



Approaching God

Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passage.

Psalm 130 - Hope

Passage Introduction:

Psalm 130 begins this way - *"Help, God - the bottom has fallen out of my life!"* And yet, a Christian is a person who decides to face and live through suffering. If we do not make that decision, we are endangered on every side. A man or woman of faith who fails to acknowledge and deal with suffering becomes, at last, either a cynic or a melancholic or a suicide. Psalm 130 grapples mightily with suffering, sings its way through it, and provides usable experience for those who are committed to traveling the way of faith to God through Jesus Christ.

Eugene Peterson - *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Read the passage slowly 2 or 3x's.

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Psalm 130 - A Song of Ascents (NLT) - 1 From the depths of despair, O LORD, I call for your help. **2** Hear my cry, O Lord. Pay attention to my prayer. **3** LORD, if you kept a record of our sins, who, O Lord, could ever survive? **4** But you offer forgiveness, that we might learn to fear you. **5** I am counting on the LORD ; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word. **6** I long for the Lord more than sentries long for the dawn, yes, more than sentries long for the dawn. **7** O Israel, hope in the LORD ; for with the LORD there is unfailing love. His redemption overflows. **8** He himself will redeem Israel from every kind of sin.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What emotions, longings, and desires do you identify in this psalm?
- What parts of the psalm reveal God's character to be a *personal* redeemer?
- What are some ways in the text we are called to participate in building hope within our lives?

Psalm 130

Passage Summary - (From The ESV Transformation Bible)

This individual psalm of lament focuses on the psalmist's own sin (v. 1–3) but then generalizes at the psalm's conclusion to celebrate the forgiveness God brings to redeem Israel of all its iniquities (v. 8). Today this psalm of both narrow and wide deliverance brings great hope and healing to sinners individually and to the people of God corporately.

Given the covenant commitment of God to his people, one might wonder if there was something about the people, Israel, which elicited God's favor. Perhaps they were more righteous than other nations, and that's why he took them as his own people. Nothing could be further from the truth! The fact is, every individual Israelite, and all of them taken together, must acknowledge this truth: "If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" (v. 3). The implied answer, obviously, is "no one—not even one!" How remarkable, then, is the verse that follows: "But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared" (i.e., be given proper regard; v. 4). Both personal (v. 4) and corporate (v. 8) forgiveness is celebrated as the wondrous and gracious gift of God to an undeserving people.

But notice what this forgiveness is to produce. Those who bask in God's merciful forgiveness are to fear God. That is, those redeemed by grace walk in his ways with joyous reverence and a determination to turn from evil (v. 4). They are marked by waiting tirelessly and expectantly on the Lord (v. 6), and they place their hope in God and in him alone (v. 7). What sinners we are, and what grace God has shown—ultimately and lavishly expressed in Christ. How his followers should be marked, then, by faithful lives of trust and obedience.

Key Takeaway:

As you read today's passage, what are 1 or 2 main takeaways that you wrote down that you want to take with you? How would you briefly summarize your observations and meditations for today?

Close in Prayer:

Close by turning today's Psalm into your own prayer. Write some of your own prayers here using sections of Psalm 130 as a guide using the theme of hope.

- vs. **1-2** *From the depths of despair, O LORD, I call for your help. Hear my cry, O Lord. Pay attention to my prayer. (In what ways can you identify with the Psalmist's prayer - talk to God about it in your own words.)*
- vs. **3-5** *LORD, if you kept a record of our sins, who, O Lord, could ever survive? But you offer forgiveness, that we might learn to fear you. I am counting on the LORD; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word. (Spend some time meditating on the forgiveness of God and its source for our hope. Talk directly to God about how you need to count on him today)*
- vs. **6-8** *- I long for the Lord more than sentries long for the dawn, yes, more than sentries long for the dawn. O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is unfailing love. His redemption overflows. He himself will redeem Israel from every kind of sin. (Turn any misplaced hope (finances, security, kids, reputation, work, comfort) back towards the Lord.*