



Psalm 130

DOES GOD FORGIVE?

The Psalms are written to help us put our feelings in the right place. With all the ups and downs of life, we need to work those feelings through until we feel as we are meant to feel, and the Psalms give us what someone has called "Psalmnotherapy." You may know that some of the psalms say things that are quite honestly and bluntly horrible. But then quite honestly and bluntly, you and I feel things that are sometimes horrible. Because the psalms are inspired by God does not mean that every emotion in them is approved by God. In the Psalms you find people talking to God about their feelings openly in the context of the security of the covenant relationship between God and his people. In particular, the Psalms of Ascent are a special collection of psalms put together in ancient Israel for this purpose. ...They are a journey from a long way away to the very heart of God, as represented by the three great pilgrim festivals in ancient Israel. We can imagine people singing these psalms as they went up to Jerusalem for a great festival. Even then, some of them seem more like something that you would write in your journal rather than sing with others, so perhaps they were also used to prepare the pilgrim privately or devotionally to make the great journey back to the very center of God.

—Josh Moody, *Journey to Joy*

An overview of the themes of the five books of the Psalms:

- Psalms 1-41: Opposition to God's Anointed King
- Psalms 42-72: Communication to the Nations
- Psalms 73-89: Devastation and Despair of God's People
- Psalms 90-106: Faith in God's Sovereign Kingship
- Psalms 107-150: Consummation and Celebration!

The fifteen "Songs of Ascents" (Ps 120-134) describe the journey of God's people toward Jerusalem, Mount Zion, the place where God has placed His name (2 Chr. 6:6) and where Messiah will reign in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

WHAT HE FEELS — _____

Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD.

Lord, hear my voice!

Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. (130:1-2)



I preached Christ for some years when I had very little (if any) experimental acquaintance with access to God through Christ. But the Lord was pleased to visit me with sore affliction, whereby I was brought to the mouth of the grave, and under which my soul was oppressed with horror and darkness. But God graciously relieved my spirit by a powerful application of Psalm 130:4, "But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared."

—John Owen (1616-83)

With guilt, you are troubled by what you have done. With shame you are troubled by who you are. Guilt and shame are closely related, often becoming a confused jumble of painful emotions. When guilt and shame become intertwined, the accumulation of pain, the desire to escape yourself, and the weight of your burdens can threaten to overwhelm you.

—Stephen Arterburn

Those that are farthest cast down are not farthest from God, but are nearest unto him.

—Archibald Symson (1564-1628)

WHAT HE KNOWS — _____

*If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared. (130:3-4)*

My biggest problem:

My greatest need:

My deepest desire:

WHAT HE DOES — _____

*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
And in His word I do hope.
My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning—
I say, more than those who watch for the morning (130:5-6).*

The spiritual discipline of waiting:

- It reminds me that I am not in _____.
- It develops _____ in me.
- It creates space for _____.
- It calls me to a deeper _____ in God.
- It increases the _____ of fulfillment.

WHAT HE SAYS — _____

*O Israel, hope in the LORD!
For with the LORD there is mercy and with Him is abundant redemption,
And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. (130:7-8)*

- With God, you will find the _____ you are longing for.
- With God, you will find the full _____ and _____ that you need.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- In what ways are you still trying to earn God's love, prove your worth, or erase something in your past? How can knowing God's love and his forgiveness free you from these shame-filled pursuits?
- How hard is it for you to wait? What can God teach you in the wait?

The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none.
—Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)

None fear the Lord like those who have experienced his forgiving love. Gratitude for pardon produces far more fear and reverence of God than all the dread which is inspired by punishment. ...It is grace which leads the way to a holy regard of God and a fear of grieving him.
—Charles H. Spurgeon

Have you never beheld a condemned prisoner dissolved into tears upon the unexpected and unmerited receipt of a pardon, who all the time before was as hard as a flint? The hammer of the law may break the icy heart of man with terrors and horrors, and yet it may remain ice still, unchanged; but when the fire of love kindly thaws its ice, it is changed and dissolved into water—it is no longer ice, but of another nature.
—George Swinnock (1627-73)

This psalm testifies to a key principle of spiritual health, namely, deliberately and decisively placing hope in God's Word.
—Josh Moody

Such is the redemption that God's mercy procures unto us. It not only delivers us from a dungeon, but puts us in possession of a palace; it not only frees us from eating bread in the sweat of our brows, but it restores us to Paradise, where all fruits are growing of their own accord; it not only clears us from being captives, but endears us to be children; and not only children, but heirs; and not only heirs, but co-heirs with Christ.
—Sir Richard Baker (1568-1645)