

Psalm 130 "I wait for the Lord"

Read Psalm 130

1. (vs. 1) The psalmist cries out of the depths. *Read Psalm 69:1-3.* How is this description of drowning in the sea a helpful image to express the agony of feeling overwhelmed by our circumstances?

There are no right or wrong answers here but some thoughts to help spark discussion.

Feeling at the mercy of the wind and the waves

Fearful you will be swallowed up

Cry out for help seems to be drowned out by the howl of the wind.

There is no horizon toward which to expend our energy – all our energy is given to simply staying afloat.

Nothing solid to grab a hold of or bottom under our feet.

Panic rises.

2. (vs. 6) There was no punctuation in Hebrew so if you wanted to emphasize something you would repeat it. The repeated phrase is "More than the night watch for the morning". In the sermon Tim gave two images that the psalmist would have been considering as a night watch – the shepherd watching the sheep – the soldier watching the wall. How do each of these images help us to understand what it looks like to wait on the Lord?

The night watch waits with keen attentiveness to the dangers of the night. This is not the waiting of simply passing the time – distracting ourselves with other things until circumstances change this is the waiting that draws all of our attention to one thing.

The night watch waits with the certainty of the dawn – the dawn will come and chase away the dangers of the night.

3. Read Mark 5:21-43. This is an example of having attention drawn to the character of God in our waiting. What is the character of Jesus displayed here? How can being attentive to this character help us to navigate the waiting as we cry out from the depths?

His power over death – if he has power over death does he not have power over this circumstance?

His grace to leave the wealthy powerful moral man waiting while he serves the poor rejected woman – things aren't as they seem – we can't put a simply formula on the help of God – he is operating with a grace and a wisdom that is far beyond our understanding.

The waiting does not mean he doesn't love us or doesn't care.

4. The forgiveness of sins the psalmist hopes in is not just an individual forgiveness but the utter restoration of all things. How can the hope of everything being made new by God help us to navigate the waiting as we cry out from the depths?

This hope changes everything. It changes our experience of waiting. It gives us an eternal perspective in our suffering. It reveals to us that the great business, work, disease and debt has been dealt with such that every other business work disease and debt is by comparison small.

It gives us a picture of what will be permanent and so will loosen our grip on the temporary.

5. (vs. 7-8) In these verses there is a shift from singular to plural language – the psalmist points to the necessity of community in our waiting. How does a faith community support us in our waiting on the Lord?

Where we can't focus on the character of God or the hope of a certain dawn in the midst of our depths we can have a community come around us and through their words and actions point us to these realities.

There would be wisdom perhaps in speaking of how a community has helped you in the midst of the depths – what practices work – which don't – and why?

6. (vs.3-4) The psalmist first thought after crying out from the depths is to the glory of the gospel – “we are far worse off than we could have imagined and far more loved than we could have dared dream”. We see the fulfillment of this in Jesus’ death and resurrection. How can our assurance in the work of Jesus help us to navigate the waiting as we cry out from the depths?

In the sermon Tim gave the following quote from a former bishop of Liverpool – J.C. Ryle – it might help to read this quote as part of the discussion to trigger the conversation. As an idea perhaps linger on each of the conclusions Ryle gives for how this assurance helps us weather the depths.

“Now assurance goes far to set a child of God free – it enables us to feel that the great business of life is a settled business, the great debt a paid debt, the great disease a healed disease, and the great work a finished work; and all other business, diseases, debts, and works, are then by comparison small. In this way assurance makes us patient in tribulation, calm under bereavements, unmoved in sorrow, not afraid of evil tidings, in every condition content, for it gives us a fixedness of heart. It sweetens our bitter cups, it lessens the burden of our crosses, it smooths the rough places over which we travel, and it lightens the valley of the shadow of death. It makes us always feel that we have something solid beneath our feet, and something firm under our hands – a sure friend by the way, and a sure home at the end.”