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**5th July 2020**

 **Sermon Transcript**

**Preacher: Matt Hubrechsen**

Good Morning and welcome everyone to Salisbury Baptist Church online wherever you may be watching from. It has been good to be able to still hear Gods word each week, in one form or another, even though we have not been able to be together.

This is the first time I am preaching through this media, and to be honest I am a bit nervous; I am sure that it will be fine though. Just over 2 weeks ago was another first for me, and that was to sit for an exam online. That was a big issue for me, and I was rather anxious in the lead up to it. There were so many things that had to be in place to sit the exam. I had to provide an exam conditions room for starters, then you must have a reliable computer and reliable internet connection. I can hear what you are all thinking, reliable and internet do not go together. When you are taking the exam, there is someone on the other end, who you cannot see but only hear them. They can see you and hear everything you are doing; my screen is shared with them so they can see everything I am doing, and they even have control of your mouse at times. And then there is the pressure of the actual exam. I am happy to report that all went ok with the exam and technical side of things and I achieved a favourable result.

I can imagine that for most of us, we have had to do things a whole lot different than we have been used to doing in recent times. Adapting to change can be quite daunting at times, there is no right or wrong way to take on change as it is a learning process as you find your feet in the new situations. I do think though that we sometimes forget to include God in the process of change and try to take on the challenge alone. This morning I would like to share a Psalm with you as an encouragement to whatever challenges you may find yourself in now.

Let me pray before we move on.

*Dear Father, we thank you for all you are doing for us. I pray this morning that as we open your word, our ears will hear what you have to say to us, and our hearts will be open to change as you speak to us. Thank you for your patience with us. Come now and speak to us. We pray these things in the name of Jesus, Amen.*

I want to share a Psalm with you all that has really resonated with me in the last few months. It is a Psalm that comes from a group of 15 Psalms known as the songs of ascent. The songs of ascent were sung by pilgrims as they made their way up to the temple in Jerusalem. The Psalm I am speaking of is Psalm 130. It is also recognised as one of the seven penitential Psalms, appropriate for prayer during times of personal or communal repentance.

If you have your bibles, you can follow along as I read:

**A Song of Ascents.**

**130**Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!
**2**    O Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
    to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

**3**If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
    O Lord, who could stand?
**4**But with you there is forgiveness,
    that you may be feared.

**5**I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
    and in his word I hope;
**6**my soul waits for the Lord
    more than watchmen for the morning,
    more than watchmen for the morning.

**7**O Israel, hope in the Lord!
    For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
    and with him is plentiful redemption.
**8**And he will redeem Israel
    from all his iniquities.

Right from the beginning we get to see where the Psalmist is writing from. Out of the depths: The psalmist is writing from a place where darkness is overpowering the light. It is a place where all hope is lost, a place that is so overwhelming for the Psalmist, that they cry out to the Lord. It is a place of suffering. We all have been there at some point in our lives. Suffering so overwhelming that we can no longer bear it alone. It could be that we have ended up in this place because of our own doing or we find ourselves there for some other reason. The psalmist cries out for mercy to the Lord in verse 2, longing for the Lord to hear their pleas. *Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy.* This place of suffering is so much that the psalmist wants relief from it. What is it that you want relief from today? Are their financial struggles, health issues, job worries, relational problems, worries about what is happening in the world today?

In verse 3 the Psalmist recognizes their place in relation to the Lord. *If you, O Lord should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?* The Psalmist has this realisation of their sin and they know based on their sin they have no standing in front of God. They also know that God forgives, see verse 4, *But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared.* It is here that the Psalmist knows that for God to have mercy on them, they need to confess their sins. Now I’m not trying to say that all suffering is a result of our sins, but what I am saying is that when we cry out to God for mercy, we recognize that there is sin in our life that prevents us standing before Him. We can stand in God’s presence with the knowledge that he is a loving God and that He is a forgiving God. We have that assurance in 1 John 1:9 that *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* God will forgive us, and our sins will be remembered no more.Through God’s forgiveness we can approach Him in awe and wonder of what He can do in our lives.

The psalmist writes in verse 5: *I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word, I hope.* The Psalmist knows that the Lord is worth waiting for. Sometimes we tend to rush on and try to solve the problems we have on our own and not wait for the Lord. You see prayer is a two-way conversation and sometimes we find ourselves asking the Lord to come help us, but we are impatient to wait for the Lords response and move on without Him. We have His word that gives us hope. It is in His word that we quite often hear God speaking to us. Maybe today we need to take more time to read His word and just sit and wait to hear Gods voice in our lives. Then we have this interesting comparison in verse 6, *my soul waits for the Lord, more than the watchmen for the morning.* A statement of how serious the psalmist is to wait for the Lord. Quite often we think of watchmen as being guards watching through the night. There is one thing on their minds, that is they looking for the morning to arrive. Similarly, for myself when I work nightshift at work, just this week past I was working nightshift. Now if you have worked the nightshift as well, you know that you long for the morning to arrive. What is it in our lives that we are dealing with that perhaps we need to just wait on the Lord for? Are we rushing ahead of God in our daily pursuits to try and get away from this suffering that is on us? Psalm 46 verse 10 says *be still and know that I am God…*...God is reminding us to slow down stop rushing and trust in Him.

In verse 7, the Psalmist shifts the focus of the prayer from themselves, and onto Israel. *O Israel, hope is in the Lord!* The Psalmist has experienced this immense suffering, they have felt the guilt of their sin in their helpless state and they have experienced the loving nature of God through His forgiveness. The psalmist wishes to share this experience with others, because he knows that there are others that are in the same state as he was. The psalmist addresses Israel as a whole and encourages them to find the same hope that they have found. This morning I would like to encourage the church, Salisbury Baptist church and all its people to find this same hope that the psalmist has. Now we are all suffering the same by way of not being able to meet as God’s people. We all wish for that time to be upon us where we can all sit together once again and worship God. We are even seeing other churches slowly getting back to normal and perhaps are wondering when we will be able to do so as well. Friends let us continue to wait upon the Lord. *For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with Him is plentiful redemption.* A time is coming when we will be able to meet again. God has not forgotten us.

In closing, let me just say that this is a psalm that we can take encouragement. It is a blueprint somewhat of the Gospel of Jesus. We all find ourselves in troubled times, so troubled that we turn and cry out to Jesus to help us. In our attempts to reach God, we feel exposed to His wrath because of sin in our lives yet we know that there is forgiveness in God, and we wait upon the Lord with hope. Having waited and found forgiveness and redemption, we are freed from our sin and delivered from our troubles. We now want to share this news of redemption and deliverance with others. We want to proclaim Gods love and mercy to all those around us.

Where do you see yourselves this morning in this story? It is possible that we move from back and forth through this story at different stages in our lives. This is represented by the high moments and the low moments that we experience. Depending on where we are is what influences our attitudes and thoughts.

Wherever you may be now, know that God’s love is never ending, it is never failing. You can pray this prayer and know that God will hear you, God is a forgiving God, and he will redeem you and restore you from your trouble.

*We thank you father for your word this morning. We thank you for your unfailing love that you have for us. Thankyou that we can approach you knowing that our sins are forgiven. Help us I pray that we will remember this truth and this hope always. Be with us as we move out into this week, may we be able to proclaim your good news to those that we meet with. We pray these things in your name, Amen.*