

Thursday, May 14, 2020

Turn off the outside "noise" for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God's Word.
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

PSALM 130 (NIV)

A SONG OF ASCENTS.

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;
² Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.

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

⁴ But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

⁵ I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

⁶ I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

⁷ 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.

— PART 1 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*

How low are you right now? How discouraged are you because of your prospects for work, or your finances, or your health concerns? The Psalmist? He is about as low as you can get. He's in "**the depths**!"

Can you identify? One reporter wrote recently that "Mental health experts are predicting **more unrest and depression** as people try to cope with COVID-19 and the fallout from the global pandemic. The predictions are troubling as the state's mental health experts say we have passed the honeymoon stage of positive feelings and are heading into several months of disillusionment."

<https://komonews.com/news/coronavirus/mental-health-experts-warn-of-covid-19-emotional-distress>

(I'm sorry. I don't remember going through any "**honeymoon stage of positive feelings**," do you?)

The article cited a researcher who opined that “in the case of like a **traumatic disaster response, when people are aggressive and angry, almost always that anger and aggression is an expression of an underlying sense of fear about something,**” said Dr. Kira Mauseth, a professor at Seattle University. “It could be a **fear of things not returning to normal** or it could be a **fear of losing control.**”

<https://komoneews.com/news/coronavirus/mental-health-experts-warn-of-covid-19-emotional-distress>

That makes a lot of sense. We are indeed collectively going through “a traumatic disaster” . . . and it is one in which it would be natural to experience some “fear of things not returning to normal or...a fear of losing control.”

We feel precious little “control” at the moment. *How long is Los Angeles County’s stay-at-home order going to stay in effect? How do I keep my family healthy? How long do I have to wear a mask? When can I go eat at my favorite restaurant again?*

Several of you who came to our FAMILY FIELD TRIP after watching Sunday’s service online with your family expressed the hope that we could soon be able to gather together again for worship and fellowship. *I share that hope!* But the best counsel we can gather at the moment continues to tell us, “not yet.” And not for some time.

So what can we learn from the Psalmist who is in “the depths”? We know where he *is*. One of the best things we can learn is to notice **what direction he is looking!**

¹ **Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;**

² **Lord, hear my voice.**

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

That is one thing we can learn when we find ourselves in the depths . . . that “**self-help is no answer to the depths of distress**” (DEREK KIDNER). We need help **outside** of ourselves. And so we, like the Psalmist, cry to **the Lord**. We ask **him**, “hear my voice!” We ask **him**, “Let **your** ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.”

Ross suggests that “The use of ‘your ears’ is a bold figure (anthropomorphism) to make the appeal more vivid: **it is as if he wants the LORD to lean over to hear better!**”

ALLEN P. ROSS, *A Commentary on the Psalms, 90-150* [Kregel Exegetical Library]

Fortunately for him, and for us, **listening** is one of the things that God does best.

EXODUS 3:7-8 (NIV)

⁷ The Lord said, “I have indeed **seen** the misery of my people in Egypt.

I have **heard** them crying out because of their slave drivers,
and I am **concerned** about their suffering.

⁸ So I have **come down to rescue them...**”

::

Abba, we are desperate that you hear our cry for help! Thank you for being THE GOD WHO SEES, AND LISTENS! Thank you for being concerned about our suffering! Thank you for being the “FATHER OF MERCIES”! Thank you for being OUR RESCUER!

Pastor Doug