

PSALM 130

MY SOUL WAITS FOR THE LORD

Psalm 130 is one of the favorites of God's people. Many of you have memorized this psalm, or at the very least, bookmarked it in your Bibles. In the first half of the psalm, the writer expresses something that we have all felt before: we just can't come to grips with the sinfulness of the world and the sin that dwells within us. Scouring the internet won't help to fix us; self-help books aren't going to do the trick, either. All that the sin-sick soul can do is to cry out from the muck and mire of sin: "Lord, forgive me, renew me and restore me!" Then, in faith, we sit back and confidently wait for the Lord to give us the help he has promised.

OVERVIEW

Psalm 130 is the 11th "song of ascents" (Psalms 120–134). Known as *De Profundis*, from the opening words of the Latin translation ("Out of the depths..")

OUTLINE

(v.1–4) Fear – the product of the sinful nature
(v. 5–8) Hope - the real life of the Christian

A PENITENTIAL PSALM

Psalm 130 has been numbered as one of the seven penitential psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143). These psalms remind us of our utter sinfulness before God and our desperate need for his forgiveness. Christian liturgies, hymns, and prayers have incorporated thoughts and words from these psalms for generations. Martin Luther's hymn, *From Depths of Woe I Cry to You* (CW #305) is based on Psalm 130.

QUOTE

St. Augustine: Just as Jonah cried to God from the depths of the ocean in the whale's belly, so also we cry to God from the depths of our sin, confident that our prayer, like Jonah's, will reach the ears of God.
(The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. VIII: 613)

FROM DEPTHS OF WOE I CRY TO YOU

1. From depths of woe I cry to you;
Lord hear me, I implore you.
Bend down your gracious ear to me;
My prayer let come before you.
If you kept record of my sin,
And held against me what I've been,
How could I stand before you?
4. My soul is waiting for the Lord;
As one who longs for morning.
No watcher waits with greater hope,
Than I for his returning.
I hope as Israel in the Lord,
He sends redemption through his Word,
We praise him for his mercy.

Psalm 130

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,
therefore you are feared.

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.

1. Vs. 1 - The Hebrew word for “depths” occurs four other times in the Old Testament, each time in a context where there is imminent danger from water (Psalm 69:2, 14; Isaiah 51:10; Ezekiel 27:34). The psalmist doesn’t seem to be talking about water here. So, from what ‘depths’ is the psalmist crying out?

2. Vs 2 – What exactly is our cry for mercy?

3. Vs 2 – “Lord, hear my voice!” A/D: We can demand that God do things for us.

4. Vs 3 – A/D: God doesn’t really keep a record of sins (cf. Micah 7:19; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Revelation 20:11-12)

A. Yes and No. Good Friday and Easter remind us that Jesus has perfectly paid for the sins of the whole world. Our heavenly Father, for Jesus’ sake, has taken our sins and cast them in the depths of the ocean. Those sins are gone forever. We accept these, and other promises God makes to us, by faith. We trust that our forgiveness and salvation is found in Christ alone. In Jesus, our sins *are not* counted against us.

The Revelation passage reminds us, however, that for those who reject Christ, their sins *are* counted against them. On the Last Day the books (record) are opened and the dead are judged by what they have done. Those who reject Christ’s perfect record and sacrifice will have to “pay” for their sins in the eternal torments of hell.

5. Why is that little word ‘therefore’ in vs. 4 so significant?

6. What does it mean to ‘fear’ God?

7. What does it mean to wait for the Lord?

8. How are Christian people like watchmen?

9. What does it mean to put your hope in God’s Word?

10. Why do you think that God calls it His *unfailing* love and *full* redemption?

Martin Luther on “Waiting for the Lord” (5,6):

“Now there are some who want to set the goal, appoint the hour and measure, and prescribe to God how they are to be helped. And if they do not experience this, they despair; or, if possible, they seek help elsewhere. These do not tarry and wait for the Lord. God is supposed to wait for them, be ready at once, and help exactly as they themselves have designed. Those who wait for the Lord, however, ask for mercy, but they leave it to God’s gracious will when, how, where, and by what means He helps them. They have no doubt about His aid, but they do not give it a name. They let God christen and name it, even if it is delayed immeasurably long,” (AE 14:192).

Luther on Hope:

“For God deals strangely with His children. He blesses them with contradictory and disharmonious things, for hope and despair are opposites. Yet His children must hope in despair; for fear is nothing else than the beginning of despair, and hope is the beginning of recovery. And these two things, direct opposites by nature, must be in us, because in us two natures are opposed to each other, the old man and the new man. The old man must fear, despair, and perish; the new man must hope, be raised up and stand. Both of these are in one person and even in one handiwork at the same time,” (LW 14:191).