[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 waits, and in His Word I do hope. [6] My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning – yes, more than those who watch for the morning. [7] O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption. [8] And He shall redeem Israel From all his iniquities.

Text: Psalm 130 A 11-1-26 Ephesians 2:1-10 Matthew 20:1-16 Psalm: 23 Resp. Ps.: 30
Hymns: 370, 373 (1-4), 370 (5-7), 778

WE STAND IN AWE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless;
My soul, believe and doubt it not.
Why stagger at this word of promise?
Hath Scripture ever falsehood taught?
Nay; then this word must true remain:
By grace thou, too, shalt heav'n obtain.

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

When we've done wrong to someone and tell him we're sorry and ask for his forgiveness, he may or may not forgive us. He may refuse to forgive us and hold a grudge against us and be bitter toward us. That's not the way God is. Why would the holy, righteous God forgive us undeserving sinners? And yet, when we sin and are sorry for it, the holy, righteous, merciful, loving God does forgive us. **WE STAND IN AWE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS**.

Our text begins, *"Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD…."* In the context of this Psalm, being *"in the depths"* is caused by our sins.

We pray, *"Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications."* It's amazing that the holy, righteous God allows us unworthy sinners to come before Him, asking for forgiveness! Hebrews 4:16 says, *"Let us … come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* Because of Jesus and what He did for us, we can come before God and ask His forgiveness. For Jesus' sake, God listens to us and answers our prayers.

The psalmist asks, *"If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" "Mark"* in the original is *"keep,"* that is, hold onto and not let go. *"Iniquities"* in the original is *"perversities, depravities."* In His Word God tells us what to do and what not to do. We confess with Paul, *"The good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice"* (Ro. 7:19). Sometimes we know that what we're contemplating to do is wrong, but we do it anyway. When the psalmist asks, *"If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could*

stand?" "stand" in the original is *"remain, endure."* If God kept a record of all of our sins and held them against us and refused to forgive us, we couldn't take it. Our guilt would crush us to the ground.

"But," we're told, *"there is forgiveness with You…."* *"Forgiveness"* in the original is also *"pardon."* Amazingly, God forgives, God pardons us guilty sinners. If God gave us what we deserve because of our sins, He would punish us and send us to hell. But instead, God in His amazing grace forgives us. God says in His Word, *"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more"* (He. 8:12). God doesn't forget anything. Yet in His mercy, God forgives and forgets our sins, that is, God, consciously puts our sins out of His memory and lets them go. We stand in awe of God's forgiveness! Because Jesus was willing to be punished for our sins, God forgives us. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* – 1 John 1:9.

We're told, *"there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared."* If we tell someone we've wronged that we're sorry, and he forgives us, that doesn't make us afraid of him. We're not afraid of God because He forgives us. Psalm 33:8 says, *"Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him."* We fear God in the sense of standing in awe of Him and His forgiveness – God's immediate, complete, unconditional forgiveness. Referring to His mercy and grace and forgiveness God says, *"'My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'"* (Is. 55:8-9)

We're told, *"I wait for the LORD…. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning – yes, more than those who watch for the morning."* If there's danger of imminent attack, a soldier on watch yearns for the dawn when he can see better. But twice we're told of waiting for the Lord <u>more</u> than a soldier on watch waits for the dawn. Sometimes we have sleepless nights worried for ourselves or for someone we care about. When that happens we yearn for the dawn to come and bring with it better things. Our Lord tells us, *"Be still, and know that I am God"* (Ps. 46:10). We can trust in the Lord who is causing all things to work together for our good (Ro. 8:28). Scripture says, *"Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint"* (Is. 40:31). The Lord sometimes makes us wait to teach us patience, and to teach us to trust Him.

As we wait on the Lord we say, *"and in His Word I do hope."* *"Hope"* in the original is also *"expect."* Our hope in the Lord isn't an uncertain wish that somehow things might get better. We wait on the Lord, expecting that He will help us, because He will. Numbers 23:19 says, *"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"* Titus 1:2 says, *"God … cannot lie."* God always keeps His Word. If you've repented of your sins, but still feel guilty and ashamed, cling to all of God's assurances in the Bible that He forgives you. (That goes for anything else we're struggling with. Read and reread God's assurances in His Word. Whatever God says – whatever the Bible says – God will do.)

We're told, *"O Israel, hope in the LORD."* Does *"Israel"* include you and me? The apostle Paul says, *"…they are not all Israel who are [descendants of] Israel, nor are they all children because they are the [descendants] of Abraham…. That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the [descendants]"* (Ro. 9:6-8). By God's grace we believe in Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, God's Son and our Savior. Whether with people who lived during the time of the Old Testament or who live now during our New Testament time, God looks for <u>faith</u> in the heart. By faith in Jesus, we're part of God's spiritual Israel. So yes, when our text speaks of *"Israel"* it includes us.

We're told, *"with the LORD there is mercy." "Mercy"* in the original is a word rich in meaning. It's like the word "grace." *"Mercy"* includes God's lovingkindness. We don't deserve it, we can't deserve it, but God in His *"mercy"* loves us and forgives us and lifts us up.

We're told, *"With the LORD … is abundant redemption." "Redemption"* means "buying back." Jesus paid with His life to buy us back from Satan and hell. For Jesus' sake, God has mercy on us. When we repent, God forgives us.

We're told, *"He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."* Here is a wonderful example of what our text is speaking of when it says, *"in His Word I do hope."* If we ever wonder, "Can God, will God forgive me?" we find the comfort we need in God's Word: *"He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."* When we tell God we're sorry for our sins, He forgives them <u>all</u>.

God is called *"LORD"* (all in capital letters) five times in our short text. *"LORD"* is Jehovah, the eternal, covenant God. God promised to send His Son to save us, and kept His promise. Jesus came, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Jesus tells us, *"Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven."* (Mt. 9:2)

By grace! O, mark this word of promise
When thou art by thy sins oppressed,
When Satan plagues thy troubled conscience,
And when thy heart is seeking rest.
What reason cannot comprehend
God by His grace to thee doth send.

By grace! On this I'll rest when dying;
In Jesus' promise I rejoice;
For though I know my heart's condition,
I also know my Savior's voice.
My heart is glad, all grief has flown,
Since I am saved by grace alone. Amen.