

**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 July 5th, 2009,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

Why does our Lord command that this Supper should be observed by believers on a regular basis? It is because He knows that we need to be reminded of how much our faith depends upon Him and the grace that He gives us, as believers. "Do this, as oft as you do it, in remembrance of Me," Jesus says in 1 Corinthians 11: 25 and 26. There are truths related to our salvation which need to be remembered on a regular basis. It is Christ's death and resurrection that need to be remembered in a special way, by the church gathered, on a regular basis. There are churches of believers who remember our Lord in the Supper once a year. For them, taking the Lord's Supper is like going up to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. That feast was only celebrated once a year under the Old Covenant, and because they think that it was a type of the Lord's Supper, then they believe that it should only be observed once a year. For them, there is much anticipation and preparation that goes on in their hearts as they come to the table and partake of the sacrament. But I think that the Lord's Supper should be observed by a church more frequently than once a year. Some churches would observe it every Sunday. I would hope that by this frequent observance that the Supper would not come to be so commonly observed that it would become simply a ceremonial observance without the heart being in it; without the special significance which it was instituted with. It is the truth of the word read every day and preached every Sunday which feeds God's people, nourishing them spiritually, on an on-going basis. But in the taking of the Lord's Supper there is a special feeding upon Christ's faithfulness. It is not a common spiritual meal of reading or preaching, but a banquet of bread and wine. Christ "brings us into the banqueting house and His banner over us is love." (Song of Solomon 2: 4) It is a special remembrance of His love to us as needy and unworthy sinners.

The Lord Jesus, however, did not legislate how often the Supper should be observed. And so we do not need to make our observations the standard for other churches. Let each church think the matter through. Jesus simply said, "As oft as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." 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 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 those questions. Let me lay before you, today, 4 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. 4th - Christ died so that you might have a godly fear of Him.

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 and my brethren, 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 having to be in the depths does not look powerful and amazing in a good way, but it was. For Christ's grace was forming Christ's character in David. Christ died so that when any saint Old Testament or New, trusting in Him, cried out to Him from the depths of their discouragement, because of the oppressions of evil men; that He would hear and sustain them in all their trials. He will build the Christian character of the one who cries to Him out of the depths so that they can do this.

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 sinfully treat 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. But David had fled 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." How did David strengthen himself? By praying and trusting in the Lord His God. It is especially when we are distressed, and when other people that are upset with us, for things which are outside of our control, that we should pray and strengthen ourselves in the Lord our God. 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." Christ died for this; that our prayers might be answered when we are distressed. Christ is the greater David whose prayers to God were answered in the garden of Gethsemane. His soul was 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 our sins and Satan. He did pursue us and overtook all of our enemies at the cross, and 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.

But 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...." 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. He will bring them to the place where they are ashamed of themselves for committing them, and where they are crying to Him for the mercy and grace 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. David allowed himself in this sin with Bathsheba to temporarily forget about God, so that he could follow after his lust. And he went on in this forgetfulness for some months. But when God came to him through Nathan the prophet and convinced and convicted him of his sin, he immediately acknowledged it. And Nathan told him that his sin was forgiven. He would not die eternally. But the feeling of the shame of what he had done to dishonor God stuck with him for some time. He had to work through this distress of soul with God in prayer.

We find one of these times in prayer recorded for us in Psalm 51. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions." "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me." "Against You and You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight." This is a very wonderful prayer that David prays because it says very much about God Himself. It was first and fore-mostly against God, that David had sinned against. But David also knows and believes that God is great in His lovingkindness. He has a multitude of tender mercies to show the believer; the greatest of which is to forgive all of their sins. David understood that he needed continuing mercy even though he was forgiven, so that he might be thoroughly washed from his iniquity. In verse 7 he prays, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." "Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice." I do not think that this prayer was necessarily composed immediately after David was confronted by Nathan. I think that it was composed after he had felt for some time, the shame and misery of God's hand being upon him day and night, as he speaks about in Psalm 32. His spiritual bones all felt broken, and he felt like God was very displeased with him over his sin. That is why he prays in verse 9, "Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities."

But you and I must understand once again, that this is why Christ died. It is so that every believer who has sinned against Him might come to Him in prayer and find mercy and grace and forgiveness and restoration back into the favor and blessings which only He can give. But 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 could stand with any confidence before God. They would not be able to endure His 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 will come down to the front and remember and celebrate in this Supper. After you come down, I will give you a few more words about the last phrase of verse 4.

4th - Christ died so that you might have a godly fear of Him. (Verse 4b)

There is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared." This is the purpose of God's 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 we think and say and do. To have that kind of regard requires His grace to be at work in our hearts. We 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. A godly fear leads to wisdom, and wisdom is personified toward the latter part of Chapter 1 of Proverbs. There we find that the fear of the Lord is something that we choose. Wisdom says in verse 23 to anyone who will hear, "Turn at my rebuke; surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you." But to those who do not turn, wisdom personified says, "Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, they would have none of my counsel and despised my every rebuke." "Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies." I trust that this is not what you and I want. 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 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 I want to line up a few verses from the book of Proverbs and have you meditate upon your own Christian life in relation to them so that each of us might pray to change where we need to. And where we are obedient to His word, that we might pray to continue in that obedience, confident, by faith in Christ, that the Lord is pleased with us. Proverbs 8: 13 - "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate. "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength." Proverbs 9: 10 - "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." In other words, it is in knowing Christ that wisdom is obtained. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him. Proverbs 14: 26 and 27 - "In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge." "In the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death." Certainly we have found the

strong confidence that to pursue righteousness through trusting in the righteousness of Christ is the way of life and blessing. Christ is the fountain of life and teaches us the fear of the Lord. "Come, my children and listen to Me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord." (Psalm 34: 11) It is Christ who will turn us away from the snares of death because of what He did on the cross on our behalf. This is told to us in Proverbs 16: 6. "In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil." O what precious truth is found here, for us to meditate upon as we partake of these elements of Christ's death. "In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity." "If You O Lord should mark iniquities, O Lord, who would stand." "But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared." God's great love and mercy is seen in the Father's giving Christ the Son to be our Savior. Atonement is provided for iniquity. And what is just as amazing, is that the Christian is given the power to depart from evil. Let us now come and draw near to God in our hearts and give Him thanks for our Lord Jesus, and ask that we might have the power to depart from evil, and the grace to do what is right.