

**Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;  
2 O Lord, hear my voice.**

**Let your ears be attentive  
to my cry for mercy.**

**3 If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins,  
O Lord, who could stand?**

**4 But with you there is forgiveness;  
therefore you are feared.**

**5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,  
and in his word I put my hope.**

**6 My soul waits for the Lord  
more than watchmen wait for the morning,  
more than watchmen wait for the morning.**

**7 O Israel, put your hope in the LORD,  
for with the LORD is unfailing love  
and with him is full redemption.**

**8 He himself will redeem Israel  
from all their sins. (NIV 84)**

Theme: With the Lord there is Forgiveness!

Have you ever seen a grown man cry? There are some situations where you might see such a sight: perhaps when his children were born, when his favorite team loses a big game, or at the death of his parents or another loved one. Another situation where men often cry is a courtroom. The judge just read the verdict—he is guilty and now he is going to spend some time behind bars. The weight of his actions just came down heavy upon him; he now fully understands the consequences of his actions and he breaks down into tears. Maybe, he sheds a tear or two while begging the judge for mercy. He asks the judge to take it easy on him, to be kind to him—it is his only hope since he knows that he is guilty of everything that he was accused of doing.

The writer of our Psalm has a similar feeling—we all should, in fact. Of course, we aren't standing in a courtroom before a judge because of

some crime we committed, but when we die or when Christ comes again we will face judgment. And we know who we are and what we've done. We are nothing but sinners. Ever since the time we were conceived, we've been nothing but sinners. We cannot keep God's perfectly, not for one single day. Think back at your life—however long it may be, about all the horrible things you have done, all the disgusting, embarrassing, selfish sins that you have committed, and not just your actions, but also things you've said and things you've thought. Some of those things other people probably know about, but only a few people. Other sins only you know about and would be completely shamed and embarrassed if they got out. Some you have chosen to forget, while others you had no idea you ever committed. Our sin separates us from God. Each and every sin that we commit condemns us. As the Psalmist writes, **If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?** It's a rhetorical question, of course. "No one" is the answer—no one could stand before the Lord because we are all guilty, each and every one of us wouldn't be able to stand before God. And there is nothing we can do to change that. We can't remove our own sins or pay for our iniquities. No amount of hard work, clean living, or positive thinking can do a single thing for us. That is why the psalmist cries out from the depths. From the bottom of the ocean, with the guilt and weight of his sins lying heavy upon him, like a criminal in the courtroom, he calls to God for mercy.

**Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.** We call out to the Lord for help because only the Lord can help us. Only he knows our situation and only he can do something about it. He is our judge that we are begging him for mercy—but our judge is also our Savior. He is the one who came down in the first place to die in our place, to remove the guilt of all our sins. He is the one who suffered through our eternal damnation and made us perfect and holy in the eyes of God. So we call out to the Lord and we appeal to his mercy.

Christ, our judge, knows all evidence. He sees all and knows all; there is nothing we can hide from him. As we said before, we know that we can't stand before him because of the record of our sins. But then the Psalmist declares in verse four, **But with you there is forgiveness.** Yes, forgiveness is found in the Lord. He removes the guilt of all our

sins, he doesn't count them against us. He releases us from their bondage and he remembers our sins no more. This forgiveness is found only in the Lord because it is he who died on the cross and gave us his perfect life. And only through faith in him do we receive all that he has done for us.

In verse seven we read, **with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.** This gift of forgiveness is given to us by his love—his never ending love and mercy is what prompted God to send his son and what prompted his son to suffer and die in our place. It is a gift of his grace, his love for us that we do not deserve.

And by this love we are fully redeemed! By shedding his blood on the cross, Christ paid the ransom price for our sins. The price that God demanded for our sins is death—eternal death, which Christ paid for by sacrificing himself. So, we are redeemed, set free from being slaves to sin; we are brought back to a right relationship to our Father—all because of Christ!

Because in Christ there is forgiveness and in him is full redemption we fear him. Fear, not in the sense of being afraid or scared of God because he knows all our sins, but fear in the sense of having honor, awe, and respect for God because he knows all our sins and yet forgives them all anyway. We love God and honor him with all our heart because of the love and mercy he has for us.

And so, we wait for him. The Psalmist writes, **I wait for the Lord, my soul waits...My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchman wait for the morning.** A guilty man would never long for his day of judgment to come. He files petition after petition, delaying the process, tying everything up with paper work as long as he can—that is why it is so expensive to put someone to death via the death penalty. But we eagerly wait for the Lord. We can't hardly contain ourselves—we long for that day to come. It's hard for us in this day and age of electricity to completely appreciate dawn. Without artificial lights it can be completely dark at night. A watchman sits in the complete and utter darkness watching for any sign of light. It can be a very nerve-wracking and draining job. He longs for the first ray of dawn, so that he knows that he and those he is protecting will be safe. The Old Testament believers waited for Christ to come the first time; we too wait for Christ—this time to come again on the Last Day so he can take us to heaven. So we eagerly wait

for Christ to come—we keep an eye out for him and are prepared at all times! And how can we eagerly await Christ's return even though we are guilty sinners? Because in him there is forgiveness—we know that on Judgment Day our judgment is favorable because of Christ!

And so as we wait, we put our hope in Christ. Our hope is in him and him alone! Our hope can't be in who we are or what we've done—**O lord, who could stand!** But our hope is in the forgiveness and redemption won for us by Christ and given to us through faith in him. And this hope, isn't wishful thinking, but a sure confidence in our salvation because of what Christ has done for us.

As the Psalmist waited for the Lord his entire hope was in him. And he encourages the people of Israel, and us to do the same. **O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.** All, not just some, of our sins paid for; full and free redemption is found in Christ. The love he has for us is never failing—it will never run out or grow cold. And so we hope in him and him alone!

Maybe you've seen a grown man cry. Many do in a courtroom because he is guilty. We cry out to the Lord for mercy because we too are all guilty; but in love he answers us by forgiving and redeeming us through Jesus Christ, our Savior. May we then cry tears of joy as we eagerly await his coming. Amen.