

# Psalm 130.<sup>1-8</sup>

## Hope

### Background

Hope characterises the believer. ‘Faith, hope, and love’ – they belong intrinsically together.

The *upward* look of faith (replacing the previous downward look which so often issues in fear) enables the believer always to be looking *forward* in hope (rather than backwards with regret) and *outwards* in love (rather than inwards in self-pity). This next psalm explores the central ‘panel’ of this 3-dimensional life we now live in relationship with the Lord. A life lived in hope.

It’s important to understand what the Scriptures mean by this hope. It’s something very different from mere *optimism*, for instance: for all sorts of reasons – sometimes to do with background, sometimes to do with personality, sometimes to do with their life-experience – for all sorts of reasons some people may be more optimistic in their outlook, others more pessimistic.

What the Scriptures mean by ‘hope’ has nothing to do with our ‘natural bent’ and everything to do with our ‘spiritual sight’. Our eyes as believers have been opened to the glorious reality of the living God who has revealed Himself in His Word: and it’s what He has revealed about Himself that lies behind the perspective the believer has – a perspective which is best characterised as ‘hope’.

You will see as you work through the psalm how replete it is with an awareness of who God is (the creator God, the covenant God, the God who speaks and hears), how God works (attentive, forgiving, loving, delivering), and what God has promised (His word is the word of promise, and the promise is of a ‘morning’ still to dawn and of a coming ‘redemption’ which will be at last ‘full’ or complete.

The exhortation to all God’s people in the closing couple of verses is an impassioned plea to ensure that your living as a believer has this ‘hope’ and hopefulness at its very core (faith / **hope** / love): in other words, believers are not simply those who embrace the specific ‘blessed hope’ ([Titus 2.13](#)) of the gospel, but those whose perspective in any and every situation is one of **hopefulness**. That, after all, was a characteristic of Abraham who, “*against all hope*” (but on the basis on who God is and what God had promised) “*.. in hope believed and so became the father of many nations*” ([Rom.4.18](#)).

On that same basis, Paul was able to insist a little later in his letter to the church at Rome that “*we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*” ([Rom.8.28](#)): and the ‘good’ that He has purposed for His people is our being conformed to the likeness of Jesus and Jesus being ‘the firstborn among many brothers and sisters’ ([Rom.8.29](#)). That ‘hopefulness’ is thus an integral part of faith – and this psalm illustrates and underlines that truth.

I suggest that along with ‘**days**’ (1) and (2), which relate specifically to Psalm 130, you also look at ‘**day**’ (4) as well in your Community Group: I’ve added supplementary questions for those three days.

## 1) Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March – depths

Read [Psalm 130.1-4](#)

*“Out of the depths I cry to You, LORD; Lord, hear my voice..” (Ps.130.1)*

The path to the heights begins always in the depths. All sorts of circumstances land us in the depths: sin, sorrow, setbacks, suffering. If that’s where you are today then look up and speak up: pray! God is rich in mercy – He will raise you up again to serve Him!

Read [Jonah 2.1-9](#): in what ways does Jonah’s prayer breathe the spirit of this psalm?

How does your experience of the forgiveness of God find expression in your reverent service of Him?

In what ways is the church a ‘safe place’ for those who, for any reason, are ‘in the depths’?

It’s sometimes said that “It’s OK to be not OK!” Is that what comes across to people? How might that be better communicated?

***Prayer:** In my distress I call to You, O Lord. You have always listened to the cries of Your people and brought them up from the pit. Do it again, O Lord my God!*

## 2) Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March – wait

Read [Psalm 130.5-8](#)

*“.. Israel, put your hope in the LORD ..” (Ps.130.7)*

Faith, hope and love belong invariably together. The life of faith is one of constant anticipation: the upward look of faith is matched by the forward look of hope. Waiting is never easy in an ‘instant’ world: but trusting in the Word of God obliges you to wait.

Why does God make His people wait?

A recurring question on the lips of God’s people is, ‘How long, O Lord?’ – what help do the Scriptures give in understanding the ‘delays’ in the Lord’s coming to the help of His people and acting in different situations?

Many Ukrainians are devout believers: what will be the comfort they draw from these final 4 verses of the psalm in these days?

For what are God’s people waiting, and why are you able to wait with real anticipation?

***Prayer:** From the breaking of the dawn to the setting of the sun, I will stand on every promise of Your Word, O Lord; for Your covenant is sure and on this I am secure.*

## 3) Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March – promise

Read [Romans 8.18-21](#)

*".. the creation waits with eager expectation .."* (Rom.8.19)

From [the start](#) of this letter, Paul made it clear that the gospel is, in essence, a promise. It's a promise which still awaits its final fulfilment and it's one whose scope is huge, encompassing all creation. A new heaven, a new earth where righteousness dwells.

How does Paul's teaching here help inform your thinking about environmental concerns today?

In what ways does the fact that 'the creation was subjected to frustration' find expression?

**Prayer:** *You restore what is broken, my Saviour God – from a groaning cosmos to a corrupt creature such as myself. How I long for the true freedom still to come!*

#### **4) Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March – patient**

Read [Romans 8.22-25](#)

*".. if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently .."* (Rom.8.25)

The promise of God's Word is supplemented by the gift of the Spirit who provides you with a tiny 'taster' and a guarantee of what's been promised. You've been set on the path of life – there are joys and eternal pleasures still to come!

What is the significance of the imagery of 'childbirth' which Paul uses at the start of this passage?

If we are anticipating a new heaven and a new earth, what should our response be to the environmental concerns which find expression in these days?

What does Paul mean by 'our adoption to sonship' and 'the redemption of our bodies' (v.23)?

Our culture isn't conducive to patience! How can you best cultivate this grace of patience as you wait for the promise of God?

**Prayer:** *When I walk through dark valleys, Lord, help me to fear no evil but to rejoice rather in the assurance that You are with me, and that joy will come with the morning.*

#### **5) Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March – weakness**

Read [Romans 8.26-27](#)

*".. the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans .."* (Rom.8.26)

Sometimes the pain is so great, the perplexity so dark, that finding words with which to pray is hard. We simply in the frustrations of a fallen world and in the weakness of our sin-stained humanity. Offer the groans to God: His Spirit will do the rest!

How does the Spirit help you as you pray?

The Spirit of God lays on the heart of believers the burden of God's will: what has been your experience of that as you have prayed?

*Prayer: You bid me pour out my heart before You, Lord – and I'm glad to do just that! But often I am tongue-tied in Your presence! Hear me in my child-like yabbering!*

## 6) Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March – conformed

Read [Romans 8.28-30](#)

*".. in all things God works for the good of those who love Him .."* (Rom.8.28)

You are not an accident! God has purposed good, not harm, for His people: in Jesus He has given you hope and a future ([Jer.29.11](#)) and in His sovereign grace He combines all things to secure what He has planned for you – conformity to Christ.

How will your being glorified be to the glory of Jesus?

In what ways are you able to discern the transforming work of the Spirit in your life through the different circumstances you've faced?

*Prayer: How great You are, O God! I rejoice in Your wonderful wisdom, as bit by bit You move Your purpose forward through all things towards that coming day of glory.*

## 7) Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March – love

Read [Romans 8.31-39](#)

*".. we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.."* (Rom.8.37)

There is no 'if' about it! [God is for us!](#) In love the Father has planned your truest good. In love the Son has purchased your truest good. And in love the Spirit secures your truest good. God has laid hold of you in love – and nothing can separate you from it!

*"Since God is for us .."*: according to what Paul writes here, in what ways has God demonstrated that He is, indeed, **for** us?

What did Paul mean by saying that *"in all these things we are more than conquerors"*?

*Prayer: You are my strength, O sovereign Lord. You make my feet like the feet of a deer and enable me to tread on the heights! Fill my heart with praise again today!*