

**Psalm 130**     A Song of Ascents.

<sup>1</sup> Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.  
<sup>2</sup> Lord, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my supplications!  
<sup>3</sup> If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,  
Lord, who could stand?  
<sup>4</sup> But there is forgiveness with you,  
so that you may be revered.  
<sup>5</sup> I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope;  
<sup>6</sup> my soul waits for the Lord  
more than those who watch for the morning,  
more than those who watch for the morning.  
<sup>7</sup> O Israel, hope in the LORD!  
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,  
and with him is great power to redeem.  
<sup>8</sup> It is he who will redeem Israel  
from all its iniquities.

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Yes – another Psalm. The Psalms are the soundtrack of our lives. They have it all – the riotous celebration of Psalm 19; the quiet confidence of Psalm 23; and the brutal honesty of today’s lesson. “Out of the depths, O Lord...” The Psalms trumpet our ‘God-assurance’, but they also lay bare our deep-seated anxieties. ‘Are you listening, Lord? Do you give a damn about what’s happening? Are you still with us?’

This is one of the Psalms of ascent – meant to be sung as the worshipper drew close to the Holy place. Not a fawning, ingratiating ‘Hey God, thanks for joining us’ song, nothing like that would do today. This is earnest and eager; hope is present, but nearly extinguished by the questions that we cannot suppress.

The good news? The good news is that anxiety cannot permanently extinguish the hope that God represents. “But there is forgiveness in you, so that you may be revered.” This is the first evidence of hope – and the forgiveness is just God’s opening gambit – something to combat our fear that every disaster is somehow our fault.

Hope is expressed in a variety of ways in Scripture. There are stories of the miraculous and the improbable; stories of the permanence of God’s promise – a record of the generational endurance of faith. Within Scripture is the legacy of story-sharing that reaches back in time and forward beyond our time, and the constant thread in these stories is the undeniable presence of God.

***Lent Five – week two of a new kind of worship: Out of the depths (Psalm 130)***  
***March 26 2020***

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The Psalmist asks our questions for us – brings our fears to the surface, and then reminds us that the light of God will change our perspective on those fears. The fear will return – that’s part of the story too; the reality of God’s presence wouldn’t be very remarkable if there were no shadows to scatter. But the Psalmist is certain that God’s ability is greater than the total of all our inabilities.

Sure as the sunrise – and as sure as the Son will rise – the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord will redeem. That redemption is not defined by our comfort, or by a return to normal (whatever that means) – no, our redemption is marked by the banishing of fear and the outbreak of love and compassion. For these we wait in faith and hope.

Amen

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**A prayer for the week:**

Your Word, O God, separated light from darkness and called order out of Creations chaos.

Speak that word of life to us in the chaos of this moment.

Where there are now limits, help us to see new possibilities.

Where there is anxiety, let us be honest about it, and trust your calming Spirit to speak.

Where there is sickness, bring healing and courage.

Where there is mourning, may you bring comfort.

In our separation, help us recognize those common cares we share.

Keep us connected. Keep us hopeful.

Keep us.

Amen

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Be assured of the Peace that God has promised, which is yours now and always through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen