

Thank you, First Presbyterian Regina for having me and my friend, Samuel, again today. And thanks also to anyone who participated in VBS last week.

First Presbyterian, the idea for today’s theme “**Wait for the Lord**” is taken from our lectionary reading in [Psalm 130](#). This penitential Psalm was sung by someone who was struggling in their life and he cried out to God and asked for forgiveness from God despite all the wrong things he had done. He waited, he trusted, and he hoped in God’s forgiveness, and he encouraged his community to do the same. When we read this psalm slowly and thoughtfully, we may feel that this Psalm is striking in its desperate cry for mercy to God concerning sins.

The simple structure of this Psalm can be divided into two parts: the first part is **verses 1-4** and the second part is **verses 5-8**. Now allow

me to read verses 1-4, the first part of this Psalm, one more time for all of us.

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

2 Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to the voice of my supplications!

3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,

Lord, who could stand?

4 But there is forgiveness with you,

so that you may be revered.

In these verses, the Psalmist cries out to God from the depths of despair. We don’t know what has caused his anguish, but it is clear that he has messed up, got himself into trouble, and can’t figure out a way to fix his mistakes and recover from the devastating

consequences of his sin. We may imagine failures, betrayals, angry words, or vengeful actions that have resulted in broken relationships, loneliness, and those awful feelings of guilt and regret. I wonder if you have felt like that at times. I wonder if you can relate to that helpless feeling of having messed up and not knowing how to fix it.

Although we sometimes get into these situations in our personal relationships, our collective sin and errors of the past also feel something like this today. The recent discoveries of so many unmarked graves of Indigenous children who were forced to go to residential schools are a good example. Once again, we are coming face-to-face with the truth of our sinful past as society and as church, and we may feel powerless to do anything about it, or to mend the broken hearts and relationships that have resulted from our colonial history.

Today’s psalm invites us to hold on to hope, to cry out to God in the midst of our personal or collective anguish, and to trust that God has the power to work something good, even out of the most broken and devastating situations. It may feel like we are utterly at loss for what to do, in the depths of distress, and our soul is low and dark, sinking and dangling, cast down and disquieted. Yet, in the darkest depths, it is our privilege — as God’s beloved — that we may cry to God and be heard.

Our lectionary texts this week also include the story of Absalom’s death, King David’s rebellious son, in 2 Samuel 18. The story highlights David’s complicated grief when his son is killed in a battle between their armies. You see, Absalom turned against his father, and tried to overthrow his kingdom. But when their armies face each other in battle, David asks his soldiers to deal with Absalom gently. And when they ignore David’s instructions and kill Absalom with the sword, David weeps for him. Perhaps he does not only weep because

his son has been killed, but because their relationship was so broken, and because he has failed him as a father.

Can you feel the complicated feelings of grief and guilt that David must have been experiencing? The words of Psalm 130 would have been fitting for him to express his feelings at that time.

In verse 3 the psalmist shows the reason for his humble supplication: he is utterly overwhelmed by his own sin and knows that God is fully aware of all his transgressions. And if God were to deal with us with strict justice, we would be condemned; if God were to consider our iniquities, God would find them to be many and great. And then, if God proceeded accordingly, God would shut us out from all hope of God’s favor and condemn us; and what could we do to help ourselves? We could not make our escape, nor resist not bear up under God’s vengeful hand. “But,” says the psalmist, **your assumption about God is wrong**, for “there is forgiveness with you (God), so that

you (God) may be revered.” Let us then give thanks for God’s patience and forbearance; we should be undone if God were to mark iniquities, and God knows it, and therefore bears with us.

When I was a kid, I got into trouble a lot. And this one time, the trouble I got into could have got me expelled. My homeroom teacher had already warned me that if I made one more mistake, then I would get expelled — and then I made another mistake. I got into a fight with another kid. I was called into the principal’s office and as I walked to his office, I knew that that day was going to be my last day at school. I was imagining (assuming) my principal getting mad at me and giving up on me (which I deserved). But to my surprise, instead of being expelled, he gave me a “second chance.” I will never forget his teary eyes when he spoke to me. It was as if he “begged” me to repent. He was known as a “killer” principal though, so seeing the other soft and gentle side of him broke my heart. I couldn’t hold myself together, I was crying, too, in his office. Then he prayed for

me. I don't remember exactly what he said in his prayer, but I could not forget how I felt at that time: I felt forgiven. I felt welcomed. I felt loved. Since then, I have grown a profound sense of respect and love for him. You see, sometimes we have this sort of assumption about God as “killer,” just like I assumed my principal as “killer.” I was wrong. Not only that my principal has a soft and gentle side of him, but he was a good man. I believe the same is true of God, too. Our God is not only soft and gentle, but He is good. He is not cruel and vengeful, counting our sins and finding us guilty, but God desires to forgive and restore us when we get ourselves into the worst kinds of trouble.

The psalmist is so right when he said, “If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered” (verse 3-4).

Now, let us see the second part of this Psalm together.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
6 my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.
7 O Israel, hope in the Lord!
For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.
8 It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.

Now, as his admiration and feeling of deep respect for God is deepening, he starts to have this willingness to wait for the Lord. In addition, his willingness to wait is also showing his dependence on God. The psalmist becomes humble as he waits for the Lord; it is for

the Lord that my soul waits, the psalmist emphasizes, for the gifts of God’s grace and the operations of His power.

Here, in this part about waiting, I wonder if the psalmist actually wanted to remind us all that when we get ourselves into the worst kinds of trouble, and we cry out to God out of the depths, God doesn’t typically wipe away our sins and solve all the problems with a snap of his fingers. However, the waiting on God that the psalmist demonstrates here is more about having hope and trust in God; which means that we hang on through what is often a long process of resolution to our issues. Even when we have repented, our problems don’t just disappear, but we have to be patient as God works with us to help make things right again in our relationship with God as well as with others.

I used to have a favorite tea cup. I got that cup from a good friend of mine. I used it almost every day to drink tea and coffee. One day I

accidentally dropped it and it broke. I was really sad and felt bad. Because I loved that cup and I went to the store and found the best glue ever to put it back together again. I managed to fix it. But then, after I fixed it, I handled that cup with a deeper sense of care, because I didn’t want to break it again. I believe it is also the same with our broken relationship with God and others. Though God forgives and restores us, yet the reconciliation work of bringing two broken individuals (or more) together again is a long process and once it is “fixed,” it should be handled with a deeper sense of care.

And as the psalmist comes to the end of his song, he now invites his fellow Israelites to have hope in the Lord! For it is in the Lord alone lies forgiveness and mercy. When the Bible speaks about “mercy,” the Bible uses the word *chesed* (חֶסֶד) which refers to God’s covenant keeping love. In the Lord, the psalmist adds, there is

“steadfast love.” Or in another translation it says there is “plentiful redemption” and “great power to redeem.”

The psalmist wants to emphasize that God alone is worthy of being our hope, and so it is only fitting for us to call one another to continue to hope in the Lord.

And the psalmist concludes with making an explicit promise of what the Lord will do, the basis of the very hope he has: “God will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.” And we know that in Jesus, we see that God’s love and mercy are displayed perfectly. And don’t you remember that Jesus Himself says to us, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29). Isn’t it amazing? This verse tells us explicitly who is invited to fellowship with Jesus: “all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens.”

You don’t need to unburden or collect yourself and then come to Jesus. Your very burden is what qualifies you to come. No payment is required; He Himself says, “I will give you rest.” His rest is a gift, not transaction. So, take His gift of rest.

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5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,

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7 O Israel, hope in the Lord!

For with the Lord there is steadfast love,

and with him is great power to redeem.

8 It is he who will redeem Israel

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Amen.