

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
 Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
 To the voice of my supplications!
If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
 Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with you,
 So that you may be revered.
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.
O Israel, hope in the Lord!
 For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
 And with him there is great power to redeem.
It is he who will redeem Israel
 From all its iniquities.

The author is in deep pain and anguish, crying out to the Lord for answers. This is the desperate angst of someone who has suffered a severe shock or devastating loss that has shaken the foundations of meaning. It expresses a longing for answers—a longing for an explanation that will return the author to some sense of normal. Intuitively we know that answers will not come quickly or easily. We know that when we experience this depth of grief, we are not prepared to hear or accept answers even if they appeared in bold before us. We know that this deep woundedness launches us on a journey that we never desired nor ever wished on our worst enemy, but answers will not come until we take that long road that leads us through more pain before healing our wounds.

And so, the author says, “I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his Word I hope...” This too is a longing for answers, but with a clear recognition that the answers can really only come from the Author of Life. It is a longing with hope, perhaps the first positive word in this entire lament. Hope resides in spiritual territory. Hope is not an appeal to reason or logic. Hope implies a relationship of trust; leaning on the Lord who in the end is trustworthy and will not forsake the one who hopes.

Like one who experiences the “Dark night of the soul,” the author currently experiences darkness, pain and anguish, as one who tosses and turns all night, waiting for the dawn. And then, the verse that strikes me as the core, “My soul waits for the Lord, more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.” That is the verse that is pregnant with hope. The despair of the night will give way to relief as light overcomes the darkness. The dawn cannot be hurried. Waiting with hope is the one action required. As long as the night lingers on...waiting is all that the soul can do. We know that in the end there will be recompense for one who waits, “for with the Lord there is steadfast love.” This is the hope that sustains us.

Group Work

Do a round with the request, “Share your story of loss, hopelessness and hope.” “How was your experience with hopelessness and did it ever transform into hope?”

Do a round with the question, “How is your hope different today than when your grief journey began?”