

**Psalm 130: 1-4; "There is Forgiveness with You", A Communion
Sermon to stimulate thoughts appropriate to taking the Lord's Supper,
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall, on November 4th, 2012,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

The frequency, of how often the Lord's Supper ought to be observed, in my mind, is related to the need to remember. If Christ is preached from all the Scriptures in the regular preaching of the word, then why would Christ's death need to be remembered in this special way every week? I do not think that it would be needed. Do you go to a banquet every week? Probably not. But it is needful that Christ be remembered in this special way once a month; lest we forget what He did at the cross, which is the basis of all our righteousness and all our strength. I think that this is a reasonable assessment, because once a month keeps the special significance of the meaning of Christ's death established in the minds of all the partakers. The Supper is approached with reverence and Christ is held to the soul as beloved. May we also remember that this ordinance is a church ordinance where the congregation is "proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes." What is it that we are proclaiming to others? And what is it that we should remember about Him in relation to ourselves? I believe that this passage teaches us specifically the answer to those questions. Let me lay before you, today, 3 things that Christ died for, to bring salvation to all the sinners and saints who are trusting in Him. 1st of all - Christ died to deliver His saints from the depths of their afflictions. 2nd - Christ died so that your prayers can be heard. 3rd - Christ died so that your iniquities would not be marked.

1st of all - Christ died to deliver His saints from the depths of their afflictions. (Verse 1)

"Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord...." The word "depths" has reference to the sorrow and misery and discouragement that the psalmist David felt in relation to his enemies and their sins against him, and also his low experience in relation to his own sins in the sight of His holy God. Let's think for a few minutes of his experience in relation to his enemies. I want us all to think of David's younger days when he was first coming into the public eye. He was anointed by God to become king, but Saul wasn't going to give up his rule without a fight. David was a man after God's own heart. He was a man who was zealous for God's honor and glory in the way that he lived his life. But he was sometimes brought low by the hatred of his enemies toward him. He had been bold and courageous when God called him to kill the Philistine Goliath. God "chose David, His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes that had young; He brought him, to shepherd His people Israel," it says in Psalm 78: 70. But in the process of raising him up to be king, God also permitted David to be brought low; so low at this point, that he says, "Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord." He did not have selfish ambition and pride working in his heart and life when the women sang Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten-thousands. He loved

Saul and his Son Jonathan as himself. Saul was envious and suspicious of him, but he only thought of Saul's good. He wanted to establish Saul's rule over God's beloved Israel. His love for his King and his God was evident when King Saul was chasing him around in the wilderness to take his life, and he said, "I will not stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed."

Will you not see, my friends, that it was David's love for his God, God's law, and other people which led him to the place where others, who were selfish and sinful, persecuted him? It was because he was being faithful to God that some people hated him without a cause. He had done what was right, and he had done valiantly, but King Saul and all those who supported the king in his selfishness and wickedness, only persecuted David for it. Saul would pin David to the wall with his spear, if he could, but David would play his harp and sing songs so that Saul's distressing spirit would depart from him. (1 Samuel 16: 23) But I hope that you will also see that this is why Christ died. Christ died so that David might have grace to live in this powerful and amazing way, rejoicing in his God, even so. David had grace in the depths of his experience. This experience of being in the depths does not look powerful and amazing in a good way, but it was. For God's grace was forming Christ's character in David. Christ died so that when any saint Old Testament or New, trusting in Him, would cry out to God from the depths of their discouragement, because of the oppressions of evil men, He would hear and sustain them in all their trials. Let us remember that God will build the Christian character of the one who cries to Him out of the depths so that they can glorify Him. Psalm 50: 15 – "Call to me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." This is what we remember when we come to the Lord's Table. We called, and God delivered us from all of our sins, and we shall now glorify Him with our lives.

2ndly - Christ died so that your prayers will be heard when you are distressed. (Verse 2)

"Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!" "Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications." David also experienced a low point of distress after he had shown Saul mercy and love in sparing his life. In 1st Samuel 24 and 26 is found the record of David's twice sparing Saul's life. This was a wonderful display of the good grace of Christ at work in his life. But it was after this that he became distressed. Turn with me to 1 Samuel 27, verse 1. "And David said in his heart, 'Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul.'" "There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel." "So I shall escape out of his hand." I hope that you can see that this episode is nothing but David's falling into unbelief. The sin of unbelief gained a foothold in David's heart for a time. It is possible that this could happen to you, as well, because of the distress of how others have sinfully treated you. God had protected David and delivered him from Saul numerous times now, but he still believed that there would come a time and a situation where Saul would finally find him and kill

him. So he flees to the Philistines. The Philistines were David's enemies because they were Israel's enemy. But nevertheless David fled to Gath to Achish the king of Gath, because he thought that there he might find peace and safety. Imagine, those who should have been David's friends; Saul and his followers, being a greater threat and danger to David, than Israel's enemies themselves. David had fled there once before, when fleeing from Saul, but Achish had turned him away. David tried to feign madness before Achish, but that convinced Achish to send him away. He didn't need madmen with him. But in verse 4 of Chapter 27 it says, "And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more." "Then David said to Achish, 'If I have found favor in your eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there.'" "For why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?" "So Achish gave him Ziklag that day." You see, David, even when he had to flee from Saul to the enemy, was so faithful in Achish's service that Achish did this for him; he gave him this city. "Therefore Ziklag belonged to the kings of Judah to this day," it says in verse 6. Proverbs 16: 7 says, "When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." How good the Lord is. But a little later, after David and his men had lived in Ziklag for awhile, it says in Chapter 30, verse 1, "Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, and had taken captive the women, and those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way." "So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive." "Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. "And David's two wives, Ahinnoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive." "Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters." "But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God." Now we must ask ourselves this question; how did David strengthen himself? He did so by praying and trusting in the Lord His God. This becomes especially important, for us as well, when we are distressed, and when other people are upset with us. They may be upset with us for things which are entirely outside of our control, and so it is especially important that we should pray and strengthen ourselves in the Lord our God at that very time. God heard David's prayers and he was able to have them answered. Verse 8 - "So David inquired of the Lord, saying, 'Shall I pursue this troop?' "Shall I overtake them?" "And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all." Let us remember this at this very hour; the hour in which we take this Supper, that Christ died so that our prayers might be answered when we are the most distressed. Christ is the greater David whose prayers to God were answered in the Garden of Gethsemane. His soul was deeply distressed there in that place, for all the persons that the Father had given to Him. His prayer to God

was, that He might pursue us when we were taken captive by all our sins and Satan. And then because He prevailed with God in His prayers, He did pursue us and He overtook all of our enemies at the cross. It was because He pursued us even through His death, that without fail He will recover all that was lost by us. How thankful we are to our God and our Christ that He prayed. And this ought to teach us to pray in all of our distresses. I want you to come down front now and gather with me to observe the Lord's Supper, and I will have a few more words for you when we get down there.

3rdly - Even when we have sinned as a believer, Christ died that our iniquities would not be marked. (Verse 3 and 4a)

"If You, Lord should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" "But there is forgiveness with You that You may be feared." Let us remember that it is sin against God which brings the Christian to the greatest depths of agony that he or she experiences. A true Christian will never go to hell because of their sin. Their sin has been born by Christ on the cross and they shall not be condemned for it. But it is still an awful thing when a Christian sins; whether that sin is being tolerated in the heart, or whether it has broken out in their actions. The Holy God makes his people whom He loves, feel their sins which are against His light and His grace. He will bring them to the place where they are ashamed of themselves for committing them. He will bring them to the place where they are crying to Him for mercy and grace, so that they might be wise and holy in the future. I believe that it is when we sin against God, as a Christian, that we feel the greatest pain and the greatest shame that we will ever feel in our life. This is because when we were an unbeliever before, either we didn't know what our sin did to dishonor God, or we didn't care. But as a Christian we both know and we care, when we come to realize what we have done in our sin. We have dishonored God. We have not conducted ourselves in wisdom or holiness. We have given ground for the enemy to blaspheme God's holy name. Many times when we think about our sins, we think about them in terms of what it does to hurt us, or other people. But the primary damage done is to God's honor and the grief that it causes to His holy heart. He knows the grace that He has given to us. But sometimes we do not humbly recognize all that we have been given by God when He first began to show us mercy and give us grace.

The reason that Jesus died was so that every believer who has sinned against Him might come to Him in prayer and find mercy and grace and forgiveness. It is so that each and every day, they might be restored back into favor and receive the blessings which only He can give. What David reminds the Lord of, in his prayer to Him here in Psalm 130, was the sinfulness of every person and the Lord's faithfulness not to mark the iniquities of those who trust in Him. If the Lord did mark the iniquities of believers, no one would stand. No one can stand with any confidence before God because of their sins. They would not be able to endure God's scrutiny of their hearts or the disciplinary actions that He takes against them. But there is forgiveness with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. When

Jesus went to the cross, all the marks that God had put down to your account were erased. Jesus paid the punishment due to all of your sins when you believed in Him. His sufferings and His death opened the door to His favor forever. This is what we now have come down to the front and remember and to celebrate in this Supper.

There is forgiveness with God, that He might be feared." This is the purpose of God in forgiving all of our sins. It is so that He might be feared by those whom He forgives. To fear the Lord is to have regard to Him in all that you think and say and do. To have that kind of regard requires His grace to be at work in your heart. You, as a Christian, need to be those who are teachable; those who will receive instruction. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "Fools despise wisdom and instruction. That verse is from Proverbs 1, verse 7. There is godly fear that has regard to God, and there is ungodly fear that will not regard Him. The Christian life is not getting our own way; it is learning God's better way. It is learning more of God's way of holiness and righteousness which is found in Christ. That is what we want. We want Christ's grace to work in us to teach us the fear of the Lord. As a Christian we choose to fear the Lord; to be instructed by His word and to receive His reproof in all the areas of our life that we need it. "It is good to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long," it says in Proverbs 23: 17. As we come to partake of the Lord's Supper let us remember these blessed truths.