

**TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP****JOIN A SERVE TEAM****NEW HERE?****CONNECTION CARD****STAY UP TO DATE****SUBSCRIBE TO DIGITAL BULLETIN****Series: How Long? Waiting on God with Honesty and Hope****Title: From the Depths to the Dawn****Text: Psalm 130**

Waiting is difficult and normal in life, especially in the life of faith. Throughout this series, we're examining how waiting is a biblical command and the posture of the people of God. Last week, Psalm 13 provided us with lament language for praying in honest pain that leads to trust. Psalm 13 is situational and circumstantial, and a lament should not be our contrast prayer.

Today, we look at Psalm 130, which gives us language for anchored hope for the journey of life. Waiting and hoping are two actions held in tension in the life of faith.

**The Psalms of Ascent**

- Psalms 120-134 all begin with the phrase "A Song of Ascents." While the exact meaning of this phrase is debated, it is likely that these psalms were sung, possibly in order, by the Israelite pilgrims on their journey to worship God at the Temple in Jerusalem. Situated on a hilltop, Jerusalem was the destination, and these psalms were the songs they sang along the way.
- The journey was not just literal. The trip to Jerusalem metaphorically reflected a life focused on pursuing God as one progresses through levels of spiritual growth.
- These Psalms were the songs for life's journey. They reminded the Israelites of the Lord's salvation, their own need for God's ongoing help, their longing for the destination, the importance of supporting each other on the way, and their continued faithful response amid life's challenges.

**A Cry from the Depths (Ps 130:1-2)**

- Psalm 130 begins in the *depths*, a word often associated with water or the sea, which is used figuratively to refer to chaos. The psalmist finds himself in dire straits, although the particular nature of his distress is not specified.
- The depths feel like a place where you're drowning. Perhaps you feel the depths of grief, anxiety, guilt, uncertainty, or spiritual dryness.
- In this dire situation, the psalmist cries out to the Lord, begging the Lord to open his ears to hear and respond to the prayer from the depths.

**The Problem Beneath the Problem (Ps 130:3-4)**

- The psalm begins in the depths of a specific, unspecified situation, but then it delves deeper to address the depths of sin.
- We all experience sin as a result of participating in fallen humanity. We know our own record of sins, the many things throughout our lives that we have done to break God's laws in our attempt to take what we believe is beneficial for us.

- Notice the contrast in verse 4, *“but you [Lord] offer forgiveness.”* The psalmist trusts in God’s character to forgive his sins. God is merciful to forgive and restore people to a relationship with him.
- Paul writes in Colossians 2:13-14, *“You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.”* The words of the psalm are fulfilled in Jesus’ death to forgive and cancel the record of sin.
- The result of God’s forgiving character is that we might learn to fear the Lord.

### **Waiting and Hoping (Ps 130:5-6)**

- The psalmist moves from the depths, to the character of the Lord, and now to the expectant posture of the life of faith: waiting and hoping.
- In verse 5, the psalmist is *“counting on”* (NLT) or *“waiting”* (NIV). The Hebrew word here is *qavah*, meaning to wait with expectation, to look eagerly, to hold the tension between two points. Like a rope, or measuring tape, pulled between two points: the present reality and future promise. Waiting is the tension between “what is” and “what God said will be.” With everything in his being, the psalmist waits.
- The object of the waiting is not the resolution of the situation of the depths (v. 1), or the forgiveness of sin (v.3). Instead, the Lord is the object of the psalmist’s waiting.
- The parallel line of verse 5 says the same thing as the first line, but with different words: *“I have put my hope in his word.”* The word hope is the Hebrew word *yachal*, meaning to wait with confident expectation or to trust that something will happen.
- The object of the psalmist’s hope is the Lord’s word, the spoken word of God. The hope is not in feelings or circumstances, but in the word of the Lord that promises salvation and presence.
- The psalmist provides a simile about what it means to wait and hope in the tension of life. The psalm waits for the Lord as a watchman waits for the morning. In the midst of the darkness of night, the watchman knows the morning is certain. However, waiting in the darkness is the tension between what is and what will be. The watchman waits and hopes for the dawn to break as it does every morning.
- Waiting and hoping are not separate. Waiting stretches you. Hope anchors you.

### **Communal Hope (Ps. 7-8)**

- The psalmist concludes that his personal hope is an example and a call for the community of Israel to hope in the Lord. Biblical hope is meant to be shared in community.
- The character of the Lord is loyal, covenantal love, and his redemption overflows. The Lord will redeem Israel. That’s the hope of what will be, even if we may not see or feel it right now.

### **How Do We Wait and Hope?**

1. We cry out honestly.
2. We remember God’s forgiveness of your sins through Jesus.
3. We wait with the expectation that God will bring full redemption.
4. We anchor our hope in God’s word, the Bible.
5. We hold the waiting and hoping in tension, like waiting for dawn.

This week, anchor your hope in God’s word by reading the Psalms of Ascent, Psalm 120-134. Read two psalms a day, or read all 15 psalms each day. Anchor your hope in the life of faith in these songs for the way.