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Rose Hill Church
Sermon on Psalm 130
8.25.24

This summer we have been going through the Psalms. Each Sunday we explore and study a different Psalm. Today, we will take a deep dive into Psalm 130. This is by no means the shortest Psalm, but it leans toward that end of the scale.

Let's look at a basic outline for what we will be studying this morning:

Outline:

Cry from the Depths 1-2

Confession of Forgiveness 3-4

Waiting for the Lord 5-6

Call for Hope to the Greater Body of Believers 7-8

Please follow along as I read 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,
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.**

**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.**

Let us pray:

As the renowned early 18th century English Presbyterian preacher, writer and teacher Matthew Henry has said, Psalm 130 is one of the seven “penitential Psalms” in the Book of Psalms. Throughout church history these particular Psalms have often been recognized as very useful and important in assisting people in bearing their soul to God and coming to repentance. It is said that John Wesley, one of the great people of faith in the British development of Methodism in the 1700’s, upon hearing the singing of Psalm 130 in a vespers service at London’s St. Paul’s Cathedral, gave his life to Jesus Christ and was forever changed.

In addition to Psalm 130 being a “Penitential Psalm”, it is also one of the Hebrew Bible’s 15 “Songs of Ascent”. Historical understanding of these particular Psalms is that they were used by the Jewish pilgrims coming to Jerusalem for the three primary Hebrew festivals; the Passover, The Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths. In ancient Israel and Judah all males were required to pilgrimage to Jerusalem for each of these three festivals, which were

spread out across the Jewish calendar year. Jerusalem proper, where the Temple itself was situated, sat on a high hill, and so as pilgrims ascended the road to the city, they would sing through the Songs of Ascent, including this one. The Jewish priests, while climbing the steps of the Jerusalem Temple, would also sing these particular Psalms during religious services.

What is most marvelous for me to think about is Jesus most assuredly would have sung these very Songs of Ascent upon His journeys up and into Jerusalem during His time here on earth.

When we survey the entirety of Psalm 130 here, we see that God is showing us that with His help, guidance, and leading, and even and especially when we are in a very dark place, and having tremendous difficulty in our life, we can have hope.

What we see in the first verse here are the deep and anguished cries of the Psalmist. A lostness, perhaps a loneliness? A heartbreak? Certainly a desperation. But not only that. For almost right away, in verse two, the writer is calling to Someone...not just anyone. He is

directing his desperation to God Himself and is persistent in doing so.

“Hear my voice. Hear my cry.”

As the Psalmist goes on, in verses 3 and 4, it seems he is reminding himself of the fact that, on the one hand, no sinful human can be in God’s presence; asking rhetorically, “Who could stand?”

Yes, this is rhetorical. He is not asking for an answer here, he is making a statement that our God does not in fact keep track of each sin, but instead there is this forgiveness! And oh how amazing that is!

You see, from the time of earliest history, once humans rebelled against God, we have been in this downward spiral, this “place of the depths”.

And it is a most dreadful place to be! But it is where we must start, with this realization of our helpless predicament. And it is that predicament which causes an unbearable weight of hopelessness and despair. Folks, I have been blessed to travel the world, to live or visit 6 of the 7 major continents. And I have run into countless people, as divergent as you can imagine. It turns out it does not matter whether we go to Asia, the Middle East, up and down the continent of Africa...no matter. Every single person I have ever met is in the same hopeless and helpless and

darkened place as their neighbor, until they put their trust in the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Period. Every single place I have been I have seen people worship something. It is inconceivable that one will not worship something; whether God Almighty, money, power, sex, or even the devil directly or indirectly. Only One God has the ability to release one from that depth of darkness. Then, only by God's grace, we can come to a place of realizing that our God is a God Who cares! **And this realization is different for each one of us; rarely is it a one off; No, coming to Jesus Christ is the beginning of a new life, but only a beginning; and it should and it must lead to a place where we grow in our understanding of the price paid for our salvation, our acceptance of this work, and our subsequent rescue; And that in Jesus Christ, and only in and through His blood, do we find true forgiveness, love, acceptance, a washing; an ability to come near to Him Who was once far off, as the Scriptures say; "But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 2:13).**

And as we move on, in verses 5-6 we see a profound instruction that is oft repeated in both the ancient Hebrew Scriptures and in our New Testament; five times the word WAIT is used in these two verses. Wait, look for, hope eagerly; this is a very active kind of looking and seeking that the Psalmist is using. But this instruction to wait is not simply found a few times here. No, the Bible is filled with the encouragement to wait on God, on His timing, His will, His way. **I can find at least two dozen similar admonitions to wait on the Lord (Isaiah 40:31, Psalm 31:24, Jeremiah 14:22, Philippians 4:6-7, Romans 5:4, to name just a few).** It is as if the Psalmist, who likens this waiting to a watchman waiting for the morning, perhaps sees the morning light way off on the horizon, just a blink at first. Just an inkling that hope is out there somewhere! This idea of the movement of the sun, rising in the east being likened to the dawning of hope in our lives...what a marvelous hope indeed!

So, as the Psalmist tells you and me that he is waiting for the Lord, he is living out what I believe the Lord desires from each of us; to wait, wait, hope, wait, wait, and wait; so let us also do

likewise. And I do not believe these are simply suggestions really. No, these are powerful and clear, and I believe foundational to our faith. Folks, this is not a passive kind of thing. It means to turn toward God with one's whole being. **The Apostle Matthew, quoting Jesus Himself in the Gospel of Matthew, says, "Seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). In other words, make Him the priority...like the Psalmist says...have your whole being wait for Him, be drawn to Him.**

Folks, all of life, everything in the entire universe and beyond; in all of earth's history and human history, everything discussed in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, all point toward the Person, the Work, the salvation of one Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, when Psalm 130 talks about putting one's hope in His Word, and waiting for the morning, he is talking about Jesus Christ, and underscoring and reminding us that to be truly His we must continue to pursue Him, not a thing, but HIM.

As we move on to verse 7, we see the Psalmist turning outward toward others to encourage them (Israel) the Lord's people, to put their hope, their focus, their lives into His hands. **And why? Because of His unfailing love and full redemption. Boom! This is it! This is why everything in the universe points to the God-Man Jesus Christ!** He is it folks! End of story! In fact He is the answer to every question you have, from the Book of Genesis all the way to Maps! (or the Book of Revelation); **Jesus Christ is the very bookends of our lives. Here in verse 7 we have the foundation for all that matters; “With Him is full redemption.” Please say this with me; “With Him is full redemption”.**

As we move on to verse 8, it says, “He Himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.” As Pastor Tyler shared last week, we who believe today are those this is talking about. I am not saying we are Israel. We are not. Israel is Israel. **But we believers in Christ today are those who have been grafted into God's tree, according to Romans 11:17.** We are His people in this time and in this place. In early July I preached on Psalm 22, where, at the end of that Psalm, it says, “He has done it”, or, as Jesus said on the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Here again in

verse 8 we are told about this work of Jesus Christ. “He Himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.” Though written many hundreds of years before Jesus’ birth, we are told of God’s coming redemption of His people, and that is through Jesus Christ Himself!

Folks, this is what I call another Boom Moment! The crescendo! The nadir of human lostness meets the apex of God’s love! And God wins through the Blood of the Covenant of Jesus Christ!

So, this is where the Song of Ascents makes its final home; in the crescendo of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. **The ancient Hebrew word used here, “redeem” in verse 8 is Paw Daw; it means to ransom, to redeem, to deliver from the consequences of sin. You see, God’s plan for humanity has been in place from the start; from the time humanity fell into the depths. God has and is bringing us full circle. And He will have the last word!**

And isn’t that exciting? Or not? Perhaps for some this feels out of control or uncomfortable. For each of us is fallen, each of us sins, each of us is broken in various ways. But, in order to take advantage of all

that the Lord Jesus Christ has for you, and for me, we must circle back and start this Psalm over again...and over and over and over, throughout our life. Yes, mam and sir! If you have lived much time at all on this earth you have felt loss, fear, doubt, pain, and on and on and on. Out of the depths I know I have cried. I have experienced much that is painful. But, folks, **as the Scriptures say, “Weeping happens in the night, but joy comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).** We all experience trials, distresses, losses, and even hopelessness. But God’s Word says, and I believe it, that we can always, in this life, no matter what we have done, how we have failed, who we have wronged, what sin we have committed, whether once or a hundred times; **we can find His arms outstretched, desirous of each of us to come to Him, for a first time or a thousandth time; He is calling you and you and you...for He longs to be gracious to you.**

In closing, let us remember that “Today is the day that the Lord has made” (Psalm 118:24), and so we must “Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near” (Isaiah 55:6).

Let us pray: