

Waiting For God  
Psalm 130:1-8  
Series: The Psalms [#15]  
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Theme: **Waiting For God Should Never Defeat Us.**

## Introduction

*Waiting.*

Waiting can be an exciting experience. Children waiting for Christmas or their birthday, counting down the number of *sleeps* until that exciting day. More than a few people have been excitedly waiting for holidays this summer, whether it is to get away to a special place or the break from work and the regular routine.

Waiting also can be an excruciating experience. Waiting for the pain to go away. Waiting for what you know, or at least fear, is bad news. Whether it is an exciting or excruciating experience, waiting can have a great impact on us. It can distract us from other things that we should pay attention to or get done. It can knock the wind out of our sails, sap our energy.

This morning we are going to think about waiting as we look at Psalm 130. Specifically, about *waiting for God*. The unnamed writer of this Psalm was waiting for God. He does not open the curtain for us to see his circumstances, but he does give us a glimpse into his distress and hope while he waits for God. Whatever the circumstances, and however long he was waiting, he was not defeated by the wait. His experience is not only a picture, but it also gives us some basic truth for our times of waiting. This Psalm teaches us that *waiting for God should never defeat us*.

## The Distress In Waiting For God Can Include ...

The Psalm begins with his distress and shows us that the distress in waiting for God can include the feeling that God seems to be silent. He prays,

“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.” (1-2)

“God, where are You? Listen to me! Speak to me!” King David expressed the same feelings in a number of the Psalms he wrote. He pleaded to God “... do not be deaf to me.”<sup>1</sup> He said that God was silent to him.<sup>2</sup> He asked God not to hide from him.<sup>3</sup>

Here in Psalm 130 the writer is saying that he is down in the depths, crying out to God. This pictures his deep distress and great desperation. King David felt the same way at times. In Psalm 69 he wrote,

“Save me, O God, for the waters have threatened my life. I have sunk in deep mire, and there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and a flood overflows me. I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched; my eyes fail while I wait for my God.” (1-3)

Because Psalm 130’s writer did not tell us about his circumstances, we don’t know if he was under pressure or attack from others, if he faced family, financial or personal problems. Nor do we know if his relationship with God and others, his health and finances were all in great shape. That’s not a problem for us because we don’t need to know his circumstances. Yes, God can seem distant when our relationship with Him is not as it should be, when we have not confessed and turned from sin. And so we need to keep current with God, even asking Him as David did in Psalm 19, to show us and then cleanse us from our “hidden faults” (12). But we need to know and remember that sin is not the only reason for feeling that God is silent, distant. The distress we experience when God seems to be silent can weigh on us, can drag us down, can defeat our desire to live and serve God with confidence and joy.

Another aspect of distress that can come when we are waiting for God is that our unworthiness and sin can take center stage. Move on to verse 3. “If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?”

Why is this statement here? There is no confession or even mention of sin, other than this question. When David dealt with his waiting for God, his distance from God because of sin, he wrote about it.<sup>4</sup> This writer clearly has been examining himself. He knew enough about himself and others to ask “If God pays careful attention to our past sins, keeps records of them that condemn us, who can stand accepted before Him?”

It is similar to Isaiah’s response to seeing a vision of God sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted with angels calling out to each other, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of hosts.” Isaiah’s first words were “Woe to me, for I am ruined!”<sup>5</sup> Both of these men knew that even if they lived rightly before God they were not perfect. They were not without spot or blemish. They also knew if God held on to that record and held it against them, that they could not stand before Him.

You see, when God seems to be silent and when we then look inward to examine ourselves, our unworthiness, our sin — even our forgiven sin — can come to the front to take center stage. And so, if we are not careful, our distress can deepen. We can feel that there is no hope for us, that we will never feel God’s presence, love and joy again, that we will never experience His provision and blessing again. We can feel defeated. We can be defeated. We can be in the depths of despair, feeling that we have sunk in deep mire where there is no foothold, and that we are flooded over by deep waters.

Yes. *But, waiting for God should never defeat us!* “Why not?” “How?” God used this Psalm writer to show us something of how we should respond in those times so we will not be defeated.

## The Response While Waiting For God Should Include ...

The response while waiting for God should include *allowing God's truth to direct our feelings*. Immediately after raising the question of who could stand before God because of our unworthiness and sin, the Psalmist writes, “*But...*” “*But.*” This little word has a big impact. “*But* there is forgiveness with You [God], that You may be feared” (4). Yes, we stand guilty before God, *but* He pardons us in His grace and mercy in the Messiah, in Jesus Christ, as we know more fully now from our vantage point.

God's word tells us there is forgiveness with Him. Psalm 86, “For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You” (5). Psalm 103 tells us, “[God] pardons all your iniquities...” (3). And the Psalms also record the fact that God forgave Israel's rebellion and iniquity.<sup>7</sup> And so David prayed to God with confidence for God to wash, cleanse and purify him from all his sins.<sup>8</sup> In the New Testament 1 John 1:9 declares, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” This is the clear truth of God's word.

Yet our feelings, our perceptions of truth are powerful even when they are inaccurate or incomplete. You probably have heard the ancient story of six blind men who examined an elephant. The first man felt the elephant's side and concluded it was just like a brick wall. The second man touched one of its tusks and said, “No, this is round, smooth and sharp. An elephant is like a spear.” The third touched its trunk and reported that this creature was squirmy like a snake. The fourth felt one of the elephant's legs and concluded that it was just like a tree. The fifth, totally confused, grabbed one of the ears and said, “No, it is just like a big fan.” The sixth man, holding the tail, said, “You all are wrong. It is just like a rope.” They continued to argue, each defending his perception of what an elephant was.

So some believers may say, “I don't feel forgiven.” “I can't shake the memory of my past sins. They weigh me down, make me feel unclean.” This Psalm writer learned to accept and, more than that, to embrace God's truth and allow it to correct and direct his feelings. We need to do this at all times and, in particular, when we are waiting for God. That includes, in verse 4, accepting that God forgives so that He “may be feared.” The ultimate goal is that we may reverence God properly, and so glorify Him.

Then, related to and built on this, we also need to place our hope in God and His Word. Go back to verse 4. “But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope.” (4-5). The Psalmist knew from the Scriptures that there is forgiveness with God. So he waited for God, grounding his waiting and hope on God's Word, not on his feelings or wishes.

He was in good company here. King David relied on God's promises in His Word, promises not to leave or forsake him;<sup>9</sup> promises to instruct, teach, counsel and guide him.<sup>10</sup> And so he wrote in Psalm 38:15, “For I hope in You, O LORD; You will answer, O Lord my God.” And again, in Psalm 17:6, “I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God...”

Question: When God seems distant and silent, as you wait for Him, do you really hope in His Word? Do you review and thank Him for the Bible's truth about Him and yourself? Do you refresh your understanding of and praise Him for His precious and magnificent promises?<sup>8</sup>

*Waiting for God should never defeat us.* It won't when we place our hope in God and His Word.

And so we can then, as the Psalm writer did, wait for, anticipate God's response. Do you see how these fit together? I allow God's truth to direct my feelings. I place my hope in God and His Word. So I can wait for and anticipate God's response.

Verse 5 again.

“I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning; indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning.” (5-6)

If you have worked a graveyard shift you know about waiting for, eagerly waiting for the morning. For many, if not most people, it is not just for the end of the shift. The night drags on, especially for someone like a watchman. He was not physically active, but was to constantly be alert for any enemies, who seldom if ever came. So as the quiet, dark hours dragged on, his eyelids became very heavy. If he were caught asleep on his post, he could face the death penalty. So he eagerly waited for the light of morning. Our Psalm writer said he waited for God with more eagerness than those watchmen.

God has promised to answer, to come to us. In Psalm 91 God says to those who love Him, “He will call upon Me, and I will answer Him...” (15a). God does not promise to answer according to our timetable or in the way we desire or expect. But He will answer us.

Think about another question: When God seems silent and distant, do you not only have confidence that He will answer, but are you eagerly, on the edge of your seat waiting for Him? When the situation goes on, do you keep on eagerly watching for God, anticipating, waiting for Him and to see how He will answer, what He will do? Or, when God does not answer immediately, at least in the way you desire, do you begin to doubt, or even abandon the possibility of God answering? This eager anticipation too is important to prevent waiting for God from defeating us.

One more. The waiting-for-God-Psalmist teaches us to call others to hope in God *while* we wait. Look at the last stanza, verses 7-8.

“O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is loving-kindness, and with Him is abundant redemption. And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

He is still waiting for God. God still seems distant and silent. Yet he is calling out to, encouraging others to hope in God. His call is much like David's in the next Psalm, “O Israel,

hope in the LORD from this time forth and forever” (130:3). But his circumstances were different. In Psalm 131 David was humbly resting in God. Here in Psalm 130 this writer’s hope was not yet fulfilled. He was living by faith and not by sight.

This is an amazing and powerful truth. When we really place our hope in God and His Word, when we eagerly wait for Him, He will direct and enable us to encourage others, even as we don’t sense Him responding to our needs. This is powerful for ourselves and others. It helps move our focus from ourselves, from our needs and desires to God and what He will do. It is used by God to challenge and encourage others to hope in Him.

## **Conclusion.**

Have no doubt about this, *waiting for God does not have to defeat you. It should never defeat you.*

Waiting. Sometimes it can be exciting. At other times excruciating. Then sometimes we may think waiting is a waste of time. Dr. Seuss’ *Oh, The Places You’ll Go* begins on an upbeat note:

Congratulations!  
Today is your day.  
You’re off to Great Places!  
You’re off and away!

But a bit later Dr. Seuss introduces the sad reality that Bang-ups and Hang-ups can happen to you. That

You can get so confused  
that you’ll start in to race  
down long wiggled roads at a break-necking pace  
and grind on for miles across weirdish wild space,  
headed, I fear, toward a most useless place.  
The Waiting Place...

... for people just waiting.  
Waiting for a train to go  
or a bus to come, or a plane to go  
or the mail to come, or the rain to go  
or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow  
or waiting around for a Yes or No  
or waiting for their hair to grow.  
Everyone is just waiting.  
Waiting for the fish to bite  
or waiting for wind to fly a kite  
or waiting around for Friday night  
or waiting, perhaps, for their Uncle Jake  
or a pot to boil, or a Better Break

or a string of pearls, or a pair of pants  
or a wig with curls, or Another Chance.  
Everyone is just waiting.

No!

he says,

That's not for you!<sup>11</sup>

We might like to say, "That's not for me! Waiting is not for me!" But, while I may see those times as a waste of time, God may have some purposes for my good, as hard as it may be for me to accept that. For while the time and way in which God will respond is beyond my control, it is not beyond His control and His loving care for me.

*Waiting for God will never defeat us when our trust is in Him.*

As you spend time with God now, talk with Him about the distress you have felt, or perhaps feel now as you are waiting for Him to respond, to make His presence real to you, to answer you, to act. Then review how you have responded to those times. Ask God to help you respond as the Psalm writer did so that you will not be defeated in those times.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 28:1.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 39:12.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 69:17; 143:7.

<sup>4</sup> cf. Psalm 32:1-5; 51:1-17.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 6:1-5.

<sup>6</sup> e.g., Psalm 78:38; 85:2.

<sup>7</sup> e.g., Psalm 51:2, 7.

<sup>8</sup> cf. 2 Peter 1:4.

<sup>9</sup> cf. Deuteronomy 31:6, 7; Joshua 1:5.

<sup>10</sup> cf. Psalm 25:8-9; 32:8; 33:18.

<sup>11</sup>Theodor Seuss Geisel / Dr. Seuss Enterprises LB. Oh, The Places You'll Go. New York: Random House, 1990, pages 1, 17-26.

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