

Summer Psalms
A SURE HOPE
Friday, August 1
Reading: Psalm 129-130

Psalm 130:3 *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.*

A man approached a little league baseball game one afternoon. He asked a boy in the dugout what the score was. The boy responded, “Eighteen to nothing—we’re behind.” The spectator said, “I’ll bet you’re discouraged.” “Why should I be discouraged?” replied the little boy. “We haven’t even gotten up to bat yet!”¹

Now that is hope! Psalm 129-130 are all about hope. As the pilgrims travelled to Jerusalem, they prepared their hearts to worship and celebrate God. You can almost hear them singing these psalms to remind themselves of God’s deliverances in the past and confessing their failures and sins in the present - all with the wonderful hope that God is merciful and would deliver and forgive again.

The psalmist speaks for the nation in Psalm 129. From the time Israel was a young nation freed from Egyptian slavery they had been oppressed many times. As a plowman breaks up the soil, so their enemies had caused deep wounds. But Israel’s confident cry is “they have not gained the victory over me.” Each time the Lord had delivered them and Israel’s prayer was that God would continue to make the plans of their enemies futile. It was a hope in God’s righteousness to continual free them from oppression – an appropriate prayer for pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem.

Psalm 130 gets more personal. In the depths of despair over his sin, the psalmist cries out for God’s mercy, for this is his only hope. No one could stand before God if He were to treat our sins as they deserve. “But with You there is forgiveness...” (130:4). We have a sure hope!

The Hebrew words for “wait” and “hope” are closely connected. They mean to look for something with eager anticipation. They mingle patience and confidence, assurance and longing. The psalmist’s confidence in God’s forgiveness comes from God’s Word. The promises of God are sure. Therefore the psalmist can say “Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with Him is full redemption” (128:7).

The New Testament talks a lot about our sure hope in Christ. It is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit because of Christ’s death on our behalf (Romans 5:5-6). Jesus has secured “this hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast” (Hebrews 6:19). It is a living hope (1 Peter 1:3). We can rest our hope on the grace that will be revealed when Jesus returns (1 Peter 1:13). As the old hymn says:

My hope is built on nothing less / Than Jesus blood, my righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame / But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

¹ <https://bible.org/illustration/little-league>