



DECEMBER 26, 2021 | PASTOR MINHO SONG

“My soul waits for the LORD” (Psalm 130:1-8)

- 1 Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;
- 2 Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.
- 3 If you, Lord, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?
- 4 But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.
- 5 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.
- 6 I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.
- 7 Israel, put your hope in the Lord,
for with the Lord is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.
- 8 He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.

‘Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD’ (vs.1) The Psalmist starts his prayer with a strong statement. It is a heartfelt prayer offered to God in times of trouble. It is the kind of prayer we should be praying to God during the pandemic.

As we look back at 2021, we realize how hard the year has been. The Covid-19 cases keep climbing up, and we are all so tired. On top of that, we as a congregation went through a lot this year. (You have done well!). By God’s grace, we are here! His everlasting love never fails!

The Psalmist is determined to experience the unfailing love from the LORD. He says, “I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits.” (vs. 5a) He will wait until the LORD hears his prayer and responds.

Have you ever been as determined to experience God’s unfailing love as the psalmist is?



I want to talk about experiencing God in these difficult times. The past two years have been extremely challenging for all of us. The pandemic has dried up much of our feelings for God, as we feel so tired and burdened to carry on daily tasks.

‘Out of the depths’

The psalmist begins with a special expression, ‘out of the depths.’ He is crying out to the LORD. Something heavy is on his mind, yes, something he cannot possibly resolve is bothering him.

So, he cries out to the LORD. He is in big trouble. He needs God to come to his rescue. The psalmist knows that he has no right to come to God like this, for he is a sinner, just like the rest of us. But he comes to God on the strength of who God is.

God the psalmist knows is God of forgiveness. Even sinners like him, God hears his prayers because God forgives.

If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. (vv. 3-4)

So, the psalmist can approach God, with the assurance that no matter how inadequate he is before God, that God will hear him.

Have you ever cried out to God during the pandemic? What is the ‘depths’ that the psalmist talks about?

The Story of Jonah

Speaking of crying out the LORD out of the depths, the story of Jonah comes to mind. Remember the disobedient prophet? God gave him a clear command to go to Nineveh (the capital of Assyrians) and proclaim that their sins have reached before God and that they must repent and turn around.

Jonah did not go to Nineveh. Rather, he took a ship heading to Tarshish, which is the opposite direction of Nineveh. Jonah did not want to obey God’s command by preaching against Assyria. After all, he wanted this nation to perish, not to be saved.



Jonah's sin was to undermine God's sovereign plan. He thought he could outthink God. That is where our sins come in. We usually think that we could figure everything out, that our thoughts are better than God's. Here is the spiritual lesson of the story of Jonah: don't change God's plan. He knows the best. Don't judge what God has in mind.

As the ship sailed westward, there was heavy wind and the ship almost capsized. The crew realized someone was not in favor of God. Who sinned? Who made God angry? What will happen to us unless we take some action now?

The crew wanted to take a lot and see who the guilty was. That is when Jonah stepped in and admitted that he fell out of favor with God because he sinned against God before he came onboard. He offered to be thrown into the sea to appease God's anger.

Look at Jonah 1:17-2:2. Where was he now? He was in the depths of a big fish's (like a whale's) stomach. It was here in the depths that he cried out to God.

'The depths' that Jonah experienced was the place (so happened to be inside the giant fish) where he met God face to face, where he saw himself as a failure. But it was also the place of God's utmost care and protection!

Crying to the LORD of the depths

It may be painful to cry to the LORD in our place of failure but crying out of 'the depths' is necessary at times because it is the depths where we see our frailty and we come across a disobedient spirit.

As we cry to the LORD out of the depths, we sense how small and weak we are. When we sense our inadequacy, we begin to understand God's adequacy.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodist churches worldwide, was once a failure. He felt so inadequate as the messenger of the gospel. When he was at Oxford University, he had the spiritual yearning to start the Holy Club with his brother Charles. It was a student movement dedicated to prayer, Bible study, and pious discipline.

From this disciplined life, he developed a passion for lost souls, eventually setting sail to America to share the gospel with native Indians. But he felt so inadequate and returned to England after two years. One morning he meditated on Ps. 130:1, 'Out of the depths I cry out to the LORD.' He felt as though the psalmist was describing what was on his mind. He, too, prayed the same, crying out to the LORD out of the depths.



Then in the evening, he attended a Bible study meeting of the Moravian Christians in Aldersgate Street, London. Someone read the preface to Romans by Martin Luther. It was there that he realized the gospel of grace: no matter how hard he tries, he will not get the assurance of salvation. It is only through faith in Christ that he will have the assurance of forgiveness. Indeed, that is exactly what happened to him. There was a profound 'evangelical conversion' that evening, known historically as the Aldergate conversion on May 24th, 1738. His prayer in the morning was answered in the evening!

I wait for the LORD

The psalmist says in vs.5 'I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word, I put my hope.'

This is where our faith comes in. The psalmist waits for the LORD to answer his prayers.

For the most part, we must learn to wait upon the LORD. Please remember that our time is never wasted when we truly wait for the LORD. Every second, every minute, every hour we wait upon God turns into a priceless experience. We learn to put complete trust in the LORD.

The author goes on, 'I wait for the LORD more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.' (vs. 6)

There is a deliberate repetition. The imagery of watchmen and how they long to see the breaking of the day after a sleepless night of watching for enemies shows the desire and anticipation.

That is how we are to wait for the LORD.

While we wait, we sense God is onto something else. It may not be what we had in mind, but God is on the move.

Hudson Taylor was a young man, barely 21 years old, when he first went out to China as a missionary. But six years of service there brought confusion in spirit and weakness in his physical body. He was so confused as to why missionaries chose not to go beyond the protected ports of his day, where hundreds of millions of Chinese souls lived and died without Christ. The missionaries all felt that it was too dangerous to go inland. It was beyond their mandate.



Young Hudson Taylor became confused and sick. The doctor advised him to return to England immediately and get rest. Otherwise, he might never return to China. When he came back to England, his 'waiting' began. He did not know how long this wait was going to be. Well, it took him six years to sort everything out. During this time, he waited upon the LORD in prayer.

While he was waiting, God did three things in his life. 1) translating the Bible with study notes into the local language he was working in 2) publishing a small book to introduce the work of China and the need to pray for this nation, 3) founding of CIM with the faith mission principle that 'God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply.' Little did he know that God was going to add one thousand workers to his mission in his lifetime!

Waiting and praying, praying and waiting, that was what Hudson Taylor did. As it turns out, those six years of waiting were the most fruitful years of the young man's life. You see, waiting is never a waste of time if we know what it is that we are waiting for.

Put your hope in the LORD

The psalmist tasted His goodness and mercy, and he could confidently exhort others to put their hopes in the LORD.

May we have the same testimony! Let us wait upon the LORD. Amen.