

Day 1: Psalm 130:1

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

To appreciate this Psalm a person ought to visualize themselves (on foot) going **up** to the house of the Lord. In addition, imagine that this place (the house of the Lord) is where you will meet God. You have taken this bold (and perhaps dangerous) step because you have a need that is so great no other force in creation can deal with it. You feel as if chaos has surrounded you and left you so lost that you cannot see a way out of your trouble. The seeker is willing to go a great distance to worship and to lay before God their cry for help. The worshipers only ask God for help with those things they cannot do for themselves.

Question: Where is a place that you have met God?

Challenge: You may have to do this where people cannot see you. Take one or two of the Psalms of Assent (120-136) and read them while walking. At the end of you walk pause to pray.

Day 2: Psalm 130:2

Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

There is both humility and boldness in this verse. The worshipers ask for something that they fully believe they will receive - that God will hear them. This is the proper attitude to approach God - with humility and boldness. Christ has given us access to God yet we approach in humility knowing the price paid for that access. The final word (supplications) can be translated "mercy." The nuance to either word is that the worshiper knows that the current distress is traced back to their own sinfulness. The sinfulness can be the act of not paying attention to their relationship to God and thereby not being ready for the distress that came.

Question: What spiritual discipline out of the list helps you with your relationship to God? Bible reading? Prayer? Worship? Service? Spiritual friends? Giving?

Challenge: Write a prayer of confession that can cover your not being attentive to your relationship to God.

Scripture: Psalm 122 and 123

Day 3: Psalm 130:3-4

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

In the long history of the people of Israel the one story that kept their hope alive was the Exodus. God provided a way for the people to come to the Promised Land, even when they had disobeyed God's command to enter it (Numbers 14:1-25). God was gracious and patient with the people then and throughout their history. Israel, in distress, looks back to that event for hope. Verse 3 declares God's essential nature is that of Grace and that nature is what draws people to God. The power and strength of God is seen in God's love. Think of the cross, what looked to be weakness was in fact the most powerful expression of power - the self-giving sacrifice of God in Christ.

Question: What do you think verse 3 means?

Challenge: Make a fearless and searching inventory of your character defects. Ask God to remove them.

Scripture: Psalm 124, 125, 126 and 127

Day 4: Psalm 130:5

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.

To watch and to wait is to live in hope. In the Bible hope is not wishful thinking or happy anticipation. It is the ability to wait for something you know is coming but is not here yet. You wait in the midst of a world that does not believe and because of their unbelief they think you are crazy to wait. They believe that God is not coming or has ever come. In the midst of unbelief our watching proclaims the reality of God in this world. In Luke 1:78 it says the "Dayspring from on high will visit us." We watched for the morning -the dayspring - of the Kingdom of God because we knew it would come. As Jesus came, died, and was raised so too will we rise with Him. We wait for the dawn in the midst of darkness for we know Christ (the new dawn) has been raised, so too will we.

Question: If you left out the concept of eternal life or heaven, what would salvation mean? Why would you hope and what would you hope for?

Challenge: Pick a night and get up very early – early enough to see the dawn and give thanks to God for a new day.

Scripture: Psalm 128 and 129

Day 5: Psalm 130:7

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.

The focus shifts from the individual to the whole country. The experience of receiving from God a hearing and forgiveness compels the worshiper to encourage others to seek help from the Lord. When we experience God's love and forgiveness it compels us to share that experience with others. We become witnesses to the love of God. We share with others and encourage them to be faithful and hopeful.

Question: Can you tell others to have hope and believe if you do not? If the answer is no, then why not or if it is yes, why?

Challenge: Think back on a time when you felt the love of God. Now write what happened and your response.

Scripture: Psalm 131, 132, 133 and 134

Day 6: Psalm 130:8

It is God who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

It is God who redeems us and sets us again on the path that leads to eternal life. The same God who hung in with the people in the wanderings is the one who is with them today. The Psalms tells us that it is wrong thinking to give praise to God for just the nice things that happen to us and to be angry with God for things that happen that are hurtful to us.

Question: What evidence was there for them to believe that God would redeem them?

Challenge: What evidence do you have that God has redeemed you?

Scripture: Psalm 135 and 136