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LAT 71

Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Thursday, April 1. 1982.

Lesson. Ephesians 3.

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Psalm 130. 1.

Undoubtedly to many of the Lord's dear people the Scripture read is relevant. It must be if we are in a spiritually conscious state of the solemnities we are in and which surround us. For we are certainly in the depths nationally and internationally, living in the dregs of Time as it appears, as the solemn prophecies of the last days of this dispensation are being rapidly fulfilled. So from that angle we are in the depths, and in the personal cases of those who fear God in sorrows, afflictions, trials, burdens, with unanswered prayer in some cases and the long waiting period before the Lord appears His dear people may feel to be in the depths. I must lay the foundation here and enunciate what is in the range of my spirit, and I hope, my sanctified, sympathetic spirit. So I say to the beloved congregation, to those who know and are in spiritual and eternal union with the sweet, loving Person of the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, that I see Jesus in the Text. For when we consider the amazing term depth, what does it mean? To go down to a very low place, to the lowest place of all, and it expresses unfathomed sufferings and agony of body and mind and soul.

My friends, who knew or knows the depths of the Lord Jesus in the days of His humiliation? With profound reverence and the greatest degree of love the Lord gives, and with adoration and wonder I will name to you two Scriptures that occur to my spirit that are greatest depths. "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." What would you say if it was for you, to raise you to the heights of Heaven? Who can penetrate through? We cannot. God only knows the depth. The greatest depth I will name with reverence and trembling and adoration is when the Lord Jesus said to His divine Father, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" There is no greater depth than that, and it is the foundation of the Text. "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." I should be

solemnly remiss to speak of the various low places of the people of God and not mention our blessed Lord.

"His way was much rougher and darker than mine;

Did Christ my Lord suffer, and shall I repine?"

He descended to the lower parts of the earth to accomplish the work of our redemption from sin, death and hell. He abhorred not the virgin's womb. That was the lowest part of the earth. And so He became Man, the Man Christ Jesus, and a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. If you know something of Christ being revealed to your soul you will have seen Him or had a faint vision of Him with His visage 'so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.' You will understand something of the meaning of depths, and out of those depths He cried to His divine Father, and as we have recently dilated on, His divine Father through Isaiah said, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." The Father supported, strengthened, carried through His pure, holy, spotless humanity. Think of the depths! So assuming a holy humanity into union with His divine Person He was capacitated for depths. When you think of it He came where we were, stood in our wretched place. He was our Surety when we were in the ruins of the fall. Think of the depths, my friends. So for your comfort I want to say, and it follows on the address at the Prayer Meeting when we said the overwhelming desire crystallised concisely by the apostle Paul was, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

So child of God, you must expect depths: but is that a right way to express it to you? It is a favour divine; it is a privilege, not something you just accept stoically. It is an honour, a great honour to come into the fellowship of His sufferings. The people of God come into depths in various ways. You will feel to be sinking in a low place, a deep place, deep waters, and it may be a dark place. I say for your comfort, you know however low you feel to sink, and I am sure you do under temptation and with servile fear which is in us, and the cruel temptations of the adversary and bitter things in the cup you know what it is to feel very low and wonder if you can go lower. I say to you, you may not realise it, but however low you sink, child of God, underneath

are the everlasting arms and you will never sink through them; you will never be lost. You will prove, and this is one of the grand mysteries, as Mr J. Raven said years ago, "Friends, people think the way to Heaven is up. The way of God's teaching is down." He brings you lower and lower and you do not think that is the way of deliverance, salvation and blessing, do you? What happens? You fall into His everlasting arms and there is blessing, deliverance, joy, salvation. You go down; you are stripped of self-righteousness, pride, carnality, worldliness. We are worldly by nature and the Lord strips us of the last mite of spiritual pride; strips us of all and shows us what vile wretches we are and what black sinners. He shows our life and we are shocked at it. It seems as though the last square inch of ground you stand on is removed from under your feet, and you fall into His blessed arms. That is salvation. I am sure some of you are in a deep place and I wanted to say that to you for your solid comfort. In bereavement, distress, afflictions, sorrows, the trials of the way and many fears and difficulties the Lord favour you to experience and sweetly realise that underneath are the everlasting arms. The dear Lord will carry you through all difficulties, sorrows, trials, dilemmas, weakness, all distresses and the river itself in His loving arms and carry you to Heaven. That is what the Lord will do for you. So the foundation we have sought to lay.

The Lord help me to speak to the word depth. Think of the depth the Lord Jesus descended to. He was dead and buried, in the lowest part of the earth. My friends, on the third day He rose triumphantly and made Himself known to His disciples. They were guilty: they had heard the report from gracious women and they believed them not, and He reproved them for their unbelief. He continued with them for forty days and was received up into Heaven and sat on the right hand of God. Let us bless God again that Christ is delivered out of all His afflictions. He is exalted, but in His tender, loving, feeling heart He feels as you pass through this valley of tears in a measure that is impossible to express because He passed this way, and being in vital union with Him this is so sweet, tender, loving. He feels in His human heart each tempted members' pains for their affliction's His. His sympathy, compassion and love flow to your breast. We have an example in God's Creation. Though man is fallen, where there is love, and especially with the Lord's people double

love, how dear parents feel in their hearts the pain and distress of their children. They are so dear to you and the tenderness you manifest to them is inexpressible. Think how the dear Lord feels for you, so He will carry you through. Think of the dimensions of His love, the depths of His love. He descended into the grave. His sufferings were tantamount to hell for His dear people, and He entered into the state of the lost, not the place of the lost. And the curse of God when the sins of His people entered His holy soul and bones, O the depth! I want you to think of the depth of the sufferings of Christ. Would you shed tears into His sepulchre as did Mary Magdalene? Would you be in the gracious frame of soul with your eyes a sluice and your tears falling into the sepulchre? "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" He had fought the fight, the victory won. All the sins laid on Him were borne away, drowned in the depths of the sea, put behind His back. The perfection of His obedience is your wedding garment. He drank the curse, exhausted the vengeance of God till there was none left. He rests in His love to you. I wish every night I could get a glimpse and a sense of a suffering Redeemer and fall asleep at His dear feet and see Him on His Throne! Do you desire in these last days, as they must be for some, to get a clearance so when you close your eyes you feel you are forgiven and if you should never wake in this world you will be in eternal glory? It is all through the depths that He entered. We know a little of it. Thank God for an inkling of it, and we shall know more of it when we reach the happy place. We shall have an understanding of what the Saviour passed through to raise us to Heaven, to eternal bliss, to complete conformity to Him. O that suffering Lamb of God!

It is the will of God that I speak to you on the depths of the people of God. It is a great word, and it is the counterpart to height. No depth no heights. Depth first. I will call over graciously, tenderly the depths. We could never have been lower than when ruined by Adam in the fall of man when he ruined his posterity. You have ^{only} got to know something of the filth of Soho, the terrible lawlessness and the dreadful things that are in man; murders, violence and so on, and much that is never known in the deep underworld of darkness that is nigh to the pit, to realise the depth of the fall of man. Then when the Lord quickens to life a soul He eternally loves according to His sovereignty and displays His majesty,

holiness and justice He discovers to them something of the depth of their fall. They see their wretched, ruined, undone state. It is by degrees, that is why I speak carefully. Some have the profoundest knowledge in a short time, as Saul of Tarsus, and they are blessed. In some cases it extends over a number of years, and this is a mystery to you. There are those you look on and feel they have the life of God in their souls but they do not know much concerning their sin. They are not overburdened by it. If they are the Lord's people He will accomplish His own work. It may be fifteen years before they are brought to nothing. I have seen it in this Church. I have seen the Lord bring them in old age to a place where they were completely stripped, emptied, and felt lost. The Lord had removed their last mite and they had never been in it before. I met years ago a highly esteemed minister about eighty, an affable, loving, gracious, able man. He said, "My friend, I have been led into my sinnership over the last few months to a degree I have never known in my life." God had shown him his heart and nature. He couldn't have preached it, could he? It is an encouraging sign. If there were multitudes like the poor publican the Chapel would be filled and there would be great hunger and thirst after the Saviour. There is a sort of social attitude, a lukewarmness, an orthodoxy that seems to have invaded us. People are not in need now. Has the Lord shown you something of the depth of ruin in Adam, and the depths of your heart, the wickedness and deceit of it? In the Psalm there is a wonderful word concerning His clemency because the Psalmist was in the depths and the Lord lifted him out. "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" No one could stand if the Lord marked iniquity according to the strict tenor of His holy moral law. "But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared" - eternally loved, adored, worshipped. Does it sound sweet to a poor sinner? "But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." No poor sinner broken-hearted over sin is beyond this pale. Some have been kept remarkably: they have not been out into the world at all. They were always in the House of God and the Lord commenced with them in their early days. They know their sinnership. How? Because God has said, "Turn again, son of man, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. They have seen their own heart and nature. They bless God

that they have been preserved from external vices but they have seen the depths. Have you been in the depths concerning your soul?

"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." That outstanding character, the publican did because a ray of heavenly light, love, mercy shone into his dark cell. He knew what it was to cry, he knew there was mercy. How did he know concerning asking for mercy? Because the Lord granted him a taste of mercy, and it flowed until it was as a river flowing into his soul and his sin had gone. He was a righteous person in the sight of God and he went down to his house justified. What about depths? Has the Lord taken you out of an horrible pit, lifted you out and you found the Rock beneath you? Has He set your feet on the Rock of Ages? What an experience!

"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." There are many depths in life in relation to temptation. I remember I was so under the temptation that I had as a child committed the unpardonable sin, and it was a two-pronged attack from Satan. First, "When you were a child you committed the unpardonable sin because you prayed and used the Name of the Trinity." and I was under it. That was the first prong. The second was, and it got hold of me, he said, "You will curse God and that is the end of it." Talk about being in the depths! Have any of you dear souls been in these places? Terrible depths they are. Thank the Lord that we have been delivered from it by the dying love of a dear Redeemer, and instead of cursing from our mouth there is praise and adoration, songs of praises. You can get into terrible places where the devil says to you that you will do something terrible, you will murder another. These are extreme things but we get awful temptations. "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." You may say you never anticipated that the preacher knew these things. He does. By awful temptations we are molested and it is true in the Hymn, "Thy soul, full of woe, shall pass as through hell." Some say that is extreme language, it is far-fetched. It is true, but out of these depths you will cry and the Lord will deliver you, and you will know what it is to rest your weary head on the bosom divine. The Captain of your salvation is there. You will know what it is to rejoice in this; "Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob," and He will command deliverances for you. I believe if you

know of great depths you will find hardly any understand you and your poor afflicted, tormented, battered soul, but He will deliver you. Once the Sun of Righteousness arises the day dawns. "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning." The morning will come and it will be a blissful morning, the bright sunshine of His love, the tender compassion of your God. You are brought safely, triumphantly through and you can sing,

"Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in Heaven."