

Psalm 130 • My soul waits for the Lord

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Psalm 130. How about Psalm chapter 130? How about that? We sang this tonight: My soul waits for the Lord. The author is unknown. The theme is essentially the confession of sin; it is also the assurance of forgiveness. Notice how the psalmist begins and says,

¹ Out of the depths (which is a way of saying, out of my severe distress, out of the greatest difficulty that you can imagine. He says,) *I cry to you, O Lord!* (And so his prayer is)

² O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!” (ESV)

Notice he's asking for mercy. And remember that the word mercy means to not get what I do deserve. So when someone is asking God for mercy, they are essentially admitting their guilt. They're saying, I am guilty, but I'm asking you not to give me what I deserve.

And so as he's crying out to the Lord, he says, Lord, hear me. Let your voice—let my voice, rather, come before You, and may You hear my cry for mercy.

And then, here's something we actually sang tonight in worship: *“³ If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities* (or in other words, if you kept a record of our sins, that's what that's saying. And the question is), *O Lord, who could stand?”*

Lord, if you kept a record of everything we ever did. But the fact of the matter is, when we come before the Lord and we pray and we ask for forgiveness. One of the most incredible truths of God's Word is that the Bible says He remembers our sins no more. (Jeremiah 31:34) Isn't that amazing?

And I've personally given Him a lot to forget, because I've had to come to Him a lot, and I've had to pray a lot for forgiveness. And in Jeremiah, we're told that part of the new covenant is that He will remember their sins no more. What a beautiful picture that is—not of forgetfulness, but of mercy.

And it's not like God forgets in the sense that, oh, I can't remember what you did yesterday. It's that He chooses to put those things behind Him, and it's such

a beautiful picture. Lord, if you kept a record, if you marked our iniquities, or our transgressions, your Bible may say, “...*who could stand in your presence?*”

He says in verse 4, and I want you to hear this statement of faith. He says, “*But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.*”

Now, there are two things that we want to make note of here. The first is the first section of that verse, where He says, “*But with you there is forgiveness...*” Don't ever forget that and keep that always handy because the enemy wants to come along and convince you and I that somehow, somehow, what we've done is beyond God's forgiveness, and the enemy loves to do that.

What he does is accuses God to you, and he basically tells you that God is probably not willing to forgive you for whatever you've done because it was so bad, and we believe it for whatever reason. We struggle sometimes believing that we're forgiven. We do.

And yet God says in His Word, He promises us if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just and will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9) There it is, in black and white. And yet, I'm not really sure, pastor, that I'm forgiven. I'm just not sure. Why are you not sure?

God's Word says that He will forgive you if you confess your sins and cry out to Him. He will forgive, you know? I love what this psalm says: “*But with you there is forgiveness....*” Boy, that's one of those things, that's one of those checks you need to write out. I know I'm using weird language here, but I'm thinking of something Corrie Ten Boom used to do.

Some of you know who Corrie Ten Boom is; some of you don't. It's okay; I won't get into it tonight, but Corrie Ten Boom used to use God's Word like a check. She said the enemy would come to me and tell me that I'm a debtor, and he'll remind me of my sin, or he'll tell me I don't have the strength, or he'll tell me something to take away my peace or anything of the lies that the enemy will perpetuate in our hearts.

She says that when he does that, he makes me feel like I'm a debtor and that I can't possibly get out of my situation. So she says, I go to the Word of God, and I write out the promises of God as if they were a check. And I say, see, there it is. He paid it in full. There's the promise. There's His Word. (Colossians 2:13-14) I'm standing on it. Get out of my face.

And so it's one of those things that is just a beautiful reminder for you and I when the enemy is hounding us about some sin that just can't seem to go away. You go ahead and just write from this Psalm, “*But with God there is*

forgiveness,...” And then put 1 John 1:9 right below that, and then write it out and just say, there it is, done, paid. Get out of here. This is done. He did it.

That's the first thing about that verse that I want you to take note of, but I also want you to take note of the fact that it says His forgiveness is that He may be feared. Did you catch that in verse 4? “*But with you, there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.*” And you look at that and go, huh? I'm struggling sometimes to figure out what's the connection between forgiveness and the fear of the Lord. I mean, with you, there's forgiveness that you may be feared.

But when you stop and think about it, when there is real, true forgiveness going on—which there always is from God—but when it's properly understood and when it's properly received, which means in line with the promises of God and taken by faith, it always leads to a deep reverence for God. Rather than a casual sort of attitude like, hey, that was easy. No, it's not like that. When there is a genuineness to the forgiveness and a response of our heart to say, Lord, I receive your forgiveness. I believe.

Have you ever prayed for forgiveness and then said to the Lord in your prayer, in that same prayer, thank you, I accept it? Have you ever done that? Do you know how often we pray for forgiveness, but we never actually thank Him for it? Or we never actually even express that we have received it in any way?

And what happens is we end up praying for forgiveness, and then, about an hour later, we pray again for forgiveness. Then, about a day later, we're reminded of it, and so we pray again for forgiveness. And the Lord's like, I heard you the first time. Did you receive it the first time? Because again, the promise is, if you confess your sins, He's faithful; He's just. He will forgive, right? And cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

But we end up saying it over and over again. But that's not because He didn't come through; it's because I wasn't there on the receiving end of the whole equation, saying, Lord, I accept. I accept your forgiveness. I receive that cleansing. And if you have to even visualize something being cleansed or a board being cleared of whatever writing was on it, or whatever you need to do to just really truly understand in your heart that it's done, it's over. And as it says in Jeremiah: He remembers our sins no more. Very important.

Getting back to Corrie Ten Boom, she used to say—actually, her father used to say to her—that when God forgives us our sins, He throws them in the sea of forgetfulness and puts up a *No Fishing* sign. I always thought that was cute, but that was her reminder to not go back. You prayed; you asked the Lord to forgive

you. Now receive His forgiveness, right? And then what comes is this deep, abiding reverence for the Lord.

Verse 5—here's where you're going to hear the song that we sang tonight going through your mind again: *"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;"*

And we've dealt with this whole issue of waiting for the Lord—waiting on the Lord, however you want to say it—before here in our study of the Psalms, because it's a recurring theme. But it's a very important recurring theme because it's not an easy one to deal with.

But the psalmist reveals what he's waiting for in this verse. He says he's waiting for the Lord to fulfill His promise. He says, I wait for the Lord, and in His word I hope. What he's saying there is that I believe that God has made a promise related to these things, and I'm waiting on the fulfillment of this, which in his case is the restoration of God's blessing after his confession of sin. Because the psalmist is waiting on the Lord to restore them—to restore Israel, to restore him, perhaps even personally.

But waiting on the Lord—waiting on God's promises—is an interesting sort of dynamic, isn't it? Because to wait on God's promises is to recognize that His promises are worth waiting for. And I'm not trying to be funny when I say that. I'm saying that when we say, Lord, I'm waiting on You. I'm waiting on Your promises, we're telling the Lord, I believe Your promises are worth waiting for and that You are, will be faithful to fulfill them. You see.

It's a statement about God's character. So it's not just faith in a promise; it's faith in the one who made the promise. I've said to you guys many times, I can make promises all day long, but I'm not in total control, so I can't always keep them. God is sovereign, and there is no one above Him. Therefore, when He makes a promise, there's no one to thwart that promise, right? So you and I are able to say, Lord, I wait. I will wait for you to fulfill your promise, because I know the one who made the promise is good for it. Right?

And then his waiting is spoken of metaphorically in verse 6, where he says, *"my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning."*

Back in biblical days, before they had satellites to spy on their enemies electronically, they would put sentries on the city wall, and the sentries would keep a lookout for the safety of the city or the people that lived within it. They were there always there to watch for the possibility of an approaching enemy, and that's what sentries did when they were in their position.

You can imagine, probably, how challenging it would be to be one of those sentries who had a night watch. You're there all night long; it would probably be difficult not to fall asleep. You can also imagine how eager they would be for daylight to arrive. The psalmist is thinking about that, and he's likening his own waiting on the Lord in the way that a sentry or a watchman would wait for daybreak to arrive. He's speaking of the eagerness to see the Lord's promises played out, so he cries out for all of Israel to join him in his hope.

In verses 7 and 8, he says, "*O Israel, hope in the LORD* (In other words, put your hope in the Lord)! *For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful* (or abundant) *redemption.*" In other words, His resources are not going to run dry in that area.

And then verse 8, he says, "*And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*" And you can hear the confidence, can't you? In the voice of the psalmist expressed in these verses. Great verses to memorize, by the way, especially if your own confidence is being challenged. I strongly encourage that when you find an area of your life where you're being challenged.

And if yours is confidence in the Lord and His promises, then find verses that relate to that and memorize them. Pull them out when the thoughts of doubt and concerns rise up in your heart and speak them. Speak that word. It's the sword of the Spirit, and we need to learn how to use it. It's used in our spiritual warfare because the enemy wants to come along and steal your blessing, steal your peace, steal your joy, steal your hope. But our hope is in the Lord.

And if this, I mean, again, this Psalm is all about God's faithfulness to forgive. Really, it's the whole theme. He will be faithful. Our God is full of forgiveness. His steadfast love, His redemption is plentiful. Over and over, he makes these statements. And these are great things to memorize.

I talk to people from time to time who are really struggling with believing that they're forgiven. What you have to do in those kinds of situations is address it specifically with the Word of God. You need to camp on that word, you need to meditate on that word, and memorize it. Just let it circulate in your heart and do a work.

God's Word is living and active, and we need to put it in and let it do what it's going to naturally and supernaturally do in our lives. God's Word is not like some cute meme that you see on Facebook that made you feel good for a moment. God's Word is alive. It is living, and it is active so take it in, put it in, and let it do its work.