

Tuesday, May 19, 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 6 —

*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.*

PSALM 130 (NIV)

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.

We’ve been talking about how difficult it can be to “wait” on the Lord. Today, let’s listen to Old Testament scholar John Goldingay...who tells us that waiting involves **both** “quiet relaxation” and “urgent expectancy”:

“Psalms 130 and 131 use the verbs “expect” and “wait” five times, and near the end both issue exhortations to “wait for Yahweh.” ...The words “expect” and “wait”

need an object — we **expect something** or **wait for someone**. So Christians are not merely people who are **hopeful**. They are people who are **expecting** Christ to come and **waiting** for Christ to come. The psalms thus talk about being **expectant** for Yahweh or for Yahweh's word and about **waiting** for Yahweh.

The word "wait," too, can have a misleading implication. **Waiting may suggest an attitude of patience, of calm mellowness. In the Old Testament, WAITING IS IMPATIENT. It implies urgency. Yet Psalm 131 also implies that there is a PATIENT side to such waiting. All being well, a baby nursing on its mother is content and settled; it knows it has nothing to worry about.** Israelites can be in a similar position. They don't have to have big ideas about their importance. They don't have to feel that they are responsible for their destiny or for the world's destiny. It isn't their job to convert the world; that is God's job. **THEY CAN RELAX.** Yet at the same time they can and must wait expectantly for God to do his job.

The combination of QUIET RELAXATION and URGENT EXPECTANCY is more demanding and more important and more tricky when you pray "from the depths." The psalms regularly pray from the depths, but Psalm 130 nuances the nature of these depths. "The depths" suggests a place where you are overwhelmed by suffering and oppression — not merely emotionally but physically and materially (Psalm 69 twice uses the word in connection with being overwhelmed by enemies). **You are not waving but drowning.** Psalm 130 presupposes such depths. Its distinctiveness lies in the way **it associates that experience with our WAYWARDNESS.** Often the fact that you are drowning is not your fault; in this psalm it is your fault. **In some circumstances you can't say to God, "You must rescue me — I don't deserve this experience."** All you can do is appeal to God's grace and mercy, to God's capacity for pardon.

...You cannot be sure you will find it. The king or president has to balance the importance of mercy with the importance of preserving standards and doing so in a way that draws attention to their importance. So you wait hopefully but take nothing for granted. Will the word of pardon issue from the king's mouth? **You wait with more urgency** than a city's guards who are watching for the dawn, and thus for the assurance that the city is not in danger of some secret attack and/or for the moment when they can go home and sleep, or **you wait with more anticipation** than the temple staff watching for the dawn and thus for the moment when morning prayers are to be made and sacrifices are to be offered.

A neat aspect of the analogy is that **THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE DAWN WILL COME, hard though it sometimes is to believe.** In one sense you cannot take for granted that **YAHWEH** will grant you pardon. ...**You know that YAHWEH is big in commitment ["unfailing love"] and big in redemption ["full redemption"]. You know that you ought to pay for your wayward acts, but that actually YAHWEH will do so. YAHWEH will pay the price of your not being stuck in the depths forever.**

JOHN GOLDINGAY, *Psalms 73-150 for Everyone.*

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Again today we pray with the Psalmist:

PSALM 130:7 (NLT)

Gracious Father, "**we put our hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love.**"

Pastor Doug