

File: Psalm 130

When it comes to public speaking the “experts” say you don’t have very long at the front end to capture people’s attention. That’s why so often whether it’s a sermon, TED talk or presentation of some kind speakers start with a story, joke or personal anecdote. It’s sort of like taking off in an airplane, that’s the beginning, then you do the flight plan and land.

I searched far and wide for a story, joke or personal anecdote the take off and couldn’t find one so let’s just say this is the quick take off and let’s get right to Psalm 130 which speaks about the real depth of human experience and a movement towards hope. I want to ask you to open the pew Bible to page 500 and follow along. I can wait

Verse 1: **“Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord”**. The author is feeling overwhelmed by something in life that causes him to feel like he’s in “the depths”. We don’t know exactly why and really---it’s not important because and here’s the great connection with this psalm, we all know what it’s like to be in “the depths”.

There are different kind of depths that people experience. There are depths of poverty-nobody wants to be poor. There are depths of sorrow and grief-nobody wants to mourn or grieve because it means you’ve lost someone you love. There are depths of pain either physical or emotional when we wonder if we can go on.

Sometimes the depths are pretty brutal and sometimes it's just being confused about life and wanting to make sense of it all. And being super busy doesn't make it all go away, all that does it make us pretend it doesn't exist. Part of the beauty of the Psalm is that it reminds us that being brave isn't ignoring being in the depths but rather acknowledging it

When we are in the depths it can seem like no one hears or cares, especially God. So we get good at covering up how it's affecting us. We don't want to let anybody into our dark place because it's seen as a sign of weakness, and yet the darkness can be overwhelming. The two recent suicides of the famous designer Kate Spade and famous foodie Anthony Bourdain are reminders of that. They appeared to have everything, and were incredibly good at covering everything up. When we are in the depths of distress, simple self-help techniques are not enough because somethings can't always be fixed they can only be carried and Scripture invites and encourages us to carry them to The Lord.

For some reason we aren't told--the author of the Psalm has been confronted with how their life is falling short of what God wants for them and cries out in verse 2 **"Lord hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication"**. Now there's a churchie word right—Supplication. Supplication is the things we're praying for. Twice in these first two verses he uses the name of The Lord which tells us that even in the depths he acknowledges God. It's as if he

wants to grab the Lord by both shoulders and say “Hey listen to me, why don’t you listen to my praying”.

Please notice he doesn’t say answer my prayers, just listen. A guy by the name of Charles Spurgeon once said “It is better for our prayer to be heard than answered. If the Lord were to make an absolute promise to answer all our requests it might be rather a curse than a blessing”. Or as someone else said “Be careful what you pray for you might get it”.

Here’s why these first two verses are so important: They show us we can go to God even when we’re at our lowest. We don’t have to shy away from praying when it feels like we have nowhere to go. You’ve heard people say about their best friend “Oh I can talk to them about anything” The fact that you can talk to God when things are like this shows us we love and serve a very personal God.

Verses 3-4 **“If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.”**

Another very “bibleish” sounding kind of verse. I mean who uses the word iniquity in their daily conversation. Basically it means he’s acknowledging that if the Lord were keeping score and looked at everything we did with a really sharp and keen eye and punished us as we deserved we are all toast, nobody’s off the

hook, not Billy Graham, Mother Theresa, your Grandma or you and me. But here's the caveat:

Maybe even the Good News of the entire Bible in one passage God doesn't turn a blind eye to what we do and don't do, the Lord recognizes how we miss the mark and fall short and still as it says in verse 4: **"But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered."** When we are hit hard with how far we fall short of God's expectations it's hard to believe there's forgiveness BUT IT'S TRUE!

That's why we worship. You may not find forgiveness with other people. Your husband or wife may not forgive you, your children or coworkers may not forgive you, you may not even be able to forgive yourself But there is one who will. Our God is a forgiving God. And do you want to know what the greatest news of all is? When God speaks that forgiveness it can't be unspoken or revoked. Fear and doubt may question it, when in the depths it may cause us to not feel it--- but they can't revoke it. How blessed we are to get to be able to worship this God.

One of the great purposes of God's forgiveness is to build a sense of gratitude in us. It really is meant to lead us to a new desire to please God in our attitude and actions.

Can you feel it? Here's this person in this really deep dark pit crying to God out of the depths of life's experiences and the focus now is put **not on them** but on God. It started with them acknowledging they were in the depths but it moves from that from self-pity to focusing on God. Pretty important for us to remember to do because it's easy to get stuck.

VERSES 5-6 **"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, yes, more than those who watch for the morning."**

Twice the author says **"my soul waits"** even more than the watchman who watches for the morning. In ancient times the watchman would be up all night and at sign of first light the watchman would wake the others. The watchman doesn't doubt that morning will come, but only wonders when and watches for it.

If you've ever had a sleepless night you know what it's like to be a watchman. You know how long the nights can seem. It seems like the morning will never come. A few weeks ago I had one of those nights, up at 3 AM had a hard time going back to sleep, it just seemed like time passed more slowly in the middle of the night than during the day. The mind wanders, it can go to places you don't want it to go. Often a place that feels like the depths.

And yet he's willing to let his soul wait as long as it takes. That takes an awful lot of trust to wait that long. And how does he and how do we know God is trustworthy and worth waiting for, even during what could be called "a long night of the soul"? Because God's been faithful in the past! We find the strength to wait and rest in The Lord when we come to the end of our own wisdom and strength and resources. Waiting on the Lord, what a blessed place to be to trust God that much. The verse said "...and in His word I do hope."

**Verses 7-8 "O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities."**

With these last two verses what the author learned in his personal life he can now apply to others in this case the Israelites. He can be an encourager, reminding not just himself but others of the things he'd said early about trusting the Lord and with The Lord there is forgiveness.

Remember at the beginning how mentioned it was gonna be a quick take off, we'll it's gonna be a quick landing to and maybe a little bumpy. So here goes--- Here's the deal with this psalm and really all of Scripture, it helps us make sense of life. It acknowledges that all of us at times find ourselves in "The Depths"

whatever that may be. The depths may be our circumstances or it may be what's keeps bouncing around in our minds.

Overscheduling our lives, or thinking we can Instagram or Facebook our way out of the depths doesn't work. What works is being honest about the depths, and turning to God, not getting stuck on ourselves. Often when we're in the depths the best thing we can do is serve somebody else, focus on God, and wait on The Lord and remember and always remember that With God there is forgiveness. God bless you, I hope you're not in the depths today but you will someday and when you find yourself there turn to psalm 130 and let the Lord help you make some sense of it. In Jesus name, Amen!