast into hell. His grace and mercy gives us the opportunity to fear him. To fear him, you see, is not some woeful obligation. Did you hear that? To fear God is not some burdensome obligation God casts on you. No, to fear him is a wonderful opportunity he allows us to have in conversion. The hammer of law may break the icy heart of man with terrors and horrors and yet it may remain ice unchanged but when the fire of his grace and love kindle, thaw that ice, it is changed and dissolved into water and it is no longer ice but of another nature and that's what God does. George's Swinnock said that.

Lastly and hurriedly, III. Notice as this Pilgrim progresses from out of the depths to that cry of conversion and now the contentment in consecration. There is a new and joyous contentment in his life. He says, "I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait." In other words, he says, "I have learned my lesson. I'm satisfied in God. I'm looking to him for my guidance and him alone." Then he says, "And in His word I wait." The forgiven, redeemed soul waits in patience and devotion at the feet of his Lord. He doesn't run ahead of the Lord, he waits for the Lord to open the door. Listen, the love that forgives you is also the love that's going to guide you after forgiveness. His timetable is absolute and perfect and it's for our good and it's for his glory.

It reminds me of the young person waiting on the right marriage partner. You wait on the Lord, the Bible says. You don't run ahead and get ahead of God in this but you wait. The Bible says also here, "in his word." You wait in his word. It means in waiting, we study the word. In waiting, we believe the word. In waiting, we hope in the word. In waiting, we live out the word because it's all his word. It's all about him. Waiting, we hope in the Lord and we hope in his word. What comforts a sick man but the hope of health? And what comforts the poor man but the hope of wealth? What comforts the prisoner but the hope of liberty? But all other hopes will fail. A physician may examine you and give you hope but he may miss it. That may fail. Friends may promise a job but that may not come through, they could fail. But listen to me: no one has ever hoped in God, that is in his word, and been disappointed. I've been at this 35 years now and I have not had one single person ever, ever, ever who said, "I've been broken in my sin. I've realized the weight of my sin. My iniquity and my rebel heart, I have been convicted about it and I've turned to Jesus Christ and he has failed me." I've never heard that. It has never happened. I've never heard it. Never heard it. He is faithful.

Look at verse 6, "My soul waits for the Lord More than the watchmen for the morning; Indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning." Now, where does that come from? The watchmen for the morning is not necessarily the watchmen on the wall. I'm convinced it's the watchmen in the temple. The Levitical priesthood was divided into 24 companies. I mean, there were a lot of Levitical priests and out of the 24 companies, that meant only once every two years could they serve in the 24 hour service of the temple and out of your group, you possibly only got to give the morning sacrifice, the most important of the day, one time in your lifetime. Think about that. You live your whole life and so has all your posterity before you in hope of serving God as a faithful priest and particularly serving in the temple and particularly serving the morning sacrifice and at best, you'll get to do it one time in your entire lifetime. So what did they do? They dared not sleep. They waited up all night and waited for the watchman for the morning and the Psalmist takes that out of the old Jewish custom and he brings it over into Christian truth and talks about how now our whole heart is anchored in looking to God, "God, you're going to get us through this." Don't make that some mystical thing. That means that you look to God and his word when there are problems in your home or when there is troubles at work or when you have a difficulty with a child. You look to God and say, "I'm going to do what God says and do it God's way. I'm hoping in him and in his word and I am locked, laser-beam locked, on God and his word," just like the watchman, the Levitical priest would wait for in the morning if he's the one appointed to give the morning sacrifice."

In verse 6, we see one so committed to consecration that he's saying, "I want to be with God," that he waits for word from the Lord but even more than that, he waits for the Lord. Fannie Crosby didn't write a lot of real deep theological songs but, man, she wrote a lot of good hymns.

"Oh, the dear ones in glory, how they beckon me to come,
And our parting at the river I recall;
To the sweet vales of Eden they will sing my welcome home;
But I long to meet my Savior first of all."

That's what the Psalmist is talking about. I'm watching for him and then one day I'm going to die. They are going to tear my little pup tent down and I'm going to depart and do you know what I'm going to do when I depart from this life? The same thing I did in this life, I'm going to look for Jesus. I'm going to look for him, look to him, worship him and serve him in heaven.

Well, finally there's an evangelistic call that comes out of all of this as this Pilgrim progresses from his conviction and his repentance to his faith in the sufficiency of the Savior promised which is Jesus Christ, to forgiveness, to some contentment in his soul, to this walking in consecration and now what does he do? Look at verse 7, an evangelistic call, "O Israel, hope in the LORD; For with the LORD there is lovingkindness, And with Him is abundant redemption. And He will redeem Israel From all his iniquities." O Israel, hope in the Lord. You know, the question is in your consecration, who do you need to say

that to? Who is your Israel that needs to hear a word of witness from you? An evangelistic encouragement from you?

Now, in verse 8, he brings back up the ugliness of sin. In verse 8, the last line, he says, "He will redeem from all iniquities." You see, it's sin that puts us in the depths of the pit, a bottomless pit, and if we realize the pit of sin and the depths we are in, then we can look up to God. So notice he's a good theologically sound evangelist, he brings people to their sin issue. If you don't get there, you can't get to salvation.

Then he says, "He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities." Well, that's an amazing thought. You just read that and go on, good night. You could meditate on that and be filled with joy for a month. All iniquities. Do you have any idea at the deep, wretched, interwoven crookedness of your heart? And he redeems you from all your iniquities. I'm going to tell you, that's good news.

Then he uses that phrase "abundant redemption," the last part of verse 7. "And with Him is," not just redemption, "abundant redemption."

So we've journeyed now from the depths of sin to really the heights of joy and then on into evangelistic urging of others. Not only have we been delivered from a dungeon but the Psalmist indicates we've been put in possession of a palace. He clears us from being captives but also he endears us to himself as his precious children and not only children, but heirs, and not just heirs but joint heirs on the level of Jesus Christ. Not that we are like Jesus but that in his great grace and perfections on our behalf, he gives us an inheritance like his. You see, God didn't just redeem you and say, "Okay, you're in the household now you be a slave over here." No, he says, "No, I'm going to redeem you and give you status with my precious, unique, one and only Son, Jesus Christ. You're going to reign and inherit all that he reigns over and inherits." You know what that's called? The Psalmist calls it abundant redemption. Abundant redemption. And that's what we have in Jesus Christ.

Do you have abundant redemption? Have you really cried out from the depths? Do you really know that God is your only hope and your only Savior? Do you walk a life that is hoping in his word? We're never perfect at that but is that the purpose and pattern of your life that, "I'm going to look to the word of God"? Listen, "Not my emotions, not what people say, I'm going to look to the word in my dilemmas and in my difficulties. I'm going to wait on the Lord and then I want to tell others about this same redemption. I want them to also have this abundant redemption." Well, amen and amen.

I'm going to pray for us.