

## **“But There Is Forgiveness with You”**

(Psalm 130 – Maundy Thursday / Good Friday – April 2-3, 2026)

Psalm 130 – <sup>1</sup>*Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD;* <sup>2</sup>*Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.* <sup>3</sup>*If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?* <sup>4</sup>*But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.* <sup>5</sup>*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope.* <sup>6</sup>*My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning – yes, more than those who watch for the morning.* <sup>7</sup>*O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption.* <sup>8</sup>*And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*

Dear Redeemed in Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our sins:

This season of Lent, we have been meditating on the penitential psalms. We have joined the psalmists, confessing our sins before the Lord in the holy fear and sorrow of contrition; and we have received the peace and comfort of His Holy Absolution.

This gift of God’s forgiveness is given to us freely. We have not paid anything for it. We have not earned it by any goodness or merit of our own. God gives forgiveness to sinners no other way than as a gift, freely received through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

But then, the gift has already been paid for. On Good Friday, we see the terribly great price God paid for our forgiveness, in the sacrifice and death of His own beloved Son. As we bow before the Lord confessing our sins, we do so at the foot of Jesus’ cross, who shed His precious blood and gave His holy life as the price to redeem us. It is for the sake of Christ crucified alone that we hear God’s Holy Absolution.

The psalmist recognizes this gift of God’s grace. He confesses that there is nothing good in him. He bows before the Lord with nothing to bring but his sin and guilt, saying: *“If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?”* Yet he waits on the Word of the Lord; for in that gracious Word of God’s Gospel he has hope, as he declares: *“But there is forgiveness with You”* (vs. 3-4).

What if God did mark our iniquities? What would happen if He kept a scorecard, where every deed and misdeed in our life was added up? Every time we sinned in thought, word, or deed, it would count against us. But every time we thought, said, or did something good, out of completely pure and unselfish motives, it would count in our favor. What would happen if God kept score like this? Would we be able to stand before Him? Would you and I come out as winners, or would we lose all for eternity?

It would be a fair system, wouldn't it? It is how things tend to work in this world. If you are a good student, you get good grades; but if not, you get bad grades and may even fail. If you do good work, you get paid; but if not, you may not get paid but rather fired. At least, we recognize this is how a fair system should work. You reap what you sow. In such a fair system, maybe we have prided ourselves in thinking we come out pretty well. We have done our fair share, and more, compared to many people. We deserve all the good that we have coming to us. We deserve to come out on the winning side.

But what about when it comes to our standing before God? His Law acts like a mirror, to show us what we are really like as sinners. His Law does not tell us we must be better than the average person, and that will be good enough. God does not grade on a curve. His Law demands that we be perfect and holy like Him. That same Law declares that *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23).

If God were to mark our iniquities, there would be countless ways we have put our sinful desires before His holy will; when we have served ourselves instead of Him alone. There would be countless ways we have selfishly put ourselves before other people; when we have hurt them by our wrong words and actions, or we have simply failed to love and serve them for their good. God sees not only the sins we have committed in broad daylight, but the sins we have committed in secret – the ways we have been dishonest and shameful in our actions, and even in our innermost thoughts.

So if God acted fairly toward us, we would all suffer the wages of our sin in death (Romans 6:23). As we came before His judgment seat, we would all get a failing grade. We would be banished from His heavenly glory in the fiery judgment of hell.

So the psalmist falls on his face and prays: *“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. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?”* (vs. 1-3). In the same spirit of penitence, we bow before the Lord confessing our great sin and guilt. We acknowledge the punishment we deserve, if He were to treat us with absolute justice. Left to ourselves, we could not stand before God in judgment as sinners.

But we are not left to ourselves! That is the good news that comes to us on Good Friday. The cross on which the Prince of Glory died enables us poor miserable sinners, crying out of the depths, to say: *“But there is forgiveness with You”* (vs. 4).

There is forgiveness with God, because He Himself paid for all our sins on the cross. The Jewish leaders wrongly tried and condemned God's Son. The Gentile governor, knowing Jesus was innocent, handed Him over to be beaten and crucified. But despite

this greatest miscarriage of justice in human history, heaven's Judge was carrying out His own act of justice. God the Father was handing His innocent Son over to be condemned and crucified for our sins. Instead of marking our iniquities against us, God marked them all against His Son. Jesus lived the only perfect and holy life of obedience to the Law of God; yet His Father counted against Him all the ways we have fallen short. God counted to Jesus our failing grade. God counted to Jesus all our failures to do the work His Law demanded. As a result, God made His own Son suffer the banishment from His presence and the fiery judgment we deserved, as He cried out on the cross: "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" (Matthew 27:46).

Truly, Jesus is the one who cried out of the depths. He is the one who was forsaken and punished by His Father for our sins, so that you and I will never face that pain, guilt, and despair of hell. When Jesus cried out from the cross, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30), He had paid the full, infinite price for our sins. This is why we can confess our great sin and iniquity to God, and yet say confidently: "*But there is forgiveness with You*" (vs. 4).

In the peace of God's forgiveness, in the joy of His salvation, the psalmist exclaims: "*O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities*" (vs. 7-8). In mercy, God has redeemed us. He has paid the full price and bought us back from sin, death, and hell. He has lifted us up to the heights of His heavenly glory – all by His gift of forgiveness.

This is the faith we confess with the Catechism, as we look to Jesus' cross and say:

...He is my Lord, Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death...

Now because of what Jesus finished on the cross, God brings His Gospel of forgiveness to us daily. We say with the psalmist: "*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning – yes, more than those who watch for the morning*" (vs. 5-6). As we confess our sins, we wait on His Word in hope; for He forgives all our sins in His Absolution. Every morning, we begin a new day in His grace – redeemed, restored, and forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Israel was very familiar with God's redemption. All the blood sacrifices at God's altar through the years pointed to Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world

(John 1:29). In the first Passover Feast in Egypt, God's people painted the blood of the lamb that was slain on their doors; and when God saw that blood covering their homes, He spared them from the plague of death coming to their enemies. They were redeemed from slavery and set free as God's people.

Now in fulfillment of that image, Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed to redeem us (1 Corinthians 5:7). As the people of Israel were led out in freedom through the Red Sea, so we have been brought through the waters of Baptism, washed of all our sins in the power of Jesus' blood. We have been set free from slavery to the enemies of sin, Satan, and death. We have been united with Christ in the freedom of God's people.

On Maundy Thursday, the night before Jesus' death, He celebrated the last Passover with His disciples, commemorating God's redemption of His people. It was during this meal that He instituted His Holy Supper, to which the Passover pointed. In this Sacrament of the New Covenant, Jesus gives us His very Body and Blood, by which He paid for our redemption on the cross. In this Holy Feast, the Lamb of God gives us His Body and Blood to eat and to drink for the remission of our sins (Matthew 26:26-28).

So today, as we kneel at the foot of Jesus' cross confessing our sins, we rejoice with the psalmist declaring: "*But there is forgiveness with You*" (vs. 4). We receive this great gift from God with thanksgiving, knowing He has paid the infinite price to redeem us. He has nailed all our sins to the cross; and in exchange, He counts to us the perfect righteousness of His Son! That tree of Jesus' death has become the tree of life for us!

As we joyfully confess with the Catechism, He has redeemed me:

...in order that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.