

# PSALM READING FOR JUNE 28, 2015

**START WITH SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 130

**OBSERVE:**

The ascription on this Psalm describes it as “a Psalm of Ascents.” These were Psalms sung by Israelite pilgrims as they climbed the temple mount in Jerusalem.

Perhaps so, but the tone of this Psalm is lamentation and longing. The Psalm begins with imagery suggesting that the Psalmist is overwhelmed by deep waters of sorrow. He is crying out for the Lord to hear his voice.

Why is he crying out from the depths? Verses 3 – 4 suggest that he is confessing his iniquity — and yet, he also seems to be seeking to escape its consequences: *If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?* In other words, the holiness of God is such an extreme contrast to human sin that none could be acceptable — if not for God’s mercy: *But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.*

The Psalmist then returns to the cry of his heart. Because he is overwhelmed, because sin is not something that can be atoned for by the efforts of the sinner, he can only throw himself on God’s mercy:

*I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope;  
my soul waits for the Lord  
more than those who watch for the morning,  
more than those who watch for the morning.*

And finally, the Psalmist ends with exaltation and confidence, calling on Israel to hope in the Lord. The Lord, he says, is full of steadfast love, and has made provision to redeem the sinner because of his *great power to redeem.*

*God alone is he who will redeem Israel  
from all its iniquities.*

**APPLY:**

Orthodox Christian theologians and saints agree on one thing: sin radically separates us from God. God is absolute holiness, and sin absolutely separates us from him.

We are asked, “do you mourn over your sins? do you bewail your manifold sins and wickedness?” by those who have meditated on the human condition.

C.S. Lewis says “Christianity has nothing to say to those who do not acknowledge they are sinners.”

But there is immense hope in the Lord: *For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.* And reading the scriptures “backward” as it were, we recognize that the forgiveness of sins comes through the perfect sacrifice — Jesus the Lamb of God.

**RESPOND:**

I am sometimes tempted to take sin lightly; to excuse myself with rationalizations; to whine “at least I’m not as bad as other people.”

The scriptures don’t leave this open to us. Sin is radically divisive. It divides us from God, from other people, and from who we are meant to be.

Thanks be to God, he has provided a way out for us. Ephesians 2:3- 5 sums up the radical nature of sin, and God’s radical mercy: *All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of*

*wrath, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ —by grace you have been saved—*

*Lord, may your holiness convict me of my sin, hold up a mirror to my depravity, and convince me of my absolute dependence on your mercy.*

*Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is high.  
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide;  
Oh, receive my soul at last.*

*Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;  
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,  
Still support and comfort me.  
All my trust on Thee is stayed,  
All my help from Thee I bring;  
Cover my defenseless head  
With the shadow of Thy wing.*

*Amen and Amen!*

**BY TOM LETCHWORTH**

<https://soarlectionarybiblestudy.wordpress.com/2015/06/27/psalm-reading-for-june-28-2015/>